The Eastern Anthropologist

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75 years of
The Eastern Anthropologist
(1947-2022)

Special Issue on 75 years Anthropology in Post-Colonial India

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Abhijit Guha

A CENTURY OF ANTHROPOLOGY IN INDIA: SEARCHING THE NATIONALIST TRENDS

Abstract

There is little research on the history of anthropology in India. The works which have been done though contained a lot of useful data on the history of anthropology during the colonial and post-colonial periods have now become dated and they also did not venture into a search for the growth of nationalist anthropological writings by the Indian anthropologists in the pre and post independence periods. The conceptual framework of the discourse developed in this paper is derived from a critical reading of the anthropological texts produced by Indian anthropologists. This reading of the history of Indian anthropology is based on two sources. One source is the reading of the original texts by pioneering anthropologists who were committed to various tasks of nation building and the other is the reading of literature by anthropologists who regarded Indian anthropology simply as a continuation of the western tradition. There also existed a view that an Indian form of anthropology could be discerned in many ancient Indian texts and scriptures before the advent of a colonial anthropology introduced by the European scholars, administrators and missionaries in the Indian subcontinent. I have argued that while criticizing Indian anthropology or sociology the critiques mostly ignored the studies done by the pioneers of the disciplines which were socially relevant and directed to the welfare and betterment of the underprivileged sections of our country and these studies for the betterment of the underdog were often conducted by anthropologists and sociologists who belonged to higher castes occupying elite positions in the society. The critics have only followed the smart way to criticize the pioneers instead of studying the socially committed works of the later and this was one of the reasons that Indian anthropologists failed to honour their nationalist predecessors and depended more on the wisdom of the Western scholars. The new discourse in search of a nationalist trend in Indian anthropology, therefore, is urgently needed for the construction of the historiography of the discipline.

Keywords: *Indian anthropology, Nationalist trends in Indian anthropology, History of Indian anthropology, Colonial anthropology, Hindu anthropology.*

ABHIJIT GUHA, Former Professor in Anthropology, Vidyasagar University, & former Senior Fellow, Indian Council of Social Science Research at the Institute of Development Studies Kolkata, Email: abhijitguhavuanthro@rediffmail.com

Introduction

There is little research on the history of anthropology in India despite the fact that courses on the growth and development of anthropology in India had been recommended at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels in the *Model Curriculum Development Report* of the University Grants Commission as early as 2001. (*Model Curriculum Development Report in Anthropology*, 2001). There are few published works on the history and the development of anthropology in India which included L.P. Vidyarthi's *magnum opus* entitled *Rise of Anthropology in India: A Social Science Orientation* (Vols. I & II) published in 1978.In the first chapter of volume I of the book Vidyarthi mentioned the 'sporadic attempts to review the researches in social anthropology in India' by scholars like S.C.Roy, D.N.Majumdar, G.S,Ghurye, S.C.Dube, N.K.Bose and S.C. Sinha. (Vidyarthi, 1978:1-29). Quite significantly, Vidyarthi could not find among these scholars any substantial attempt to search for a nationalist trend of social and cultural anthropology in India. Four years before the publication of Vidyarthi's book a biographical sketch of the eminent Indian anthropologists was published by, S.K.Ray, the then Librarian of the Anthropological Survey of India, which also gave us some idea about the growth of anthropology in India. (Ray, 1974). In the recently published Routledge Dictionary of anthropologists there is a short description of the development of Indian anthropology based on already published Indian materials. (Gaillard, 2004).

All these aforementioned works though contained a lot of useful data on the history of anthropology during the colonial and post-colonial periods have now become dated and they also did not venture into a search for the growth of nationalist anthropological writings by the Indian anthropologists in the pre and post independence periods. A recent book *Anthropology in the East: Founders of Indian Sociology and Anthropology* edited by Patricia Uberoi, Nandini Sundar and Satish Deshpande published in 2007 contained separate biographical chapters on pioneering Indian anthropologists and sociologists by individual authors. This book although not devoted to search for the nationalist trends in Indian anthropology and sociology, contained many interesting information on the activities and works of the pioneers of Indian anthropology and sociology in the pre and post-independence periods. There were of course a number of perceptive articles which touched on the different aspects of the history of Indian anthropology but none of them attempted to write a nationalist history of the discipline. (See for example, Sinha, 1967; 1971; 1974; 1978 & 1980; Béteille, 1997; 2000 & 2013; Sarana & Sinha 1976; Uberoi, Sundar and Deshpande, 2000 &2007; Srivastava, 1999 &2000; Rao, 2012; Sahay, 1976; Joshi, 2015). In a recent period, Roma Chatterji in her brilliant article raised the question of Indianness in Indian anthropology and sociology but her point of departure was more on reflexivity of Indian anthropologists with a tangential touch on the nationalist thinking among sociologists like M.N.Srinivas and

T.N.Madan in the post-independence period. (Chatterji, 2005:162-176).In this context we may recall Surajit Sinha's perceptive review of Nirmal Kumar Bose's ideas about the development of an Indian tradition of anthropology through the studies on urgent problems of post-independent India and Sinha emphasized the dangers of using borrowed ideas from the West. (Sinha, 1967:1707-1709). Despite his repeated insistence for Indian anthropology, Surajit Sinha, however, did not delve much deeper into a historical search for nationalist trends in Indian anthropology. Sinha seemed to have restricted himself around the thoughts of Nirmal Kumar Bose only while looking at the nationalist tradition in Indian anthropology. N.K.Bose's research endeavours on the other hand were largely influenced by the American cultural diffusionists, like Franz Boas A.L.Kroeber and Clark Wissler (Bose, 1953).

Conceptual framework and methodology

Under these facts and circumstances, the conceptual framework of this discourse is derived from a critical and selective reading of the anthropological texts produced by Indian anthropologists. This reading of the history of Indian anthropology is based on two sources. One source is the reading of the original texts by pioneering anthropologists which were committed to various tasks of nation building and the other is the reading of literature by anthropologists who regarded early Indian anthropology simply following the western tradition. These two readings of the texts are juxtaposed to write a new and critical history of Indian anthropology, which I have designated as the 'new discourse' in the title of this paper.

Analytical essays or parts of ethnographic monographs, rather than descriptive and/or simple ethnographic treatises, devoted to the role of anthropology in nation building have come under the purview of this research. So, Sarat Chandra Roy's pioneering article 'An Indian Outlook on Anthropology'(Roy,1938) and Tarak Chandra Das's sectional presidential address at the Indian Science Congress entitled 'Cultural Anthropology in the service of the individual and the nation' delivered in 1941 and his novel paper on museum building in independent India are more important sources of data for this research rather than Roy and Das's classical ethnographic monographs on the Mundas and Purum Kukis of Manipur (Das, 1941). Another example is Verrier Elwin's comprehensive essay on the 'History of Anthropological Survey of India' published in 1948. (Elwin, 1948). Elwin's classical monographs on the Muria Gonds of Bastar do not directly come under the scope of this research.

Another group of anthropological works has also come under the ambit of my investigation. These were the works which were conducted on a burning problem of the country which has had tremendous bearing on nation building. For example, the rare and unique researches of Tarak Chandra Das on Bengal Famine (1949) and on Social Tensions among the refugees(1959) by Biraja Sankar Guha come under this category. (Guha, 2017; 2016a; 2010; &2011).

Quite offbeat and almost forgotten but original article written by B.R.Ambedkar on the origin of the caste system in India presented in an anthropology Seminar at Columbia University in 1916 has also been relooked in this context of nationalistic trends in anthropology, since it sharply differed with the explanations provided by Western as well as Marxist and non-Marxist Indian scholars (like N.K.Bose and M.N. Srinivas) on caste system in India. (Ambedkar, 1916).

The overall planning of this research paper is designed on the basis of the previous works done by the author on the history of anthropological research in India. It is also based on the hypothesis that a nationalist tradition of anthropological research is discernible in India. Accordingly, the methodology of the research is exploratory and involved intensive reading of the literature which carried this nationalist tradition. Readings of analytical papers and critical essays rather than plain ethnographies by the pioneers became more important in this discourse.

Colonial critique of Indian anthropology

There is a standard critique of Indian anthropology advanced by some of the Indian anthropologists. The critics say that Indian anthropology is the product of a colonial tradition and the Indian anthropologists for various reasons followed their colonial masters in one way or the other. Let me try to arrange the history of this critique of Indian anthropology in a chronological manner.

A chronological description of Critiques

1. As early as 1952, Nirmal Kumar Bose, in a significant article entitled, 'Current research projects in Indian anthropology', published in *Man in India* enumerated the research projects undertaken by the department of Anthropology, Government of India (the former name of the Anthropological Survey of India) and the anthropology departments at Calcutta, Madras, Lucknow, Delhi, Gauhati and Osmania Universities. Bose's investigation was exhaustive and based on written replies from the heads of the aforementioned institutions. After reviewing the overall scenario, he concluded:

There does not seem to be any problem which Indian anthropologists have made peculiarly their own. Anthropologists in our country have, on the whole, followed the tracks beaten by anthropologists in the more powerful countries of the West. What they do, we generally try to repeat on the Indian soil (Bose 1952: 133).

2. Followed by Bose in 1971 the famous Indian anthropologist Surajit Sinha in his insightful article published in the *Journal of the Indian Anthropological Society* (hereafter *JIAS*) observed that despite considerable growth in research publications and professional human

> power in social and cultural anthropology during the last 100 years, the Indian anthropologists largely remained dependent on western and colonial traditions (Sinha, 1971: 1-14). In continuation of his pertinent examination of the colonial dependence of Indian anthropology, Sinha contributed a full chapter entitled 'India: A Western Apprentice' in a book, *Anthropology: Ancestors and Heirs,* edited by the Marxist anthropologist Stanley Diamond in 1980 published by Mouton. In that article Sinha discussed 'the process of naturalization of the different strands of Western anthropological traditions' and finally ended with a pessimistic note

For some time, the proliferation of trained manpower, random efforts at catching up with the latest developments in the West and a general increase in the number of publications will characterize the development of Indian anthropology (Sinha, 1980: 281).

Trained by both Nirmal Kumar Bose and Tarak Chandra Das and also at a later stage by Robert Redfield, Sinha was exposed to a wide arena of global and national anthropology. He completed his major works on the relationship between tribe and caste in the context of Indian civilization as as well as state formation by mid 1960s. A closer view of his published works revealed that he first presented the critical idea on Indian anthropology in a Wenner-GrenFoundation conference held in New York in 1968 (Sinha, 1968). In fact, Sinha's self-critical views on the growth of Indian social science in general and anthropology and sociology in particular could be traced back to his article entitled 'Involvement in social change: a plea for own ideas' published in the radical social science journal *Economic and Political Weekly* as early as 1967 (Sinha, 1967:1707-1709).In this article Sinha stated quite categorically

A scholarly tradition of leaning heavily, if not abjectly, on ideas borrowed from the West is growing in this country. This is clear from the post-independence writings of a large number of Indian social scientists and the research policies of some of our modem research institutions.

The borrowed ideas and concepts, when accepted uncritically, obscure the major issues involved in planned social change and stand in the way of posing the right kind of questions in the study of social change. (Ibid 1707).

Sinha pursued with this critique of Indian social science by converging his attack on Indian Anthropology in the subsequent articles.

Taking note of his earlier article in the *JIAS*, Sinha in his 'Foreword' of the precious book *Bibliographies of Eminent Indian Anthropologists* (1974) written by Shyamal Kumar Ray, made a remark

…. there was a general reluctance among Indian scholars to take due note of the research publications of Indian pioneers and contemporaries. As a result, research endeavours of Indian scholars tend to be derivative, leaving

the responsibilities of breaking new grounds exclusively to western scholars (Sinha, 1974: iii).

Although Sinha praised N.K.Bose and T.C.Das at the individual levels for their insight and ethnography respectively the critiques advanced by Sinha in his 1967, 1971 and 1980 articles on the overall achievement of Indian anthropology was quite pessimistic and distressing. For him there was hardly any sign of an independent, let alone nationalist Indian anthropology. In his article entitled 'Urgent Problems for Research in Social and Cultural Anthropology in India: Perspectives and Suggestions' published in *Sociological Bulletin* in 1968 Sinha identified three distinct social anthropological 'vantage points' to approach the urgent problems in India, which were: (i) study of 'Primitive Groups' of tribes, (ii) study of human groups for the theoretical understanding of Indian society and (iii) anthropological study of problems urgently needed for national reconstruction and development. But quite interestingly Sinha left the third area untouched for the purpose of the paper (Sinha, 1968:123-131). It was not clear why he had done so and what purpose prevented him to undertake discussion on this vital area. More interestingly, few years later Sinha wrote in the Foreword of a book entitled *Bibliographies of eminent Indian Anthropologists*

We are also impressed by the fact that these pioneering scholars, often working under severe limitations of resources, were engaged in life-long endeavour in their particular areas of academic interest. Each of them demonstrated a rare quality of mental independence while living most of their lives under colonial rule (Sinha, 1974: iii).

But quite strangely, Surajit Sinha never came up with a comprehensive and overall review of the results of the 'mental independence' of his predecessors who lived their 'lives under colonial rule'. Sinha seemed to satisfy himself only with the praise of N.K.Bose and occasionally T.C.Das.

3. Next to Sinha came the critique of Amitabha Basu and Suhas Biswas who held professorial positions at the prestigious Indian Statistical Institute at Kolkata. In their article, '*Is Indian Anthropology Dead / Dying*' published in the *Journal of the Indian Anthropological Society,* they raised the question of social relevance of Indian anthropology squarely and concluded that the subject was either dead or dying in the post-colonial period.(Basu and Biswas, 1980:1-4). More interestingly, some commentators (e.g. V.Balakrishnan, P.P.Majumder and D.Piplai, 1980, pp. 4-5, 9-10 & 11-12) on the paper disagreed with Basu and Biswas and argued that Anthropology in India was very much useful for the ruling and privileged classes and might not be useful for the masses!

4. Celebrated Social Anthropologist and Sociologist André Béteille in one of his articles published in the *Sociological Bulletin* in 1997 wrote:

   In India, each generation of sociologists seems eager to start its work

on a clean slate, with little or no attention to the work done before. This amnesia about the work of their predecessors is no less distinctive of Indian sociologists than their failure to innovate (Béteille, 1997:98).

Béteille's observation on Indian sociologists however, was not novel. About twenty five years before his pronouncement, Surajit Sinha critiqued Indian anthropologists almost in the same manner which I have already mentioned.

5. After about two decades of Sinha, another anthropologist, Biswanath Debnath in his article published in the *Economic and Political Weekly,* castigated Indian anthropologists for failing to evolve their own tradition and blindly following the footsteps of the colonial masters by studying small, isolated and marginal tribal communities and their process of integration in the mainstream Indian civilization (Debnath, 1999:3110-3114). Almost the same kind of shrill voice on the purported neo-colonial bias in Indian anthropology was heard in the writings of J.J.Roy-Burman in 2011 (Roy-Burman, 2011).

6. In a recent article published in *Economic and Political Weekly* Vivek Kumar, a professor of Sociology at Jawaharlal Nehru University in his article 'How Egalitarian Is Indian Sociology?' observed a higher caste bias in Indian Sociology and Social Anthropology (Kumar, 2017:)

Interestingly, none of these critiques were forwarded by any western anthropologist or sociologist and all the critiques were put forward by professionals who earned or are earning their livelihood by practicing Sociology and/ or Anthropology in India.

7. In a more academic vein, R.Srivatsan argued in his *Economic and Political Weekly* article that the dominant discourse among the anthropologists and sociologists on tribal policy in India had changed little from the colonial times to the emergence of nationalism in the early post-independent years (Srivatsan, 1986, pp.1986-1999).

Under the above scenario, I will argue that while criticizing Indian anthropology or sociology the critiques mostly ignored the studies done by the pioneers of the disciplines which were socially relevant and directed to the welfare and betterment of the underprivileged sections of our country and these studies for the betterment of the underdog were often conducted by anthropologists and sociologists who belonged to higher castes occupying elite positions in the society. Now I enumerate some of the remarkable scholars of the early Indian anthropology who though worked during the colonial period tried to build up a nationalist tradition of anthropology. All of the following anthropologists were born in India in the 19th century and applied their knowledge in anthropology and sociology for the cause of the marginalized and exploited tribals and other underprivileged and deprived sections of the

Indian population. Although, these anthropologists were influenced by the theory and methodology of the western anthropologists but they used the western knowledge for the cause of the exploited tribals and marginalized communities of India. But before we move into the domain of nationalist anthropology, I will narrate another interesting story in the development of anthropology in India, which was Hindu anthropology.

Hindu anthropology

On the reverse side of the critiques there also existed a view that an Indian form of Anthropology could be discerned in many ancient Indian texts and scriptures before the advent of a colonial anthropology introduced by the European scholars, administrators and missionaries in the Indian subcontinent. As early as 1938 Jogendra Chandra Ghosh in his interesting article *Hindu Anthropology* published in the Anthropological Papers (New series) no. 5 of the University of Calcutta tried to show that before 6th Century B.C. the Hindus innovated various measurements on human body and its parts, which in European terms may be called Anthropometry, an important branch of Physical Anthropology. Ghosh began his article by saying

Anthropology is one of the modern progressive Sciences. Anthropometry and Ethnology are the two important branches of this Science. We shall here give some facts to show that the Hindus had their Anthropometry and Ethnology from a very early period (Ghosh, 1938, p.27).

Mr Ghosh further pointed out that the earliest record of those anthropometric measurements was found in *Susruta-Samhita*, a medical treatise written by the ancient Hindus. Ghosh also held that the ancient Hindus had their own notion of Ethnology and its first expression was found in *Rgveda* in which 'races' were classified on the basis of their skin colour. Suffice it to say that Ghosh was hinting at the fact that 'racial theory' became a major theme in later day western anthropology.

Another later proponent of Hindu Anthropology was the famous anthropologist Nirmal Kumar Bose (1901-1972) who was a onetime secretary of Mahatma Gandhi and himself a committed nationalist. Bose in his earliest textbook entitled *Cultural Anthropology* published in 1929 made a novel attempt to show that the ancient Hindus in their scriptures classified the desires or needs of human beings into *artha*(economic), *kama*(sexual) and *moksha* (spiritual) almost in the fashion of later day functional anthropologists of the west. Bose probably held that the Hindus like the western anthropologists had their own scheme of understanding human nature and behavior which existed since long. Bose later proposed a theory in Indian anthropology entitled 'Hindu Method of Tribal Absorption' which helped to induce the tenets of Hindu Anthropology more effectively among the successive generation of anthropologists in India. The idea was first proposed in a paper in the Indian

Science Congress in 1941. Bose's proposal was based on his short field trips among the Juang tribal community of the Pal Lahara region of Orissa.

The essence of the theory was the tribals who had come into contact with their powerful caste Hindu neighbours gradually lost their own tribal identity and were given a low caste status within the Hindu fold. This idea became very popular and acceptable among the mainstream Indian anthropologists and Bose's paper turned into a compulsory text in the curriculum of Indian Anthropology. There was hardly any question or restudy in the Juang area to recheck Bose's proposition and the idea took deep roots in the minds of Indian anthropologists for generations. The university and college students of India who studied anthropology were taught the theory of 'Hindu Method of Tribal Absorption' as an established sociological fact. Bose's nationalist ideas, therefore was based on his anthropological views of vertical integration of society in which the Brahaminical ideals were at the topmost position. Sociologist Pradip Bose neatly summarized the essence of Nirmal Kumar Bose's Hindu nationalism in a brilliant manner

….Bose's depiction of Hinduism describes a process which vertically integrates various groups into a social structure administered and guided by Brahaminical ideals and values. The same vision of the absorptive power of Hinduism explains his argument that tribals were successfully assimilated into the Hindu fold. In a way, Bose like early Orientalist writers, projected Indian social history as essentially the history of Hinduism, or of the assimilation of non-Hindu groups into Hindu society (Bose, 2007:326).

Hinduisation of the tribals was accepted as an obvious and inevitable process which also helped to overlook any possibility of protest by the tribals against the Brahaminical imposition in any form. It also helped to hide the exploitation and subjugation of the tribals by the Hindus. Later, another theory proposed by M.N. Srinivas, one of the doyens of Indian Sociology and Social Anthropology reinforced the superiority of the Brahmins by showing that the lower castes always tried to imitate and emulate the life-style of the twice-born castes. This theory came to be known as 'Sanskritization' and also became an essential part of the college and university curriculum in Indian Anthropology and Sociology. A lone Indian sociologist Surendra Munshi criticized both N.K.Bose and M.N.Srinivas in his brilliant article 'Tribal absorption and Sanskritisation in Hindu society' published in the prestigious journal *Contributions to Indian Sociology* in unequivocal terms

My more serious criticism against Bose and Srinivas is that, lacking a general sociological theory of society and social change within the framework of which empirical data are to be collected, interpreted and transcended, they end up with the transformation of the object of study into a theory that has conditioned the study itself. In other words, in their concern with the ideal sphere, they are compelled to accept the ruling ideas of the society, past and

present, for providing them with the interpretation of the corresponding empirical reality studied by them. In sum, their analysis is ideological (Munshi, 1979:304).

Munshi, however did not deal with the inconsistencies and lack of fit between the data collected by N.K.Bose and the theoretical generalizations made by him in his Hindu method of tribal absorption paper.

Since the publication of the twin ideas, Indian Anthropology and Sociology revolved round 'Hindu method of Tribal absorption' and 'Sanskritization' and under the strong influence of Bose and Srinivas Anthropology and Sociology in India became oriented towards the study of Hindu religious and higher caste superiority. The path set by the doyens left little scope for a secular and materialist Indian Anthropology. The search for the counter movements against Hinduisation and ethnographies of anti-acculturative processes in Indian Anthropology and Sociology was marginalized to a large extent.

The Western scholars who came to India in the post-independence period too mainly studied caste and village level dynamics as well as Indian civilization under the framework of a high caste Hindu order which again added force to the models generated by Bose and Srinivas. The growth of a secular and national Anthropology in India was nipped in the bud. Indian anthropology became Hinduised, religious and at the same time westernized. Indian anthropologists forgot that the development of a national Anthropology also required a secular and indigenous approach to the problems of nation building. There were of course notable exceptions like Mckim Marriott's study on technological change and problems of overdevelopment in a village in Uttar Pradesh and F.G. Bailey's excellent paper on the peasant view of bad life in Orissa wherin the authors discussed about the problems of Indian peasantry from a purely secular perspective (Marriott, 1952:261-272; Bailey, 1971: 299-321).

The tenets of Hindu Anthropology are still haunting some of the Indian anthropologists. Thus Ajit Kumar Danda, former Director of the Anthropological Survey of India and the Chairman of the Indian National Confederation and Academy of Anthropologists(INCAA) claimed in one of the professional journals of the subject, *Journal of the Indian Anthropological Society* in 2017

One of the earliest *Smritis*: *Manava Dharmasharstra*(literally, *The Sacred Science of Man*), dates approximately 1350B.C….. is perhaps the most ancient text in Anthropology ever produced anywhere on the earth. It is claimed to be more than 1000 years older than the first application of the word Anthropology as such, which is believed to have been used for the first time by Aristotle (384-322B.C.) (Danda, 2017, p. 6).

Nowhere in his article entitled 'Anthropology in Contemporary India' could Danda discern a secular and nationalist stream of thought in the history

of Indian Anthropology. He had only seen anthropology as an 'academic discipline' (the westernized tradition) and a 'body of knowledge' (the ancient Hindu tradition) and thus failed to appreciate the secular, materialist and nationalist tradition of anthropological thought in India. Suffice it to say that in his 'body of knowledge' type of Anthropology, there was hardly any place for *the adivasis*, the *dalits* and the *lokayata* traditions of thought. I just give an example. The monumental work entitled *Lokayata: A Study of Ancient Indian Materialism* (1959). New Delhi: People's Publishing House, written by the famous Marxist philosopher Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya (1959) did not find a mention in Danda's long text on Indian philosophy. Danda, however, unlike his predecessor Jogendra Chandra Ghosh, did not use the term 'Hindu Anthropology' but his intention was clear, which was to push an upper caste and Sanskritic tradition of thought in the academia under the cover of Anthropology as a 'body of knowledge'!

The nationalist anthropologists

Let me now make an inventory of some of the remarkable scholars of the early Indian Anthropology who though worked during the colonial period tried to build up a nationalist tradition of anthropology. All of the following anthropologists were born in India in the 19th century and applied their knowledge in Anthropology and Sociology for the cause of the marginalized and exploited tribals and other underprivileged and deprived sections of the Indian population. Although, these anthropologists were influenced by the theory and methodology of the western anthropologists but they used the western knowledge for the cause of the exploited tribals and marginalized communities of India. Here is the list.

I present below a list of seven nationalist anthropologists who neither blindly imitated the colonial masters nor were they besieged by a 'Hindu Anthropology'. All of the following anthropologists were born in India in the 19th century and applied their knowledge in anthropology and sociology for the cause of the marginalized and exploited tribals and other underprivileged and deprived sections of the Indian population. Although, these anthropologists were influenced by the theory and methodology of the western anthropologists but they used the western knowledge for the cause of the exploited tribals and marginalized communities of India and also towards the materialist exposition of Indian social reality.

Sarat Chandra Roy (1871–1942) is regarded as the father of Indian Anthropology who was a practicing lawyer at Ranchi and began to do research on the society and culture of the tribes of the region not out of ethnological curiosity, administrative need or evangelical mission like the Europeans, but driven by his humanitarian passion to deliver justice to the exploited tribals. He was deeply moved by the plight of the *Munda, Oraon* and other tribal groups, who were subjected to the continued oppression by an apathetic colonial

administration and by a general contempt towards them in courts of law, as "upper-caste" Hindu lawyers had little knowledge of their customs, religions, customary laws and languages. His keen interest and sympathy of the oppressed tribals inspired him to study their culture and Roy always stood for their cause. His house at Ranchi had a set of rooms prepared for his tribal clients so that those who came from far-off villages could stay on while their cases were being fought in court. (Ghosh, 2008).

Bhupendranath Datta (1880 – 1961) who was the younger brother of the famous Hindu revivalist social reformer Swami Vivekananda, joined the anti-British struggle and sent to prison by the colonial government in India, and later he earned an M.A. in Sociology from Brown University, USA and a Ph.D. degree from the University of Hamburg in 1923. His books *Dialectics of Hindu Ritualism (*1950) and *Studies in Indian Social Polity* (1963) although published much later, can be regarded as pioneering works on Indian society and culture from a Marxist perspective. (Seehttps://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhupendranath_Datta).Datta presented his research paper on the political condition of colonial India to V.I. Lenin. Lenin gave a reply to Bhupedranath and requested him to collect data on the peasant organizations in India, which was very much appreciated by Datta. (https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1921/aug/26c.htm) His contributions have not yet been included in the curriculum in Indian Anthropology nor the critics of Indian Anthropology mentioned Datta's name in their critiques on the subject.

B.R. Ambedkar (1891-1956)**.** Ambedkar's views on caste are also neglected in the Anthropology and Sociology curricula in the Indian universities and colleges. Ambedkar is still a nobody in the syllabi of Anthropology in India. As early as 1916, B.R.Ambedkar made a novel attempt to explain the caste system in India in a paper read before the Anthropology Seminar of Alexander Goldenweizer (1880-1940) at Columbia University. Ambedkar was then 25 years old and a doctoral student in Anthropology. The full title of his paper was 'Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development. Starting from a fundamental anthropological finding of tribal clan exogamy Ambedkar had been able to show how caste endogamy was superimposed on the former. Secondly, his exposition of caste as an extreme form of class system as early as 1917 was also exemplary and this work of Ambedkar was never mentioned or referred by the world renowned scholars on caste in India.(Ambedkar, 1917). Take for example, G. S. Ghurye. In his famous book *Caste and Class in India* (1957) Ghurye mentioned the name of Ambedkar only once in page 226 and that too as 'the leader of the Scheduled Caste' although Ghurye discussed at length the importance of endogamy in characterizing the caste society in India (Guha, 2017).

Panchanan Mitra (1892 –1936) was a professor of anthropology in India. He was among the first Indians to study at Yale University and conducted several anthropological expeditions in India and abroad. He was the head of

the Department of Anthropology of the University of Calcutta and is most known for his pioneering book *Prehistoric India* as early as 1923. This book which was the first of its kind by any Indian scholar showed the antiquity, richness and diversity of the culture of humankind long before the advent of scripts. He is still the lone Indian anthropologist who wrote a book on the history of American Anthropology in 1930 (Bose, 2006, p.1439).

Biraja Sankar Guha (1894-1961) was the founder of the Anthropological Survey of India and was known to the students of Anthropology as a Physical Anthropologist who made a classification of the Indian population on the basis of their Physical features. Very few people know that he first undertook a thoroughgoing field survey on the social tensions among the refugees of the then East Pakistan for suggesting the government about how to understand their problem and improve their living conditions.

K.P. Chattopadhyay, (1897-1963) was not only the Head of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Calcutta but was also a life-long fighter for civil liberties movement in West Bengal before and after the independence of India. .His researches on the jute mill workers and the workers of the then Calcutta Corporation were pioneering in anthropology which broke away from the colonial anthropological tradition (Roy-Burman, 2000).

Tarak Chandra Das (1898-1964) made a marvelous empirical study, still unparallel in global and Indian Anthropology on the devastations caused by the Bengal famine of1943 during the colonial period. Das was such a courageous academic that he in his Presidential address of the Anthropology section of the Indian Science Congress in 1941 criticized the colonial government and the Christian missionaries for doing a lot of harm to the tribals of north east India. He had a vision for the application of Anthropology for human welfare but that was forgotten by the Indian anthropologists. The critics of Indian Anthropology also did not care to look at the socially relevant and responsible studies of T.C.Das (Guha, 2011).[1]

Nirmal Kumar Bose (1901-1972). Bose was a versatile personality in Indian anthropology. His multifaceted interest ranged from temple architecture and prehistory to transformations in tribal life under the impact of Hinduism and modernization. He was a professor at the University of Calcutta, Director of the Anthropological Survey of India and Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Government of India, and was also a dedicated social worker, a Gandhian political activist, and above all a prolific writer in Bengali and English on diverse topics in professional journals, popular magazines and newspapers (a complete bibliography containing the full references of Bengali and English articles of N.K. Bose and his short life sketch can be found in Ray 1974: 61-120). Baidyanath Saraswati viewed Nirmal Kumar Bose as the 'Gandhian anthropologist' (Sraswati 2003: 1-26) while R.S. Negi in his 7th N.K. Bose memorial lecture at Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts mentioned

that Raj Mohan Gandhi described Bose as a 'left leaning anthropologist' (Negi 2013: 1).

This list is not exhaustive. It only highlighted the missing strips of research in the history of Indian Anthropology, which has not yet become a tradition in the pedagogy of Indian Anthropology.

Sarat Chandra Roy: the first nationalist anthropologist in India

In an important book entitled *Anthropology in the East*, Patricia Uberoi, Nandini Sundar and Satish Deshpande in the subsection 'Nationalism and the Nation-State' of the 'Introduction' commented

We are yet to form a detailed picture of the ways in which nationalism exerted its influence in shaping Indian sociology and social anthropology. To be sure, almost every historical account of the discipline, whether it concerns an individual, an institution or the discipline at large, makes mention of this factor…. (Uberoi, Sundar & Deshpande, 2007, p. 38).

In the discussion that followed the above quoted opening statement, the authors admitted two important points, viz., the question of nationalism occupied a 'very wide spectrum' and second no Indian anthropologist or sociologist could oppose nationalism. I do not claim that I have been able to cover the whole range of the nationalist spectrum of Indian Anthropology but I could only discover some of the notable nationalist anthropologists and highlight their works in some detail just as a beginning.

Along with the colonial tradition, a nationalist trend in Indian Anthropology could also be discerned which was growing during the pre and post-independence periods in India and this trend was characterized by the works of the anthropologists who were socially committed and contributed to nation building through their analytical writings and research (Guha, 2018, p.8). These anthropologists learned the methodology of the discipline from the west but did not become blind followers of Europe and America and they also did not want to derive their anthropology from the religious scriptures of the ancient Hindus. Instead, they visualized an Indian character of anthropology which according to them could be used in nation building, a task which finally could not develop into full maturity by their own successors. Let me exemplify.

In 1938, the same year in which Jogendrachandra Ghosh wrote the article 'Hindu Anthropology' in a Calcutta University journal, one of the founding fathers of Indian Anthropology, Sarat Chandra Roy wrote an article entitled 'An Indian Outlook on Anthropology' in *Man*, the Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland. This article can be regarded as one of the pioneering ones in the nationalist tradition of Indian Anthropology. Because, in this article Roy not only critically evaluated the major theories developed in the then western Anthropology, like evolutionism,

diffusionism and functionalism with much skepticism but he also made a novel attempt to synthesize the ideas of ancient Indian philosophers with western anthropological concepts. According to Roy, the essence of Indian thought lay in the subjective process of 'sympathetic immersion' with other cultures and societies and this could be combined with the objective approach of western Anthropology. I quote Roy

Thus the objective methods of investigation of cultural data have to be helped out, not only by historical imagination and a background of historical and geographical facts, but also by a subjective process of self-forgetting absorption or meditation (*dhyana*) and *intuition* born of sympathetic immersion in, and self-identification with, the society under investigation.

The spread of this attitude by means of anthropological study can surely be a factor helping forward the large *unity-in-diversity-through-sympathy* that seems to an Indian mind to be the inner meaning of the process of human evolution, and the hope of a world perplexed by a multitude of *new* and violent contacts, notably between Eastern and Western civilizations (Roy, 1938, p.150).

One may note that Roy did not bring in any Hindu religious connotation to this method. For him, the Indian way of reaching the Universal through a sympathetic understanding of particular cultures through tolerance and love could build up a national character which would not try to shape the different peoples and cultures in a uniform pattern. In Roy's words

The better minds of India are now harking back to the old ideal of culture as a means of the progressive realization of the one Universal Self in all individual- and group-selves, and the consequent elevation or transformation of individual and 'national' character and conduct, through a spirit of universal love. The anthropological attitude while duly appreciating and fostering the varied self-expression of the Universal Spirit in different communities and countries, and not by any means seeking to mould them all in one universal racial or cultural pattern, is expected to help forward a synthesis of the past and the present, the old and the new, the East and the West (Ibid).

Sarat Chandra Roy's approach to develop a nationalist Anthropology in India was not a simple theoretical exercise. One should remember that he founded one of the oldest journal of Anthropology in India named *Man in India* in 1921. Roy's aim was to develop an Indian School of Anthropology. In an editorial of *Man in India* published in 1985 the then editor Surajit Chandra Sinha commented

Sarat Chandra Roy's enterprise in *Man in India* was motivated by the national needs of his times and his personal pride in nationalism. As for lines of scientific enquiry he also wanted Indian scholars to seek suggestions from Western scholars and so was adopted a policy.... It also transpires that practically all the Western and Indian pathfinders in the anthropology of India

have contributed to this journal. (Sinha, 1985, pp. iv-v).

Suffice it to say that Roy was not a blind nationalist. He was open to suggestions and contributions from western experts in the pages of *Man in India* and quite a good number of western anthropologists had contributed their original research findings on India in this pioneering journal. Sangeeta Dasgupta's perceptive comment in this regard is useful

Roy's long and varied career witnessed the rise of Victorian evolutionism, then diffusionism, and the eventual displacement of these by functionalism: at different points in time he applied all these concepts to the Indian context.At the same time, as a professed Hindu and nationalist Indian, particularly in the later phases of his career, Roy sought to methodologically establish an 'Indian view-point' for anthropology, believing that anthropology would help in the integration of national life (Dasgupta, 2007, p.144).

Roy's nationalism, despite his professed Hindu background was basically Indian.

The professional nationalist anthropologists: T.C.Das and B.S.Guha

In this section I would narrate two cases of the practice of nationalist anthropology by two professional Indian anthropologists. Our first anthropologist is T.C.Das of the University of Calcutta and the second is B.S.Guha, the founder Director of the Anthropological Survey of India.

Tarak Chandra Das

In 1941, T.C.Das delivered the presidential address in the Anthropology section of the Indian Science Congress. The lecture was a 28 page full-length paper entitled 'Cultural Anthropology in the Service of the Individual and the Nation'. In this lecture Das's major objective was to convince his readers about the immense potential of social-cultural anthropology as applied science for the overall development of the Indian population. In the five subsections of the lecture, Das dealt with the application of anthropology in almost all the important sectors of a modern nation, viz. trade, industry, agriculture, legislation, education, social service and administration. With the help of concrete empirical findings either from his own field experiences or from the ethnographic accounts of world renowned social anthropologists(e.g. Lucy Mair, Felix Keesing, Issac Schepera, H.I. Hogbin, B. Malinowski) Das justified the inclusion of anthropologists in policy making bodies and application of anthropological knowledge in every sphere of nation building(Das, 1941, pp. 1-29). In order to substantiate his arguments, Das had used rather unconventional sources of data, like Mahatma Gandhi's 1937 article published in *Harijan* about the adverse effects of the methods adopted by the Christian missionaries to convert the economically poorer classes of the Hindu population in different parts of India(Ibid, pp. 17-23).[2]

One of the most vital section in the Presidential Address of Das was on the role of anthropologists in building up a proper type of educational system suitable for the real needs of a particular community in the Indian context. The great anthropologist had the courage to write strong words regarding the colossal wastage of public money by the then colonial government for the establishment of schools among the tribal people. Let us hear in his words:

Education is perhaps rightly claimed as the panacea of all evils that befall mankind. But people differ in its definition, and naturally it has different types. There is one kind of education which uplifts the individual morally and intellectually and makes him fit for the struggle for existence. There is another kind of education which is intended for the exploitation of the so-called educated. There is a third type of education which the enthusiasts in their zeal for ameliorating the condition of the poor and the ill-fated impose upon them without considering their necessity or capacity. We have neither time nor inclination to discuss this point here but suffice it to say that much labour and more public money have been squandered and are still being squandered in imparting education which does neither suit the people nor help them to put a morsel of food into their mouth (Ibid, 1941, pp. 13-14).

Had he stopped here the above words would at best been regarded as a fine piece of journalistic remark on our educational system. But Das then narrated from his own rich field experiences in Manipur valley of North eastern India about the adverse social impact of the establishment of a network of primary schools and a few high English schools. I quote Das again

The two schools I saw used to teach their students how to read and write Methei besides a little arithmetic, which they managed to forget within a few months after their departure from the school. …… it is difficult to understand how high school education will help Manipuri agriculture or textile industry. The employments at the disposal of the State are very limited and the students who pass out of these schools every year will increase the number of unemployed as they no longer think of going back to their fields. During the first few years they will be idolized by the community but this will soon pass away when they will be looked upon as parasites and it is not impossible that they will be a source of trouble to the State (Ibid 1941, pp. 15-16).

Consider this insightful observation of Das in connection with the active participation of the English educated youth in the ethnic and secessionist movements that developed in this region of India after the independence. Das strongly advocated that in this type of situations the advice of the experienced and trained anthropologists is required in the Herculean task of educating the tribal and other underprivileged communities in a diverse country like India. Das probably was the first Indian anthropologist to advocate the indispensable role of social-cultural anthropology in nation building by combining micro-level field observations within a macro framework which is still lacking among

the majority of Indian anthropologists. We have a lot to learn from Das even today (Guha, 2011, pp. 245-265).

Biraja Sankar Guha

I will just take up two writings of B.S. Guha. The first is a short essay entitled 'The Role of Social Sciences in Nation Building' published in *Sociological Bulletin* in 1958. The second piece is a book titled 'Studies in Social Tensions among the Refugees from Eastern Pakistan' first published in 1954 and then in 1959 by the Government of India. The article on the role of social sciences in India is remarkable for its contemporary relevance.In this article Guha's major emphasis was on how to understand the nature of intergroup tension (he called it 'social tension') with the help of the social sciences. He proposed quite cogently that if one cannot understand the mechanisms and anatomy of conflicts between groups having different morals, values and religious practices, then just a superficial approach towards nation building in the name of 'melting pot theory'(as in USA) or the epithet of 'Unity in Diversity'(as in case of India) will simply fail. The role of social sciences, not the physical or biological sciences, was thought to be crucial at this point. R. K. Bhattacharya and D.P. Mukherjee missed this point of Guha (see, Bhattacharya and Sarkar, 1996, pp.1-13 & Mukherjee,1996, pp.35-82) while evaluating his contributions. I quote Guha

In the United States of America where the population is extremely heterogeneous and derived from many sources, with different ethnic and cultural traditions, such tensions and conflict have become very persistent in spite of the so called melting-pot theory and the ideal of inter-group tolerance, not merely as an ethical virtue but as a political necessity (Guha,1958,p. 149).

In the same article Guha expressed his displeasure in giving 'undue weightage' to the superficial differences in dress, hairstyle and food habits among Indian populations. According to him the 'process of Indianization based on the underlying unifying forces of history, traditions and common values' should have been adopted. (Guha, 1958, p.150).Guha viewed the study of group relationships, conflict as well as tension among the human groups as the most important areas in nation building and social sciences according to him had a great role to play in this mighty task. For Guha, the importance of social sciences was the greatest in solving the problems arising out of conflict and tension and he urged that the Governments should keep substantial budgetary allocation for the social sciences towards this end.

The second sociological research of Guha, which I would discuss now was a book which was the result of team work. In this book Guha had taken up the issues he outlined in his article on the role of the social sciences in nation building. This book titled *Studies in Social Tensions among the Refugees from Eastern Pakistan* (1959) was based on intensive fieldwork done by an interdisciplinary team of researchers. Most surprisingly, virtually no discussion,

let alone evaluation of this book had been done by the critics of Indian Anthropology and by the admirers of Guha. Complete absence and/or inadequate treatment of B.S.Guha's book on social tension characterized the literature of Indian anthropology and sociology. I will now discuss Guha's arguments and analysis of the findings depicted by the authors in the different chapters of the book.

The book is basically a solid factual report and analyses of socio-economic, cultural and psychological data collected by a team of trained anthropologists and psychologists on the refugees who came from the then East Pakistan to West Bengal under the overall supervision of B.S.Guha. In his 'General Introduction' Guha first justified his selection of two sample areas of refugee resettlement colonies which he finalized in consultation with Gardener Murphy who was selected by the UNESCO as Consultant to Govt. of India in the project to understand the underlying causes of social tension in India. After this Guha put the survey in the wider political scenario of the country and mentioned in unequivocal terms the evil effects of the earlier 'divide and rule' policy of the British Government as well as the sectarian approach of the Muslim League Government of the then Bengal, which paved the way towards 'engineered' communal riots that led to large scale displacement of the Hindus from the then East Pakistan (Guha, 1959: viii). While searching the reasons behind the evacuation of the Hindus Guha based his arguments not on any sociological theory but on the empirical findings of his multidisciplinary team of fieldworkers. Therefore, according to him

The loss of prestige and social status which the Hindu community previously enjoyed, and the realisation of the futility of regaining it now or in the near future was a far more potent factor in creating the feeling of frustration than the loss in the economic sphere (Ibid).

In the subsequent pages of the 'Introduction' Guha went on to analyse the data on the 'areas of tension' among the Hindu refugees which were collected by his research team members through the use of social anthropological and psychological methods. Guha here made an excellent sociological analysis by putting the areas of social tension in an hierarchical and dynamic form. For Guha his data led him show how the areas of tension played their respective roles and how the affected members of the community shifted their grievance and aggression from one area of tension to another. Like a true social anthropologist Guha also ventured into the variation in the social tension at the level of age, sex and socio-political situation. Another interesting explanation of B.S.Guha was on changing authority structure of the traditional Hindu joint family and the worsening of the intra-family relationships among the refugees but here also he made a comparative interpretation of the two refugee settlements which were selected by him for the study. In one place where people depended on the governmental aid and assistance the traditional authority structure of the family was found to be

stronger than in the refugee colony where the uprooted people had to struggle harder to get them resettled (Ibid, 1959, pp.xi-xii). By and large what was most interesting to observe was Guha's technique of explaining such a complex thing like social tension. All through, he, like a seasoned sociologist or social anthropologist attacked the problem from a relational and dynamic angle without falling in the trap of a static view of society. While providing economic or psychological explanations he also did not take recourse to either Freudian or Marxian models. Finally, and what was really several steps ahead in his time Guha recommended a participatory and nationalist model for the resettlement of the refugees. For him, the social tension between the refugees and the government mainly arose owing to the fact that they were treated as 'outsiders' from the governmental side. The refugees should be given the responsibility of managing their own resettlement camps so that they could regain their self-respect. This was the view of Biraja Sankar Guha whom I would like to regard a one of the pioneering social scientists of the post-independence India.

I will end by quoting the last line from the Guha's 'Introduction' from the book on Social Tensions

Once their displaced energies are canalised into well-directed productive sources, there is every reason to hope, that instead of a burden and a clog, the refugees will turn out to be useful participants in the march of progress of this country (Ibid. 1959: xiii).

It is an irony that both the critics and admirers of Indian Anthropology during the post-colonial period missed the emerging spirit of a nationalist anthropology in the writings of B.S.Guha.

B.R.Ambedkar as a nationalist anthropologist

In this section I will narrate the contributions of B.R.Ambedkar which not only differed markedly from N.K. Bose but also may be viewed from a nationalist perspective.

As early as 1916 B.R.Ambedkar made a novel attempt to explain the caste system in India in a paper read before the Anthropology Seminar of Alexander Goldenweizer (1880-1940) at Columbia University. Ambedkar was then 25 years and a doctoral student in Anthropology. The full title of his paper was 'Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development'. It was an 18 page paper which contained a pure and detached academic exercise on the nature of the caste system in India and nowhere in the paper have we found any comment or observation from the personal experiences of the author. It was full of critical scholarship on the then existing anthropological and sociological literature on caste in a lucid and argumentative fashion. In the first part of the paper Ambedkar dealt with the works of four famous scholars like Emile Senart(1847-1928), John Nesfield (1836-1919), S.V.Ketkar (1884 –

1937) and H.H.Risley (1851-1911) and without being biased towards these well-known authorities, he pointed out the shortcomings of all these scholars in understanding the essential feature of the caste system. But his method of criticism was quite interesting. While criticizing the authorities Ambedkar did not fail to observe the positive aspects of their contributions. In his own words

To review these definitions is of great importance for our purpose. It will be noticed that taken individually the definitions of three of the writers include too much or too little: none is complete or correct by itself and all have missed the central point in the mechanism of the Caste system. Their mistake lies in trying to define caste as an isolated unit by itself, and not as a group within, and with definite relations to, the system of caste as a whole. Yet collectively all of them are complementary to one another, each one emphasising what has been obscured in the other [Ambedkar (1917): 1979:7].

Looking at caste as a system in which each *jati* is part of the whole was definitely a step forward in social and cultural anthropology as early as 1917 and Ambedkar was not ready to accept caste system as a system of 'division of labour' which minimized competition among occupational groups. For him caste system is a division among the laboring classes rather than division of labour. A closer reading of this article reveals that although in the milieu of Boasians at Columbia Ambedkar used the Morganian social evolutionary methodology to approach the basic principle behind the caste system. He observed that marriage outside one's own immediate kin-group represented through clan exogamy was the fundamental and universal feature of human society and in India the state of 'tribal exogamy' survived even in the stages of civilization whereas in the modern world this is no more the rule. Let me quote from the original

With the growth of history, however, exogamy has lost its efficacy, and excepting the nearest blood-kins, there is usually no social bar restricting the field of marriage. But regarding the peoples of India the law of exogamy is a positive injunction even today. Indian society still savours of the clan system, even though there are no clans; and this can be easily seen from the law of matrimony which centres round the principle of exogamy, for it is not that Sapindas (blood-kins) cannot marry, but a marriage even between Sagotras (of the same class) is regarded as a sacrilege [Ibid (1917): 1979:9].

This is the logical foundation based on which Ambedkar advanced his arguments to elucidate the caste system. Because, he cogently argued that since in India exogamy was the stronger rule so endogamy must have been foreign to the country. But then how caste system, which had to survive on endogamy, could come into place in India? The way Ambedkar answered this anomaly is the most interesting part of this original paper. Before going into the details let me quote again

Nothing is therefore more important for you to remember than the fact that endogamy is foreign to the people of India. The various Gotras of India are and have been exogamous: so are the other groups with totemic organization. It is no exaggeration to say that with the people of India exogamy is a creed and none dare infringe it, so much so that, in spite of the endogamy of the Castes within them, exogamy is strictly observed and that there are more rigorous penalties for violating exogamy than there are for violating endogamy. ….. Consequently in the final analysis creation of Castes, so far as India is concerned, means the superposition of endogamy on exogamy [Ibid (1917): 1979:9].

Next to this analysis Ambedkar went on to explain how some of the social groups in ancient India which were classes turned into enclosed endogamous groups probably to ensure the privileges which they accrued out of the ancient class system.According to Ambedkar, since the Brahmin and the Kshtriyas were the most privileged classes it was these classes who began to enclose themselves to secure their privileges by becoming endogamous. Later other groups also emulated the higher classes and the system spread over wider regions. So classes in India were forerunner to castes, and castes according to Ambedkar were enclosed classes characterized by endogamy. I quote Ambedkar

We shall be well advised to recall at the outset that the Hindu society, in common with other societies, was composed of classes and the earliest known are (1) the Brahmins or the priestly class; (2) the Kshatriya, or the military class; (3) the Vaishya, or the merchant class; and (4) the Shudra, or the artisan and menial class. Particular attention has to be paid to the fact that this was essentially a class system, in which individuals, when qualified, could change their class, and therefore classes did change their personnel. At some time in the history of the Hindus, the priestly class socially detached itself from the rest of the body of people and through a closed-door policy became a caste by itself . The other classes being subject to the law of social division of labour underwent differentiation, some into large, others into very minute, groups…….The question we have to answer in this connection is: Why did these sub-divisions or classes, if you please, industrial, religious or otherwise, become self-enclosed or endogamous? My answer is because the Brahmins were so. Endogamy or the closed-door system, was a fashion in the Hindu society, and as it had originated from the Brahmin caste it was whole-heartedly imitated by all the non-Brahmin sub-divisions or classes, who, in their turn, became endogamous castes. It is “the infection of imitation” that caught all these sub-divisions on their onward march of differentiation and has turned them into castes (Ibid: 17-18).

Starting from a fundamental anthropological finding of tribal clan exogamy Ambedkar had been able to show how caste endogamy was superimposed on the former. Secondly, his exposition of caste as an extreme

form of class system as early as 1917 was also exemplary and this work of Ambedkar was never mentioned or referred by the world renowned scholars on caste in India. Take for example, G. S. Ghurye. In his famous book *Caste and Class in India* (1957) Ghurye mentioned the name of Ambedkar only once in page 226 and that too as 'the leader of the Scheduled Caste' although Ghurye discussed at length the importance of endogamy in characterizing the caste society in India. The same kind of omission of the anthropological contributions of B.R.Ambedkar could also be observed in the writings of Nirmal Kumar Bose.

In lieu of a conclusion

The colonial critique of Indian anthropology (Sinha, Basu and Béteille) and the proponents of Hindu Anthropology (Ghosh, Bose and Danda) ignored the materialistic, socially committed, secular and nationalist trends of Indian anthropology which was growing in the hands of some remarkable anthropologists before and after independence of the country. The critics have only followed the smart way to criticize the pioneers instead of studying the socially committed works of the later and this was one of the reasons that Indian anthropologists failed to honour their nationalist predecessors and depended more on the wisdom of the Western scholars. Surajit Sinha, for example, held a critical view on the growth of Indian anthropology in the post-independence period which was largely pessimistic. Sinha viewed Indian anthropology as 'Western apprentice' and in the process he never made any attempt to search for the nationalist trends in Indian anthropology although he found some of his teachers, for example N.K.Bose and T.C.Das, had independent ideas. But Sinha never attempted to make any comprehensive and overall review of Indian anthropology from a historical perspective. Had he done so, he would have found remarkable scholars of the early Indian anthropology who though worked during the colonial period tried to build up a nationalist tradition of anthropology. Sinha sensed their existence but missed them badly. The new discourse in search of a nationalist trend in Indian anthropology, therefore, is urgently needed in the historiography of the discipline.

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Notes

1. Interestingly, T.C.Das's obituary was not published in any journal of Anthropology in India. Only Sociological Bulletin published the obituary of this great nationalist anthropologist. (Sociological Bulletin, 1964)

2. N.K. Bose's paper entitled 'Hindu Method of Tribal Absorption' was presented as a lecture in the same Science Congress of 1941 in which T.C. Das delivered *the* presidential Address. Bose's lecture was later published in the journal *Science and Culture* and in course of time, became famous in Indian Anthropology while Das's lecture dealing with the role of anthropology in solving the burning and practical problems of nation building went into oblivion among the anthropologists in India.

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S. N. Ratha

TRIBE: USE AND MISUSE OF THE TERM

Abstract

Eco-diversity and a forest habitat are believed to be the basis of human evolution. For more than two million years, beginning in early Pleistocene, Man lived in the forest. Only about ten thousand years ago, humans began to distance themselves from the forest, when they learnt tending plants (agriculture) and animals (stock-breeding). In certain parts of the world, the transformation of the forest habitat to the non-forest habitat was complete, before its documentation. However, in many other parts of the world, the process still continues. The residual population, clinging to the forest habitats, is called tribe, a term coined by the Europeans for non-European communities.

In Bharat, however, every endogamous social group, including those of the non-Hindu, is called a jati. In no vernacular of our country, there existed a term equivalent to tribe. The terms, now used are supposed to be equivalent to the English word 'tribe'.

I

The Indian society, to begin with was characterized by a four-fold division (Rv. X.90.12), termed as the *varnashrama*. The *varnas* were Bramhana, Ksatriya, Vaisya and Sudra. Initially and ideally, the *varnas* were not based upon birth but upon the quality and calling of the individual (*guna* and *karma*: Bhagavat Geeta IV.12). Down the corridors of time, the *varna* scheme was consolidated into endogamous sections of functionally interdependent groups in the society; and inter-marriage between the different *varnas* lowered the status of the off-springs and led to the formation of new endogamous divisions. The new ones were called s*ankaravarna*. Further inter-marriages between *varnas* and the sankaravarnas and between the *sankarvarnas* led to the formation of new *sankaravarnas* (Manu X). In Manu's scheme all such social formations, beyond the four *varnas*, include what in contemporary times have come to be known as *jati* or Castes, *Scheduled Castes* and *Scheduled Tribes* in Indian English. By the time the Indian society was exposed to the Europeans, it was constituted of innumerable *jatis*. The Portuguese called them 'casta'.

S. N. RATHA, Former Professor of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Sambalpur University, Burla, Odisha, E-mail: snratha@rediffmail.com

II

In the *Census,* initiated in 1881, the Indian population was divided into two 'social types', tribes and castes, by which time the term 'tribe' was already in vogue in Europe to designate non-European communities of Africa, Asia, Australia and the Americas. The Europeans used the term for all those communities they looked down upon as inferior and less civilized, an attitude recurrent in the 19th century and early 20th century Anthropological literature parading evolutionism. The tribal society is supposed to represent a stage in the evolution of society from primitive bands to nation states (Service 1962: 110-42)). Even Bailey's conceptualization of tribe-caste continuum (1961: 7-19) is an indirect acceptance of the evolutionary dogma in the specific context of the Indian society. However, *if Manu's authority on social formations in India is accepted, the tribes are to be taken as genetic extensions of the varnas. Thus the Indian tribal societies are not the antecedent stages of civilization but its product.*

III

The terms, caste and tribe became handy for the colonial administrators to 'divide and rule' India. Beginning in 1918, nine Orders/Notifications were issued in different times till 1936 listing the 'Hill Tribes' and 'Backward Tribes.' Notwithstanding such categorization, the record of land rights (R.O.R) in India continued to use the term *jati* to indicate all Indian social types. All communities - castes, tribes, even the Muslims and Christians - are recorded as 'jati'. The constitution Pundits of post British India stuck to the use of the term tribe to set aside a section of India's population to be scheduled under Article 342 of the Constitution, by the President. Article 365 (25) described "Scheduled Tribes…" (the compound term first appeared here) as "…such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be scheduled for the purpose of this Constitution". Article 342 prescribes the procedure to be followed in the matter of specification of *Scheduled Tribes*. The indicators used by the Government of India to classify communities under 'Scheduled Tribes' are 'primitive traits, distinctive culture, geographical location, shy of external contact and backwardness'. These criteria do not figure in the constitution but have come to be accepted following the definitions coming down from the 1931 *Census* coined by Hutton, a Cambridge trained anthropologist, the report of the first *Backward Classes Commission* 1955 (Chairman Kaka Kalelkar), the *Advisory Committee on Revision of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe List* 1965 (Lokur Committee), and the *Joint Committee of the Parliament on the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Order* (Amendment) Bill 1967 and *Chanda Committee* 1969.

IV

From a run through of some textbook definitions, what emerges as an

ideal tribe or tribal formation is that it is a social group of a simple uncomplicated kind consisting of a collection of families of common origin or derivation or descent and custom, possessing a distinctive language or dialect and culture, a name and a definite territory, engaged in joint activities for some common purpose.

Some have also used negative descriptors, such as, absence of any occupational specialization (Risley 1901: 22), lack of state organization, absence of classes and literacy (Steward 1954:44), non-involvement in cash economy, little supra-village political organization, non-adherence to any great religion (Moerman 1974: 54), limited cultural elaboration and non-existence of central regulative political organization (Sahlins 1968) to identify tribes.

Tribal societies are said to be inadequately organized to bear an elaborate cultural development, where force is held in severalty and people living in a perpetual state of fear from violence (a situation described as ' Warre' by Shalins borrowing the term and the concept from Hobbes), where separate institutions do not exist to control economic, social and religious activities, where all institutions revolve around the wisdom of peace making; where all rituals, economic transactions and kinship are expressions of reciprocity, friendliness, avoidance of unfriendly situations, and where 'gain' is measured in terms of social advantages rather than material benefits (Sahlins ibid).

Based upon these indicators singly, severally, or in some combination, though one can point at some human aggregates as tribes, it does not necessarily lead to assume a 'tribal stage' "to appear in the transit from a single settlement with embedded political organization to state structured society" and goes on to add "that most tribes seem to be secondary phenomenon in a very specific sense: they well be the product of processes stimulated by the appearance of relatively highly organized societies amidst other societies which are organized much more simply." Thus "tribalism can be viewed as a reaction to the formation of a complex political structure rather than a necessary preliminary stage in its evolution" (Fried ibid: 170).

There is no theoretical need for a tribal stage in the evolution of political organization. 'Tribalism' is an evolutionary *cul-de-sac*, "part of a spasmodic cycle that in and itself lacks the institutional raw material capable of leading to more complex forms of polity" (ibid: 173). Tribal groups are not social organizations, Fried asserts, "whose integrity recedes into a remote past"; and "that there are clues indicating that the tribalism displayed, is reaction to more recent events and conditions"; and "that tribalism can be made to play a major political role in a real present, is not a modern discovery. Long before recent European colonialism, not to say neocolonialism, the Chinese, and the expanding state societies had grasped the essentials of divide and rule" (ibid: 173).

V

India is exposed to multiple and varied historical forces over several millennia. It is not hard to find social formations conforming to the indicators used in circumscribing tribal societies. But surfacing communities as distinct social types and naming them as tribes in India begins with the European colonialism.

The *Government of India* issued nine orders listing various communities in various states under the specified Schedule since 6.9. 1950. With the introduction of *Tribal Sub-plan* (*TSP*) strategy for integrated development of the *Scheduled Tribes* in 1975, some tribes or parts thereof have been identified as *Primitive Tribal Groups* (*PTG*). Renamed a Vulnerable Tribal Groups .These groups are identified for their pre-agricultural level of technology, low level of literacy, small, stagnant or diminishing population, remote and isolated habitat, distinct cultural and ethnic individuality and specialized avocation, if any. The Government of India fixed these criteria through an administrative order (G.O.I 1990: 146 and 153). Now, such groups number 75, and more are likely to be added.

Thus in India, "… tribe is an administrative and political concept" (Singh 1994). *All* communities, irrespective of their socio-economic status, have been declared as tribes in Kinnaur, Jaunasar- Bawar, Pangwal and Ladakh (except one community). In common parlance, a tribe is one that which is not a caste, i.e., an individual is a member of some society by virtue of not being a member of other specific societies. "In South East Asia…" observes Moerman (1974: 54), "…a society is member of a tribal set by virtue of not being a member of the civilized set."

In a publication brought out by the *Government of India* in 1998 for 'official use only' 608 communities are listed as *Scheduled Tribes* in an alphabetical order (G.O.I 1998:30-45).In the meantime some more communities have found place in the Schedule. It appears to be an ever-growing list, and many more communities are likely to be added. The Constitution (Article 46) imposes the responsibility of improving the quality of life of the *Scheduled Tribes* on the Union and the State Governments. Therefore, identifying communities fit enough to be 'scheduled', has come to become a permanent administrative exercise; and tribal development has become a major, increasingly more important component of the nation's *Five-Year-Plans*

Special privileges are bestowed on the scheduled communities in the form of reservation in educational institutions, state legislatures, and the Union parliament, scholarships, employment and promotions in government and public undertakings. Areas of tribal concentration are set aside (V and VI *Schedule* of the Constitution) as *Scheduled Areas* for special administrative and infrastructure inputs. These advantages motivate more and more communities to claim scheduled status. Thus the constitution initiated a trend

in creating a vested interest in the scheduled status. The reservations, initially supposed to be withdrawn after ten years, continue till today, being extended at the expiry of every ten years. Such extensions through amendments to the constitution have almost become a permanent feature of the constitution in spite of the caution issued by the *Commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes* several years back (X Report- 1960-61, Part-1, p. 342). He wrote, "It is high time to ensure that backwardness does not reach a stage of becoming vested interest with some beneficiaries who are enjoying and monopolizing to themselves the special privileges granted to the backward classes under the excuse of safeguards provided for them in the constitution."

No Indian language had a word in its vocabulary synonymous with the English word 'tribe.' Now several terms, often with different meanings, are in use. For example, in Odia, it is 'Adivasi' (early inhabitants); in Assamese it is 'Janajati' (the term defies translation into English); in Telugu it is 'Girijana' (hill people); and in Hindi it is 'Adimjati' (early jati). Of late, another controversial term has surfaced-'the indigenous people.'

VI

Anthropologists in India also do not project a unified view on the concept of the tribal society. While some, like T. B. Naik hold tribal society completely different from caste society, others, like G. S. Ghurye do not find any difference between the two; Bailey takes a stand between these two extremes (ibid: 11). Thus in India, there is a great deal of confusion in conceptualizing tribal society. To add to this confusion some tribal communities claim *varna* status- some as Brahman, some Ksatriya, some Vaisya and some Sudra (Singh ibid: 7); and some castes claim tribal status. In a nation-wide study of the communities undertaken by the *Anthropological Survey,* it is noted that 11.80 per cent among the tribal communities claim *varna* status. 8.30 per cent claim Ksatriya status, 0.90 per cent Brahman status and 7.50 percent Sudra status. For example, the Gaddi and the Pangwala of Himachal Pradesh and the Kagaty of Sikkim and West Bengal claim Brahman status; whereas the Jaunsari tribes claim Vaisya status (Singh ibid: 7). The same study reports that 171 (26.90%0 tribal communities perceive their status as 'high', 298(46.90%) as "middle' and 161(25.30%) as 'low'. Among the non-tribal communities, 11.20 per cent perceive the tribal social status as 'high', 39.20 as 'middle' and 49.40 per cent as 'low'.

At the moment, a community named Durua in Koraput, having all the qualities of a *Primitive Tribal Group*, is yet to be scheduled (Rath 2004). Several members of a non-scheduled community named Rona are surreptitiously changing their community nomenclature to Kotia, a scheduled community, and an innovative method of gaining the Scheduled Tribe status.

Those whose tribal identity is already established are innovating methods to establish distinct identities. "In their quest for a distinct identity",

writes Roy Burman, "the tribal peoples created scripts for and literature in their languages. Today there are at least 10,000 publications including text-books. Intellectuals among them have brought out analytical history of their social processes, languages and literature. They raise their voices against display of their culture objects in museums without relating the same to their social, cultural, economic, historical and ecological contexts. There is a growing tendency to claim their religions as distinct spiritual calls. 5 per cent of the tribal population returned their religion by the name of their respective tribes or by names adopted by their respective tribes in 1981 census. In 1991 the corresponding figure, was about 10 per cent" (Roy Burman 1995: 10).

Some tribal communities are seen to be on war path to safeguard the privacy of their habitats, for exclusive access, control and management of their resources, to maintain the traditional roles and role models in their socio-economic set-up in their interactions with the government and other agencies asserting their power at all levels. The recent governmental step of extending the provisions of the Panchayati Raj to tribal area is looked upon as historic landmark in the fulfilment of tribal aspirations. There are advantages attached to tribal status in India.

VII

It is alleged that the "word tribe lacked sociological vigor from its very inception" and that it is "the single most egregious case of meaninglessness in anthropological vocabulary", and "figures prominently on the list of putative technical terms ranked in order of degree of ambiguity" as alleged by Fried (1967: 154). The relevance of the concepts of tribe and the tribal society to anthropology and its practitioners is considerably denuded. In India, however, the term *Scheduled Tribe* is unlikely to become obsolete in Indian English vocabulary and administrative jargon, or non-functional in Indian socio-political dynamics in any predictable future.

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Ravindra K. Jain

A CRISIS OF CONSCIOUSNESS: DISCOURSE BEYOND CASTE AND COMMUNALISM

Abstract

This article outlines an anthropological exploration of the evolution of individual and social consciousness in modern India mediated by religious and political persuasions.

The colonial consciousness carried the signature of sanskritization and westernization but it was comprehensively encompassed by Orientalism which prevented an indigenous national conceptualization of 'people' (jana). There were also at play religious influences and political delimitations. During the post-colonial conjuncture this fraught consciousness, aided and abetted by social structural factors, crystallized into dominating regional sub-types. The article concludes with a brief and programmatic examination of its northern, southern and western manifestations indexing incipient changes.

Keywords: *colonial and post-colonial conjunctures; consciousness: individual. social, national; religious and political delimitations; loyalty and patriotism; abortive rebellions; regional subtypes*

On the first page of *Rabindra Rachanabali (*The Collected Works of Rabindranath Tagore) a distinction is posited between *mrinmaya* (of mud, soil, land, territory) and *chinmaya* (of consciousness) in civilization. In redefining what have been called sanskritization and westernization as the impact of British colonialism on Indian society (M.N. Srinivas's Social Change in Modern India), the distinction between geography and territory on the one hand and consciousness, on the other, has been totally obscured. Consequently, the interplay of these two dimensions as affecting nationalism via Orientalism in the melange between sanskritization and westernization, as the twin processes of social mobility and change in Indian society, needs to be understood in its totality.

Let me first consider the thesis of the encompassment of Indian westernization within Orientalism. The bifocality of materiality and

RAVINDRA K. JAIN, Formerly Professor Sociology and Social Anthropology, Jawahar Lal Nehru University and Formerly Lecturer, Social Anthropology, Oxford University, United Kingdom

conscientization in Indian westernization is marked by military domination and trade on the one side and the impact of Christianity, on the other. While the former copula (military domination and trade) is well captured even in the global history of humankind (see, Yuval Noah Harari's Sapiens), the impact of Christian proselytization is completely undermined. And it is precisely in this respect that the declamation of Protestantism as public religion has led to a profound effect on Indian society (see, Joel Lee's Deceptive Majority) through the conjoint operation of westernization and sanskritization. Here I am assuming, not incorrectly, I suppose, that the 'Hinduism' so-called and its various *panth* ('pathways' to use a felicitous expression of T.N. Madan's) were, before the impact of declamatory Protestantism , individualistic and segmented rather than congregational and public. What the combination of congregational/ public religious consciousness and its operation in society (wearing one's religion on the sleeve) and the spectre of material and martial domination did was to create circles of elite exclusivity in regional political systems of India. Here I allude to the typical north Indian small multi-caste regions struggling to define themselves as wider religion-based (temple oriented) collectivities (see Sudipta Kaviraj's The Imaginary Institutions of India). What these little kingdoms and zamindaries ended up was as spaces of elite dominance and exclusivity. Public religion (or *sarvajanin* in Sanskrit and in local vernacular usage) was the formation that increasingly occupied the social space. Arya Samaj is an early example of this development and, to take a leap into the present conjuncture, the colossal statutory in public places, a contemporary one.

Exclusivity of the elite, as proto-untouchability in its extreme form, is the combined outgrowth of an Orientalism-induced westernization and the *savarna*-based sanskritization in society. The hierarchical distinctions, cutting across rural and urban, north and the south of India are the products of this dynamic. Consciousness or awareness (*chetna*) is the heart of the matter. The White-man Orientalist never even recognized the natives as 'people' (*jana*) (See, Ravindra K. Jain's Introduction in Text and Context: The Social Anthropology of Tradition). And the real 'people' never had 'religion-wise' the instinct of a collectivity to stand up to the adversary. Interestingly enough while the 'foreigner' Muslim was amalgamated ambidextrously in the category 'native', the White-man Christian stood apart though as the progenitor of a public consciousness he provided the model of elite exclusivity to the native.

Here we wish to refer to the fusion between the colonial White Man's Burden and the post-colonial "White Media's Burden" (see, Tariq Mansoor, in Indian Express, dated 21 January 2023), the latter referring to what the author regards as a wilful caricature of Prime Minister Modi in a two-part BBC documentary in relation to the persecution of Muslims in the Gujarat riots of 2002. From the viewpoint of contemporary history, then, the colonialists' game of driving a wedge between the Hindu and the Muslim communities and

installing it as a template in the "peoples" consciousness seems to have succeeded (see, Romila Thapar, in The Wire, dated 20 January 2023). An interesting by-product has been a division in the consciousness of the Muslim community itself vis-a-vis the present ruling dispensation and a parallel schism in the Hindu 'community'. The ambidextrousness of the Indian Muslims is both a cause and a consequence of the fusion referred to above. One is reminded of a characterization of the Indian Muslims by the sociologist A.K. Saran who likened them to the Shiva holding poison in the throat (Nilakantha) neither able to gulp it (proto-Hinduism) down nor excoriate it, unlike in this respect the converts to Islam in Indonesia, for example. (anecdote courtesy T.N. Madan). A way out of this impasse is (in the opinion of a substantial body of intellectuals in India) for the two 'communities'- Hindu and Muslim- to be self-critical rather than laying great store by the critique of each by the other, and of either by a foreign body representing the 'developed' world.

As regards the dominated, the 'native', we find in their consciousness a confluence of loyalty and patriotism (*'jus raja tas praja,'* as the ruler so the subjects), culminating in our own times into apologetic patriotism (e.g., Gandhi and Nehru) or, in the Hindi literary genre, into apologetic romanticism (see, for example, Akshaya Mukul's Many Lives of Agyeya).The confluence of loyalty and patriotism is a feature of 'kisan' (big landlords, smaller farmers and landless labourers—all attached to the land as agriculturists) behaviour as well. This category constitutes a very large proportion of the Indian population (nearly 40%) and it would be an oversimplification to reduce all their mutual interactions to the patron-client category. Here the dynamics of role-model enculturation by the lower stratum of the life-style of the higher strata (of this more a little later) seems operative. As a recent field-study of agriculturists on the Bengal-Bihar border shows (to quote from a review of the book by Harsh Mander); "In what he (the author) calls Rahimpur in Malda, he finds the entrenched landlords make common cause with the landless workers against the labour-hiring peasant class. In the panchayat he calls Sargana in Anaria, by contrast, it is the landless and peasants who join forces against the entrenched landlords. He finds that in self-identification, the categories of peasant and farmer are problematic, fluid, slippery; not surprisingly when two-thirds of all marginal, small and medium farmers in Rahimpur, for instance, derive their income mainly from off-farm work.. (He) does not find classes in fixed relationship of adversity or alliance; contentious and collaborative relations exist simultaneously."(Review of Indrajit Roy, *Politics of the Poor: Negotiating Democracy in Contemporary India*, Cambridge University Press, 2018, The Wire, 6 August 2021). In nationalist politics, the apogee of apologetic patriotism was Veer Savarkar. All we are saying is that, suspiciously, there exists a continuum regarding national consciousness between his and the Gandhi/Nehru brand. And that this pattern conforms with the grass-roots peasant life as well. This should by no means be construed as a blanket damnation of the Gandhian and Nehruvian leadership in the freedom movement and, much

less, as the apologists for the present ruling dispensation would have it, a valorization of violent native confrontation with colonial rule in India, viz., the hagiography of Subhas Chandra Bose and Bhagat Singh. (For a subtle analysis of the paralysis of the Gandhian non-violent confrontation itself,(see Jyotirmaya Sharma's *Elusive Non Violence*).

Programmatically, we propose to project the aforesaid argument temporally and spatially. Upholding the perspective of contemporary history, we look at two conjunctures: the colonial and immediately post-colonial era (the movement of freedom struggle and the Nehruvian years) and the post-ltberalization era (post-1991 years of structural reforms and the rise of right-wing politics). Spatially, we would compare and contrast two sub-types of the paradigm, namely, north India and south India with Bengal and Tamil Nadu (then the Madras Presidency) as case-studies. In what follows we would only touch upon the pre-history, as it were, of the two subtypes. Cutting across the two subtypes one may generalize for the macro-structure of Indian society and posit a continuity between the colonial and post-colonial conjunctures. This macro-structure can be summed up in three principles: First, there is a continuing relationship and interaction between proximate generations. Second, the ties of friendship and neighbourliness figure in continuous "ordinary"(See, Veena Das, *Textures of the Ordinary)* interactions. Three, as regards the socio-economic strata there is the process of role model enculturation by the lower from the higher stratum. We find that in varying degrees these three principles are operative in the elite-dominated and elite-emulated hierarchical structure of Indian society.

To come to the prehistory, so to speak, of our aforementioned paradigm, the uneasy blend of sanskritization and westernization in the 19th century Bengal is well captured in the novels of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-1894) which Sudipta Kaviraj has aptly summarized as "the unhappy consciousness". To generalize it along the hinterland of north India, we find the imperfectly religion-based rebellion of 1857 (on which a little more anon), and in our own times, with Bengal as the leitmotif, the Durga Puja festival (more carniivalesque than religious) all through the Indo-Gangetic plain. One should also note variations such as the Chhath puja in Bihar tending towards a sarvajanin or public celebration of religion, and perhaps a trajectory along similar lines to analyze the Kumbh mega-festival in Allahabad. All these instances reverberate with the limits and possibilities of Hindu 'panths' struggling to be collective. The small-kingdom socio-political boundaries had set inexorable limits to the expansion of individually-tuned religious gatherings. Thus we find in north India the rise of bhakti cults such as the kabir-panthis, nanak-panthis, raidas-panthis and so on and more infrequently the 'congregational' followers of bhajans or devotional songs of Mirabai and Surdas. However, the main modality of performance here is the Baul of Bengal who is not oriented to a congregation. The collectivities, such as they were, remained

linguistically and ethnically circumscribed; there was no question of congregations such as the church service or namaz in a mosque. Within the realm of the bhakti collectivity, the individual worshipper reigned supreme.

The unhappy consciousness of Bankim Chandra, the Bengali novelist was, from the viewpoint of his inner conflict, an expression of the indigenous individual belief system reaching out to a publicly articulated foreign congregational/Christian model. The abortive violent confrontation by martial Hindu sects against the alien White supremacist—a perennial theme in Bankim Chandra's novels—has to be seen in that perspective. It is a forerunner in the literary genre of the ambiguous and ambivalent religious consciousness that was to reverberate strikingly, and possibly reached its denoument ,in the rebellion of 1857.

The second case that we take up is Tamil Nadu. Here we do not consider the prehistory of the south Indian conjuncture with resort to a novelist like Bankim Chandra, but via the figure of Ramaswamy Naicker Periyar in Tamil Nadu. As the founder of the well-known *suye-maryadai* or Self Respect movement Periyar initially championed the non-Brahmin parties (the Justice Party) as against the dominance of Brahmins but increasingly veered toward not only anti-caste but anti-religion agitation culminating in what has been called an indigenous brand of anarchism. Apparently Periyar's "political atheism" (see Karthick Ram Manoharan's Periyar: A Study in Political Atheism) attracted a number of aspiring young politicians, e.g., C.N Annadurai, but his message of Self Respect remained confined to a smaller group of acolytes until a social language was found in the shape of Tamil popular culture and Dravidian identity. The individualistic conscientization of Periyar fell short of a mass movement which was to be subsequently carried on the shoulders of D.K. and D.M.K. parties in the political arena. The ambivalences of Periyar himself in regard to power politics and his 'unprincipled' stand on state power (his early period of dalliance with Russian inspired socialistic regime) make him an enigmatic figure in the annals of Tamil Nadu socio-political space. It may justly be said that the failure of Self Respect as a *social* movement lay in its character of being a mirror-image of the individualistic religious consciousness of the Tamil Hindu pantheon. Had it not been for the heteroglossia of Tamil film, theatre and popular literature the Dravidian political movement could barely have survived on Periyar's anarchic belligerence alone. As it became clear early on neither the anti-God nor the anti-caste posture of Periyar had a long shelf-life in Tamil Nadu.

This then is the abortive history and geography of rebellion in colonial and post-colonial Indian society. The valorization of sanskritizaton and westernization as material facts of social mobility and change does little to hide the crisis of consciousness that underlay these processes. For north India, the Indian National Congress sponsored Brahmin-Bania-Hindi nationalist

discourse and for south India the Dravidian-Tamil-non Brahmin 'regional' discourse typify the modalities of socio-political consciousness in the country. That this consciousness was heterogeneous and uneven throughout the spatio-temporal conjunctures of colonial, post-colonial and post- 'structural reforms' Indian society ,is a story imbricated in the annals of contemporary history. It continues to haunt the politics of our own day. In all this, it is the accent on Tagore's *chinmaya* rather than *mrinmaya* alone that we have attempted to highlight.

ADDENDUM

Western India and Dalit Futures

We have spoken earlier of the exclusivity of the elite as proto-untouchability. In the eradication of this virus the north Indian Brahmin-Bania-Hindi discourse of the Indian National Congress failed miserably. Even the southern Indian Dravidian-Tamil-non Brahmin discourse as signalled by Periyar's own futile efforts had a limited (and that too primarily 'political') success. However, when one comes to western India, it is the call of Ambedkar's movement against untouchability as the kingpin for the "annihilation of caste" that commands our attention. Before tracing its gradual evolution in the twentieth century (see Nirupama Rao's The Caste Question: Dalits and the Politics of Modern India) we may consider seriously its twenty first century avatar, particularly its convergence in today's conjuncture with the footprints of Periyar's anti-caste movement (see the Conference in Wolverhampton University, 2022). The analytical standpoint that unites the anti-proto-untouchability tirade through the convergence between Periyar and Ambedkar is the insight that the untouchable/untouchability is the *constitutive outsider* of the caste (jati/varna) order. As we have seen, when we trace the trajectory of 'untouchability through the Orientalist character of sanskritization and westernization the phenomenon spreads far beyond the ritual purity and pollution of the Brahmanical taboo. It straddles all exclusionary taboos of the *savarna* ideals that may be generalized as *ghrina* (disgust or extreme aversion or hate) involving contact with those who are lower in the socio-economic hierarchy (See, Joel Lee's Deceptive Majority, and also Aniket Jaaware's comprehensive discourse on touching and not touching in Practising Caste). The temple, with its tabooed sanctum sentorum is the epitome of this exclusivity with the suggested 'public' solution that the sacred image be displayed on a tower outside the temple (a *manastambha*) for "everyone" (the people) to see. The acute manifestation of ghrina practised by the savarna power holder against the subservient untouchable was resisted in such confrontational movements as those demanding temple entry, end of exclusive seating in schools and the struggle to draw water from village tanks. The extreme counter-reaction to elite ghrina came in the 20th century Maharashtra in the form of Dalit Panther

movement which was a heightened, atavistic, surge of collective untouchable sensitivity mostly expressed in individual acts of creativity through dalit literature.

Here we must meditate on the intimate but contradictory consciousness of the untouchables as both vulnerable to exclusion and attacks by the savarna and their self-conception as outsiders guarding the purity and inherent self-esteem of the higher-ups. (see, for example, the character of the dalit protagonist adolescent girl Maadathi in the film of the same name). This self-same contradictory consciousness is also well captured in the irony and sublimated frustrations of the protagonist in dalit literature . It also runs aground the legal and constitutional 'protective' measures instituted by the State. This is the story of the dalit acceptance/non-acceptance of the anti caste atrocity legislation. There is thus a fusion in the Dalit predicament of what one may term (after Michael Herzfeld) "subversive archaism" and what Foucault would call "surveillance" via imposition of discipline by the State. The imbrications of the former intimate self-realization in the dalit behaviour and consciousness are through ritual and the response to the latter is political. These two dimensions of dalit consciousness are ably delineated in Anupama Rao's narrative; they constitute the limits and possibilities of dalit conscientization in late twentieth century Maharashtra.

As we follow to the end Anupama Rao's narrative, a light at the end of the tunnel seems to appear in the form of the advent of Mayawati in Uttar Pradesh. But in our view that light failed when Mayawati's BSP as a political party fell into the trap of dalit jati fragmentation and fractionalism at the minimal level of the hierarchy and an improbable block-solidarity(sarvajan rather than bahujan) in alliance with the savarna at the maximal level of hierarchical segmentation. In Maharashtra itself, to turn to the very recent development, the ruins of Ambedkarism in terms of Prakash Ambedkar's Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA) political party let themselves be absorbed in the encompassing factionalism of Shiv Sena, thus further clipping its wings as the vanguard of dalit emancipation.

Whereas the party political process seems to be the Achilles' heel of dalit emancipation and the "annihilation of caste" the growing clout of youth and student activism on the wider canvas of India shows positive portends. The heteroglossia of cultural revival—films, literature, arts, and the social media in general—reveals and at the same time impacts youth consciousness. This consciousness is at the intersection of generations, friendship, neighbourliness and role model enculturation. The intersections help as well as hinder the chinmaya (ideational potential) of emancipation. Will they overcome the hubris of territorially bound nationalism (mrinmaya) remains to be seen.

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Abhik Ghosh

THE NEXT HUNDRED YEARS OF ANTHROPOLOGY IN INDIA

Abstract

The last hundred years have shown us that Anthropology has grown slowly and gradually into a discipline leaving its own mark in the arena of other disciplines in universities. However, this history has not been without its ups and downs. In this season of merry-making and the bittersweet ending of an epidemic year, it would be the right time to reassess our hundred-year past of teaching Anthropology and see where we would be headed in the next hundred years or so. Perhaps some of these reflections would be of some benefit.

This paper begins by discussions on certain well-known aspects of Anthropology as it has evolved in the last hundred years. Using that as a platform one would like to look at how this subject would evolve over the next century as a discipline. This would be a very useful exercise in understanding ourselves and our credentials in the future development of society.

For some people, Anthropology has been losing its 'edge', its methodological tricks and details, to the greater world. Many things covered by Anthropologists are now being done, sometimes much better, by other disciplines using methodologies invented and tested out by Anthropology. Over all this, Anthropologists excursions to the field has become much less like 'field visits' and much more like a 'stay' at a different location, often well-known to the researcher.

Against this background is the pressure from academia to publish short, fast and hard in larger numbers using the currency of the present rather than the distillation of a long-term research. Those who have done so have benefitted much in the current regime.

This paper is a sort of a critique as well as an exposition of how Anthropology would be making its own future in times to come. Without an ideal, we would be in danger of 'being the thing of shreds and patches' that we have criticized so much in our own past.

Introduction

When I begin on such an enterprise, it is with some trepidation, for I am in an august company with many well-known anthropologists in line who

ABHIK GHOSH, Professor, Department of Anthropology, Panjab University, Chandigarh

have made comments about the future of Anthropology in India over the years. I wish to add on to rather than review these works and so I shall begin with some degree of stock-taking, of understanding what we have achieved and reached so far.

Early Indian Anthropological Ideas: A Beginning

Manu's *Dharmashastra* (2nd-3rd century BC) comprehensively studied the Indian society of that period, based more on the morals and norms of social and economic life. Kautilya's*Arthashastra* (324-296 BC) was a treatise on politics, statecraft and economics but also described the functioning of Indian society in detail. Megasthenes was the Greek ambassador to the court of Chandragupta Maurya from 324 BC to 300 BC. He also wrote a book on the structure and customs of Indian society. Al Biruni's accounts of India are famous. He was a Persian scholar who visited India and wrote a book about it in 1030 AD. Al-Biruni wrote of Indian social and cultural life, with sections on religion, sciences, customs and manners of the Hindus. In the 17th century Bernier came from France to India and wrote a book on the life and times of the Mughal emperors Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb, their life and times. As we uncover the Sanskritic writings and study them, over the years more and more such writings have become part of our knowledge of human beings including the major Indian philosophies. Some issues have been included in Indian Anthropology.

India and the World

Of new interest in this narrative has been the spate of recent studies that show how Indian concepts and ideas have influenced Western thoughts, ideas and philosophies. People are now writing detailed texts of this kind of 'deep' history that happens to be extremely invigorating to our analysis, enlightening us about areas that we have ignored so far.

The Formative Phase (1774-1919)

For Majumdar (1950), this phase ended in 1911. According to Vidyarthi (1975), this period extended to 1920.By 1807, the Company had realized the importance of anthropological knowledge. The Governor-General had appointed Dr. Francis Buchanan to collect information on the life and culture of the people of Bengal.

One of the first things that happened in Anthropology in India was the setting up of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1774 by Sir William Jones. Under this organization, a number of anthropological works were conducted and many were printed in the journal of the Society. It is said by many that such work did not constitute an anthropology since they were written by British administrators and missionaries rather than 'true' anthropologists. However,

many were well trained and their works are still studied, albeit as matters of historical interest, in Indian universities. They included famous names like L. S. O'Malley, E. Thurston, Edward Tuite Dalton, Herbert Hope Risley, R.V. Russell, William Crooke, J. T. Blunt, Buchanan, J. P. Mills, R.E. Enthoven, J. Todd, Valentine Ball, Baden-Powell, Sir Edward Gait, Sir Richard C. Temple, Sir Denzil Ibbetson, H. A. Rose, E. T. H. Atkinson, J. Shakespear, P. R. T. Gurdon, N. E. Perry, T. V. Grigson, Sir Edward Gait, Campbell, Latham, and others. These men compiled encyclopaedic material on castes and tribes of various parts of India. What they could not collect, they compiled in other works where they described regions as well as the people they met on their travels. 'True' anthropologists like W. H. R. Rivers, J. H. Hutton, A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and C. G. Seligman also came to India. Their work influenced people like Paul Olaf Bodding, Hoffman, Emelen, etc. to work on Indian communities in a greater degree of sympathetic detail.

The Asiatic Society was established in 1774 (it became the Asiatic Society of Bengal later in 1784) and this seems to be the beginning of anthropology in this part of the world. By 1784 the journal of the society also started coming out regularly. By 1893, a separate section or Part III was being published of the journal which contained only anthropologically relevant material. This continued till 1904. Recently these old issues have been digitized for future generations and copies of articles contained there may be obtained for a price. The Academic Association began in 1828, the Bethune Society in 1851, the Benaras Institute in 1861 and the Bengal Social Science Association between 1867 to 1878. All of these were Institutes where social science research began to be carried out.

The Constructive Phase (1920-1949)

For Majumdar (1950), this phase began in 1912 and ended in 1937.By 1920, Anthropology came into the curriculum of Post-graduate studies at Calcutta University with R. Chanda as Head. This was a marked change from the earlier period. By 1918 it was a subsidiary subject in Calcutta University but its true identity emerged only with its development into a full-fledged discipline. K. P. Chattopadhyay was one of the first to be appointed there with R. P. Chanda (who is famous for his idea of brachycephalization in Western India). They were joined by L. K. A. Iyer. The first group of students included luminaries like N. K. Bose, D. N. Majumdar, B. S. Guha, P. C. Biswas, T. C. Das, S. S. Sarkar, Dharani Sen and Andre Beteille.

Ethnological work suffered after the transfer of Sir Herbert Risley to other work and no one seemed to be willing to revive it. Eventually, the Anthropological Survey was originally begun in 1946 as a Department of Anthropology, Government of India. This happened after the Government of India held a consultation between B.S. Guha and Dr. R. B. Seymour-Sewell, at the time the Director of the Zoological Survey of India. It was located in Benares

(Varanasi) for a couple of years due to problems in Kolkata but after the building of the Indian Museum was built, it was shifted there in 1948. It was intended to carry out extensive Anthropological work in all the three spheres of Anthropological work under B.S. Guha. The unit was also intended to teach and train students in Anthropological work with a stipend of Rs 150 per month starting with six from 1946-47 (when they went to Odisha) and then four from 1947-48 (when they went to Jaunsar-Bawar). A trip to the Andaman Islands was also organised in the same year (1948) (Anthropos; 1948).

The Analytical Period (1950-1990)

For D. N. Majumdar (1950), this phase began in 1938 and carried on to the present.The earlier anthropologists like Surajit Sinha called this the recent phase. By this time Indian Anthropologists had started regularly interacting with anthropologists abroad and many kinds of collaborative works were taken up. A shift was seen from the descriptive studies of preliterate villages to the analytical studies of complex societies. Village studies still remained the norm and began to be raised to the level of a methodological deity. The Americans who came to India during this period made their works famous for all time and immortalized also the names of the villages they worked in. These studies began with the work of Sir Henry Sumner Maine in 1871 and Sir Baden-Powell in 1892. Morris Opler of Cornell University (Madhopur and Rampur), Oscar Lewis of the University of Illinois (Rampura) in 1952, David Mandelbaum of the University of California, W.H. Wiser and Charlotte Wiser of Cornell University in 1933-36 (Karimpur), Alan and Ralph Beals from University of California(Namhali and Gopalpur), Harold A. Gould (Sherupur), Kathleen Gough (Wangala, Dalena, Kumbapettai), Stephen Fuchs, T. Scarlett Epstein (Mangala, Kalenahalli), Gitel Steed (Kasandra), Ruth and Stanley Freed from the National Museum of Natural History at New York (Shanti Nagar), F. G. Bailey (Bisipara), Robert Redfield, W. A. Rowe of Cornell University (Senapur), M. S. Luschinsky in 1954-57 (Senapur), M. R. Goodall of Cornell University (Chittora), David Mandelbaum, McKim Marriott (KishanGarhi, Wai town near Pune), John T. Hitchcock (Khalapur), John J. Gumperz (Khalapur), Kolenda (Khalapur), Ralph R. Retztaff (Khalapur), Leigh Minturn (Khalapur), A. P. Barnabas (Sharanpur), Adrian C. Mayer (Ramkheri), G. M. Carstairs (Deoli), Henry Orenstein (Gaon), Robbins Burling (Rengsanggri), Milton Singer (Madras), Gerald D. Berreman (Sirkanda), David G. Mandelbaum, O. T. Beidelman, Bernard Cohn (Senapur), Martin Orans (Jamshedpur), etc. Indian anthropologists who were included in this group included S. C. Dube (Shamirpet), M. N. Srinivas (Rampura), A. Aiyappan, D. N. Majumdar (Mohana), Prof.Inder Pal Singh (Deleke), K. S. Mathur (Potlod), Yogendra Singh (Chanukhera), G. S. Ghurye (Haveli Taluka), etc. A large number of village study monographs were published in the 1960s through the Census of India 1961. The first of these was a study of Ghaghra by L. P. Vidyarthi.

Further, it was already apparent that studies on women was a requirement in Indian Anthropology. Many studies showed problems of equity as well as issues emanating from patriarchial biases in agricultural societies, especially in Northern India (for example, Sharma; 1982).

By 1997, the idea that women were not just a commodity but there were many nuances to the idea of women could be seen by Anthropologists working on women in India. As the Miss World contest was aired on Indian television, an anthropologist visualised the various viewpoints aired during and after the show from the vantage of a room in Shillong, Meghalaya, India. He saw many things about how people discussed issues of morality, ethics, modesty and change. He also saw how it was seen to be 'wasteful' expenditure which could be put to more useful avenues. While some felt issues of modesty others felt that they had moved on. These fractured dialogues showed a difference of opinion in the population that needed to be researched in much greater detail (Russell; 1997).

The Evaluative Phase (1990-present)

The complexity of Indian society was frequently described by Western anthropologists in terms inimical to many Indian anthropologists. Hence, Indian anthropologists began to feel that a better interpretation of such complex interrelationships could be given by Indian anthropologists. As a result, many anthropologists have proposed their own theories. The study of recent improvements and changes in anthropology in India deserves to be done in much more detail. However, it has become clear that not only are the earlier trends being maintained but many areas of anthropology are emerging anew and other sub-fields within are becoming active. An increasing interest in Medical Anthropology, Religion, Development studies, Psychological studies, as well as other areas is becoming more evident.This stage involved many studies relating to the complex relations between Colonialism and Anthropology in the Indian context of traditional customs as one example (for instance, see Dirks; 1997). One of the offshoots of this attitude has been to restudy villages earlier studied during the various village studies programme mentioned again. This is also producing fruitful data on social change.

In fact for Bottomore (1962), Indian social anthropology had much to teach sociologists from India as well as those in Britain. This, he felt, would lead to a close and long-lasting relationship. For Cohn (1965), there was enough ethnography on the legal aspects and on disputes for a comparative study in India, as he amply showed. He claimed that comparative and pan-Indian studies on other aspects had already begun. It was only to be expected that this trend would continue to critically examine not specific cases merely but a pan-Indian idea of the Indian legal system.

Agehananda Bharati (1971) claimed that all the sociologists and

anthropologists critically evaluated Other peoples' religions but did not note the 'affective and orectic' elements that made belief systems and rituals work. He called for a much more intensive and perhaps more objective as well as subjective analysis of religion than had previously been done in Anthropology. This could have come from no more experienced person than he, since he was known as a practicing tantric and had written a book on *Tantric Traditions*.

Mysore Narasimhachar Srinivas (born on 16 November 1916 in Mysore), was educated initially in Karnataka. In his own house he was close to Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Marathi, as well as a colony of urban shepherds or Kurubas. A graduate from Mysore University in 1936, with a Masters in 1939 in Sociology, he was taught by G.S. Ghurye taught both Sociology and Anthropology, though he often disagreed with his views. He then completed anLl.B. before completing his Ph.D. from Bombay University. He proposed the idea of 'Brahminisation' as a form of caste mobility in this work among the Coorgs for the first time. He also promoted the idea that there was a 'field view' and a 'book view' to looking at ritual practices. He was structural-functional in his outlook through his following of the work of A.R. Radcliffe-Brown and Bronislaw Malinowski. He worked with the former and E.E. Evans-Pritchard to complete his D.Phil. from Oxford in 1947. Over time, more concepts like 'Sanskritization' began to be included in his work since 1962, as well as a differentiation between the terms *varna* and *jati*. He promoted the study of village life in India to understand social change. His work in Rampura led to a new concept – that of 'dominant caste' being used to explain the behavior of certain castes in the field context in 1959. In 1966, he developed the term 'Westernization' to explain a set of changes happening among the rural elite and among others. When he founded the Department of Sociology at the University of Delhi, one of the people he appointed was Andre Beteille. He focused on fieldwork as a very important part of the work of Anthropology and Sociology. His *Remembered Ethnography* is a unique enterprise which he wrote after his field notes were accidentally burnt. He went on to write papers on national integration, dowry, bridewealth, industrialization and its effect, urban communities, hospitals and gender issues, among others before his death in 1999 in Bangalore.

Another major set of models were created by trendsetter ShyamaCharanDube (born 25 July 1922 in Seoni in Madhya Pradesh), who first completed a degree in Political Science before deciding to join Anthropology. He then conducted a study of the Kamars of Raipur for his doctoral dissertation in Sociology, studying the society holistically using traditional anthropological methods. He then went to England as a Lecturer in Anthropology, from where he developed his love for studying multi-caste villages from India, and began with Shamirpet in Hyderabad, and then in Western Odisha. He became interested in studying the impact of community development planning on villages. This formed a very important part of this

period of his research interests, where he contributed both to Sociology as well as to Social Anthropology. He wrote *Indian Village* in 1955 and then *India's Changing Villages: Human Factors in Community Development* in 1958 as well as *Power and Conflict in Village India*, as well as several research papers. He also worked on red tapism in Indian bureaucracy and was in favour of the development of an indigenous Anthropology, especially issues of exploitation, inequality and injustice. He wanted a dynamic social science to respond to changes in society. This was to be his major theme till 1988. Dube contributed to Sociology as well as to Social Anthropology, and taught Political Science at Lucknow University and Sociology/Social Anthropology at Nagpur and Osmania universities. He served for some time at in the Anthropological Survey of India and also at the National Institute of Community Development (1961-64). He died on 4 February 1996.

Triloki Nath Madan (born in Kashmir on 12 August 1933) was most well-known for his textbook of Social Anthropology that he wrote with D.N. Majumdar. He was also known for his work on the *Family and Kinship among the Pandits of Rural Kashmir* (1966). His details of the rituals and their symbolic reasons behind their performance was frequently cited by scholars across the world. He also taught both Sociology as well as Social Anthropology and became one of the experts in religious renunciation as well as on domesticity. He has also written much about the lived aspects of different forms of Hinduism, life cycle rituals as well as comments on Islam. He continues to influence many students, scholars and academics even today.

André Béteille(born 30 September 1934) may be seen as a very major social scientist of eminence who has again worked both in Anthropology as well as Sociology.He saw many current problems happening due to certain practices of society (after Weber) and he also looked at the idea of hierarchy, inequality, change and the way castes were functioning today in many spheres of today (after Rawls). He looked at institutions and how they helped to embed the ideologies of individuals. The ideas of politics, secularism and religion also became analysed through his framework. His initial work was on Tanjore (Tamil) Brahmins and fieldwork conducted among them which was added to by intense perceptive observations of society.

Vinay Kumar Srivastava (1991) on future of Anthropology said: the point was to stand up and make the identity of the Anthropologist felt for others. It was also an issue that one needed to show the move towards playing a second fiddle to the market was that ordinary Anthropological work itself led to future market skills. In other words, the move towards skilling was already a part of Anthropology but this was often not being acknowledged.

It was necessary to integrate the different branches of Anthropology and also to integrate 'special branches of Anthropology' like Medical Anthropology, Economic Anthropology with the rest of the field.The

Anthropologist thus needed to be political and moral in order to engage with current issues in society. Only then could we solve the problems that engage us today. However, this did not mean being subjective. This meant a scientific, rational approach to moving towards a just, ethical, moral and more egalitarian society.

We need to study the transnational links of our local areas and problems and conduct good fieldwork to become better. Further, we need to hone and create methodological and theoretical tools for the purpose.As an addendum, it would be useful to remember that economists and historians found the use of Anthropological methods like case studies, genealogies and concepts like dominant caste important in analysing long term trends quite some time ago (see Kessinger; 1972). Other methods call for a rethinking of the use of archives (Mathur; 2000).

For Persoon and Van Est (2000), different communities have different ways of measuring time, hence their conception of future is different.The past is often thought of as a resource.Anthropological writings and the future (which is hidden) include Divination, religion, oral traditions, material culture, development discourse, economy, environmental issues.Often last chapters of monographs end with a view by the anthropologist about the future of the community studied (especially if it is a hunting-gathering or nomadic one). There is mention of influence of a dominant culture like 'hinduization' of a tribal community, etc.Use of resources unsustainably is also a case in point. Often they claim community harmony with natural resources without adequate scientific data.So terms like 'sustainability' and 'future generations' proliferate in anthropological literature. So much of the things recommended use such ideas to propagate their ideas.

Vineeta Sinha (2005) begins with a detailed account of the interaction of Indians with the rest of the world through written accounts.The struggle to be relevant to others continues. Also, the focus on tribal studies and its importance was also evident.What she claims is that Indian anthropology needs to theorize these separations and unities as a means of engaging with the problem. The idea of an 'intellectual crisis' is often mentioned for the social sciences and Anthropology using different terms (as in Danda; 1981 and Padhy; 1988). There is seen to be a 'lack of enthusiasm and creativity' (Misra; 1972) as well as the lack of new theories and methods, coherence and proper direction coupled with a mindless imitation of Western models (Sharma; 1990). It was also seen that Indian Anthropology was lagging in terms of Western Anthropology (Basu and Biswas; 1980). However some (as in Atal; 1976, Hasnain; 1988). The overall idea has been to re-evaluate and redefine the content and priorities of Indian Anthropology as well as to relook at the crisis for a more in-depth reading (Chatterjee; 2002).

Those with good knowledge of their field areas may be potentially used

by various government departments, which sometimes happens but Indian Anthropologists needed to be heard and to apply their knowledge to particular problems. However, relations with the government cause distrust, mistrust, scepticism and suspicion (Sachidananda; 1980: 17-18). This tension between anthropologists and the government preclude the use of Anthropology for practical solutions.

The terms 'indigenous' and 'native' are problematic. They need to be contextualised epistemologically and politically within the idea of knowledge production in Anthropology in a colonial context. This context has been missing in most works and it has only become more attended to in recent works. Many in the Third World use the term 'native' to mean refashioned identities without having a tone of subjugation or marginalization. It has also been labelled 'other' or 'indigenous'. The true meaning of such terms need to be put firmly within the Indian context (Karlsson; 2003).

Peter Berger (2012) looked at early anthropologists who studied caste and the village and unravelled their theoretical orientations and the beginnings of the argument of understanding the village as a microcosm of the whole.Dumont's work was analysed with all the critics' comments.

However, other general trends in the discipline of anthropology made themselves felt in India as well: Geertz's symbolic anthropology, Lévi-Strauss' structuralism, Asad and Said's criticism of colonialism and Orientalism, feminist anthropology and neo-Marxist theories, to name just the main currents. As more anthropologists came to conduct fieldwork in India the themes also diversified. Caste and social structure became less dominant topics, while religion began to receive more attention (see Fuller and Spencer; 1990).

Much like Raheja, Dirks, Burghart, and Marglin in the 1980s, Wadley contributes to widening Dumont's narrow focus on purity as the single value, hierarchy as the single type of relationship, and power as nonreligious.

Next was an analysis of Subaltern Studies by RanajitGuha.Also, this and Cohn, began the idea that incorporation of history in Anthropology was not just a sub-discipline but an incorporation in the basic way that the discipline looked at society itself.

Postcolonial theory not only criticizes the complicity of culture with power but generally "targets academic disciplines." This is the reason why "disciplines devoted to representing the Other . . . have been less enthusiastic, if not hostile" to this approach, as the historian Gyan Prakash wrote in the volume edited by Dirks (Prakash; 1992: 376). The latter stated more generally, that "Western scholarship has consistently been part of the problem rather than the solution" (1992: 9). In this view, anthropology is not only morally dubious because of its entanglement with colonialism right up to the present, and its ignorance of that very fact, but in addition its aims (discovering

"authentic" culture) are questionable, its ethnographic method (spending a year in a village and then generalizing the findings) doubtful, and its epistemological assumptions (ignoring the "knower's involvement in the object of knowledge") naïve (Prakash; 1992: 262, Dirks; 2001: 54, 79).

Dirks deliberately abandoned both culture and ethnography. He offered anthropology a dead end and advised us to do his kind of history instead of ethnographic fieldwork.

This outline has shown that theoretical perspectives involved in the anthropology of India have been as diverse as the social and cultural phenomena being studied. No single approach can claim pre-eminence, nor—despite shifts in urgent issues and popular trends—can particular themes or methodologies claim hegemony over others. However, in my view, to amend an expression of Marshall Sahlins (1985: 149), a theory needs to be "burdened with the world," that is, with ethnography and the microscopic dimensions ethnographies usually describe. As long as a scholar working from a theoretical perspective is able to engage in an ongoing dialogue with ethnographic material and can generate new analytic impulses on the basis of this correspondence that will in turn facilitate the understanding of social processes and patterns, it will be alive and well; disconnected from ethnography, a theory soon loses its heuristic value for anthropology. Since "ethnography is never impossible" (Ortner 1995: 188), the prospects of further theoretical development in the anthropology of India could be promising.

P. Venkata Rao (2012) suggested to help students understand the arenas in the market where they may be gainfully employed after having done Anthropology. Further the Development Project Evaluation should have process Evaluation, Outcome/Effect Studies; Systems Evaluation: Social Soundness Analysis, Social Impact Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment, etc.; Cultural Resource Assessment and Management (recording, conservation, and management of cultural resources including prehistoric and historic sites); Corporate or Business Anthropology: Product Design, Project Management, Program Management, Marketing and Consumer Behaviour; Sales Strategies; Applied Visual Anthropology, Advertising, Reporting, Audience Research, Documentary making; Needs Assessment (for different types of needs); Capacity development training to increase the capacity of processes of organizations and/or institutions; disaster management, preparedness, relief plans, training, environmental risk assessment; creating own consultancy or non-governmental organization; social marketing and social entrepreneurship.

Participatory methodologies which anthropologists are relearning from non-anthropologists, recognition of emphasis on importance of indigenous knowledge for sustainable development, use of anthropological insights in management schools, etc., could be mentioned here also.

Buddhadeb Chaudhuri (2015)

Buddhadeb Chaudhuri (2015) said that, "to my mind, the main challenge is that often we, the anthropologists, are following such techniques which cannot really provide us the true anthropological perspectives. I am not against other/ new techniques in the context of the emerging areas of research, but the whole problem is if instead of observation, case studies etc., we go for schedules or structured schedules and cover small samples (unlike the sociologists who generally in such studies cover large samples), it cannot provide us the true perspective or insight for proper analysis. Some of the emerging areas that he identified included the following:

1. Health, Anthropology and Indigenous wisdom and knowledge;
2. Anthropology and Area Studies;
3. Environment, Development and Forest; and
4. Anthropology and Human Rights".

Needless to say, Chaudhuri himself worked on these four arenas of research in great detail throughout his career, in support of his views.

Understanding Some Aspects of Anthropological Trends in India Today

Ganguly looks at the present political scenario through which she explains how public opinion has often curtailed research that has been seen as offending the public. Under such circumstances, she claims that due to the popular opinion on current academic work, we are forced to address our work and our language for a much bigger audience than originally intended. The challenge would be to do so without compromising on ethics and academic integrity in India (Ganguly; 2017).

In the current atmosphere, Anthropologists deal with their overall disagreement development programmes even as they deal with current assessments of development in specific cases. It shows us how development in the Indian context has often overlooked local solutions as opposed to top-down programmes. According to many, this particular brand of development would need to become the hallmark of true development, overseen by anthropologists in different roles (de Zwart; 2000).

Recent trends include relaxations in norms for rigorous fieldwork.Some results of research from other social science or fields in biology seem better than those done by anthropologists.Fieldwork decreases in intensity and in detail. People work on specific arenas than on holistic approaches.In research students and researchers work in narrow specific areas forgetting its links with wider arenas of the study called anthropology. This was perhaps done to suit the current trends in Anthropological studies which show publications in a large range of subjects which do not show a direct link to Anthropology. This

is often done to increase the range of publications to higher Impact Factors. So, then, each anthropologist attends to one major arena of research and also deals with some other areas that interest them. This scattered nature of research increases data and publications but is bad for the continuity of research.

Apart from these areas some fields have been added as important arenas of research in Anthropology in India that have led to higher publications and reports. These include Palaeoanthropology, Corporate and Business Anthropology, Human Rights issues, Visual Anthropology, among others. This period also strengthened Forensic Science and Human Genetics.

Where do we go from here? We can either have history happen to us or we can make it as we go along and shape it in a particular manner. It is with this responsibility that we must ensure fieldwork for basic ethnographic work. Ethnographic data and its changes must be recorded since this is the baseline for all of our predictive and theoretical data inputs.

New ethical dilemmas and problems are also likely to emerge as fieldwork by Anthropologists occupy other areas of social life and inhabit other mental maps of personal space of the fieldworker as well as of the Other. These have often been related through individual cases (for example, Kunnath; 2013 about fieldwork among Maoists).

Academic teaching of Anthropology will certainly keep spilling out of our Departments and institutes in much greater volume than ever before. We should welcome it even as we welcome the impact of other disciplines on Anthropology. I think I see that there will be much financial pressure to monetize and commercialize the discipline, if only to finance our academic environment. Though sad, without a more benign governance this is to be our reality.

To wit, arenas like Corporate and Business Anthropology, SIA, research methodology, Anthropology of Development and arenas like Forensics, nutritional anthropology and developmental and growth research, among others may become the next platform on which the growth of the discipline might depend.For Paul Sillitoe (1998), Development Anthropology might hinge on studies on Indigenous Knowledge, which we have seen was a harbinger for studies on bottom-up development.

To remain meaningful, one may then state that Anthropological research would be required to be itself a skill set. It is wrong of industry to state that skilled individuals for industry are needed and they are not available. Any industry would require only a few Anthropologists as per their requirement – too small a number to be commercially trained. Thus, they would push the onus of last-mile training for being within their organization to academia – which is highly unfair. By pressurizing this through government is doubly unfair. Perhaps they would do better by accepting the high level of training and skill sets Anthropologists give and then deal with the way the employees

adapt to their environment rather than the other way around! Also, the people whom we consider today as 'textbook anthropologists' were considered to be mavericks when they lived and worked (for example, see Srinivas; 1997).

Anthropological research, in general, is intrinsically useful. The focus need not be given through outside agencies and funding organizations but by our own understanding of our disciplinary boundaries. So, we should not look for people to tell us what we should be but should tell others what we are. How are we any different from the disciplinary boundaries of, say, Medicine? Further, Anthropology can be useful not by being applied in a focussed manner but by collecting baseline data that may be used in many spheres and many areas simultaneously. This is why it is seen to be so multifarious in its operations.

One aspect is the issue of numbers and metrics as a guide to academia for the world. Begun by profit-making journal companies, today Universities and the Indian government have accepted this with alacrity, notwithstanding the murmurs of dissent globally becoming more and more strident. Whatever be the cause, reason or dynamics, research guided by large-scale academic metrics at the national scale may guide funding and thus much research, a case of the tail wagging the academic dog.

The fact remains that Anthropologists in India suffer from a lack of manpower as well as funding to do intensive long-term research. Sometimes they are also pushed into arenas of research which they are not comfortable with or may even disagree to. The idea of national agendas for research was also hotly debated since it was felt that it created closed systems with closed minds. The only way was to give adequate funds for research and personnel so that work could be carried out at a suitable pace to compete with International colleagues (Singh, Wood and Vidyarthi; 1971). This situation does not seem to have undergone much change in fifty years.

The major research work required are in the arenas of conflict and insurgency, inter-faith relations, inter-community relations, online modes of data collection, epidemics, as well as on food and culture. A new arena would be in the spaces of local history and its interaction with the community.

Another arena that needs to be covered (already begun by INCAA) is to frame clear ethical guidelines for Anthropologists in India. They may be critical of government plans and policies or even of whole governments if it is warranted by general consensus of Anthropologists. This is crucial for further commercialization of Anthropology which is inevitable.

Conclusions

Anthropology is itself a skill set, it does not, over and above itself need to become one.We need to get our discipline understood and clarified to others. This would ensure a basic understanding of the subject to others. This includes

a set of ethical guidelines.Wagging the market instead of being the dog that is wagged by the market is a necessity if we are not to be sold to the market, lock stock and barrel. In fact we are in imminent danger of having our results manipulated to suit market forces since they would be the financing body of our projects. Research scholars, graduates and PGs in Anthropology are to be seen as skilled labour. Prof. Srivastava would have seen us as independent entities. Today, that he is no more, we must underline this responsibility for ourselves and become what we wished him to guide us to.

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Sukant K. Chaudhury

INCLUSIVE POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT OF TRIBALS IN INDIA THROUGH EDUCATION: INSIGHTS FROM THE NEW EDUCATION POLICY

Abstract

This paper explores and analyses the overall development scenario among the tribal in India from the past 100 years. It includes the British era as well as the post-independent era. Throughout these years the policy of exclusion has affected the Indian tribes in all spheres. The major setback are visible in their education status and health status. Further, they do not find a place in top bureaucracy, apex courts, apex universities and higher education institutes including IIMs and IITs. It requires overhauling of the whole mechanism and paraphernalia dealing with the tribes. Education has been the weakest point for them. In 1951 only1.2 per cent were literate which went up to about 47 per cent in six decades, i.e., in the 2011 census. The New Education Policy(NEP) has a lot of promises which are yet to be realised. In fact, most of the educational policies earlier made hefty promises for the tribals. However due to their improper implementation and lack of honesty on the part of officials, could not fulfill their respective mandates and promise. In light of this, the present paper would analyze development of tribals in India through the NEP and how it may bring in a more innovative inclusive policy.

Keywords: *Tribal development, problems in education, New Education Policy, exclusion and inclusion.*

This paper is located within anthropology of education. Anthropology of education deals mainly with education among tribes and simple societies, their pedagogy in the cultural context, education in multicultural context, local method of learning, and cultural context of teachers and students as well. George Spindler (1955) among others have written on the subject.

The state of affairs regarding education[1] in tribal areas of India has attracted many scholars of tribes (Vinay Kumar Srivastava 1991b; Singh and Mahanti 1997; Jaganath Pathy 1999a, b; Bhowmick and Bhowmick 2000; Xaxa 2001). Insightful works are available on the working of schools in tribal areas (Chakravarthi and Singhrol 1988; Ratha and Behera 1990). Some studies

SUKANT K. CHAUDHURY is Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Lucknow, Lucknow, India. email: sukantkchaudhury@gmail.com

conclude that the health profiles of tribes can be improved by educating them (Pandey et al., 1999). Rita Sinha (1996) submits that the most important aspect in education is the development of a relevant curriculum which meets the learning needs of specific groups. She calls it a 'localized cur- riculum' or the 'tribalization of education.'

Till recently the whole category of tribe, the manners in which it has been understood reflected colonial hangover. The anthropological perspective of evolution has contributed significantly for a lopsided understanding of the tribe. For example, the tribes were treated in the evolutionary ladder in a sequential manner: from hunter-gatherers to shifting cultivators to settled agriculturalist. However, idea was contested by N.K. Bose (1972) and Surajeet Sinha (1980)[2] who said that Indian tribes coexisted with civilization in India. However, the coexistence concept has treated the tribes from the point of view of core and periphery debate, where the core is neutral, innocuous and the periphery is mainly geographical. Posing a counter-argument, recent studies have pointed out that this core-periphery dialectics is a larger design where exclusion principles are operative to keep them on the margin (Chaudhury 2008a). Exclusion leading to marginalization is not by accident or chance but by a particular design of state formation. Tribal land has been usurped for public purpose in the name of industrialization and infrastructure and development. As said earlier, historically tribes have been marginalized, they have been voiceless, and they have been exploited in spaces created within the system of governance. Meena Radhakrishnan's Study '*Dishonoured with History: Study of Ex-criminal Tribes*' (2001) is a case in point. Understanding of the question of exclusion, marginalization, and subjugation is possible only by adopting a right-based approach to development leading to empowerment in a sustainable way so that interaction between tribes and mainstream remains vibrant, meaningful and futuristic. In order to understand the whole process, the paper will discuss briefly what all has happened in the British era and the post-independent era.

British Era

Mainly the problem started with the problem of cultural contact with the tribe. Of course, once upon a time they were living in the stage of homeostasis, i.e., happy-go-lucky worldview reflected in the lifestyle but contact with outsiders resulted in various changes among them (Roy Burman 1992, Dube 1975, Bhowmick 1989, Srivastava 1989).

The taxation system started during the Mughal era. Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf (1982) says that the Muslims rulers though started taxation; they had a *laissez faire* policy. Only the revenue officials used to go to the tribal villages to collect a part of the produce. In this manner, the tribal maintained and insulated system or a homeostasis (Chaudhury and Patnaik 2008b). Oommen (2010) says that the tribals continued with a subsistence system

which never wanted surplus. All the interfering agencies constructed the idea of poverty and further imposed it on them, which created too many development goals and thus were never realized. Further Furer-Haimendorf says that the exploitative cultural contact started in the colonial era, both for academic and non-academic interests: academic means British Anthropologists studied them which included W.H.R. Rivers, A.R. Radcliffe-Brown; non-academic means the missionary activities and the role of Christianity in development (it had differential impact on different tribes in different regions).

D.N. Majumdar says that the cultural contact started mainly due to a few reasons:- (a) existence of mineral resources in tribal areas, (b) entry of administrators and missionaries, (c) entry of specialists like medicine men, agents and vendors (d) development of transport and communication (e) displacement of tribal population from their traditional habitat. Vidyarthi and Rai (1977) said that broadly two factors are responsible for culture contact: traditional factors and modern factors. Traditional factors include: (a) Hinduisation, (b) Sanskritization, (c) tribe-caste continuum, (d) tribe-rajput continuum, (e) revitalisation process like the Bhagat Movement among the Oraon.[3] The modern Factors are: (a) Christianisation (b) Urbanisation (c) Industrialization (d) Development Programmes (administration, communication, Community Development Programme and education).

As said earlier there are three serious problems in tribal education in India' i.e., the system of formal education created these three problems of absenteeism, stagnation and dropout.[4] So far before the onset of modern formal education they had their traditional ways of learning things. The family socialized, educated and trained the child about the social values, norms, customs, traditions, folkways and mores. The tribal youth dormitories (Ghotul among the Muria and Gonds and Dhumkuriya among the Oraons) were important traditional institution for the purpose of learning many things. However, modern education system could not be geared up in tune with the tribal cultures and the result was that the child became alienated after being educated or was lost to the family by doing some white-collar jobs. Therefore, it was suggested that education should be presented to the tribal in such a manner that it should cut the barriers of superstitions and prejudices. For example, some tribals believed that their gods will be angry if they sent their children to school run by outsiders (Chaudhury 2004).

Economic Factors:

There are certain economic factors which prevented the tribals from sending their children to the school. Their children always helped the parents in economic activities like cultivation, collection of forest produce and grazing of cattles. They also helped in household activities like taking care of infants and small children while their mothers are away in performing economic activity, sometimes even cooking for all members of the household, cleaning

of utensils of the house etc. The school timings always coincided with their economic activity timings. Therefore, the parents do not desire to send the children to the school. Their school going reduced the economic stability and soundness of the family. Further, parents do not have the patience to wait for a long period to get the economic benefit of the child out of education. Further, the tribals cannot afford good quality higher education and technical education because of backward economy.

Furthermore, the structure and content of formal education failed to attract the tribal children to school. There was no special curricular to teach them which could sustain their interest. They are taught the same thing as being taught to non-tribal and general population. They are taught history and geography of the country without any reference to their history and origin and geography. L.R.N. Srivastava (1967), one of the tribal education expert suggested that the tribal child should be taught about the local history and culture first, then should be taught about the neighbouring community and finally about the national scenario.

There used to be a problem of medium of instruction to the tribal children. Most of the states imparted education in regional languages making it uninteresting to the tribals. Probably the tribal's sentiments for his/her own language were hurt. Another problem is that of nature of habitat. Most of the tribal villages are scattered and inaccessible. The child had to travel a long distance to attend the school. Besides this S.N. Ratha (1992) pointed out that there was no proper school building; at best they had roofless structures without any furniture, chalk and blackboard. Role of teacher was another distraction. Most of the schools were single teacher schools where the teacher could not pay attention to all classes. Non-tribals teachers did not have any idea about tribal life, culture and problems. The teacher is usually having pre-conceived and biased notion about the tribals and treated them as inferiors. Some of them were interested in private tuitions. Many teachers were also de-motivated to work because of low salary, lack of accommodation in difficult terrains. The Christian teachers had a dual role – that of a teacher and a preacher. They behaved differently with Christian and non- Christian students. For the nomadic tribes, there were facing more problems because they do not stay at one place for a longer duration of time and are 'mobile'. The above instances reflect upon the cumulative stagnation and wastage as the outcome of formal education. Many tribal students failed year after year because of absenteeism by both teachers and students. Many scholars pointed out that tribal students lack mathematical ability.

Several suggestions came in including providing tribal students special curricular, having more extra-curricular activities, appointing tribal teachers, having residential type of schools, having local medium of instruction, having textbooks which include lessons depicting tribal ways of life and culture, making the school timings and holidays adjustable to meet the local needs, providing

the students mid-day meals etc. Most of the above suggestions have been implemented but the end result has not been very fruitful except the fact that there is a rise in literacy level. It will be clearer when we discuss the Xaxa Committee Report (2014).

Evolution of educational policy in India

The universal compulsory education has come through Article 45 and Article 46 of the Constitution of India.It is also stated that the State has the responsibility of taking special care of the educational interest of the ScheduledCastes and the Scheduled Tribes. It is important to note that the literacy rate of the tribals in 1951 was only 3.46 per cent.[5]

This was mainly because there was no formal education system among them earlier. Gradually, schools were opened up in the tribal areas but the tribal people were not used to any organized formal system education system which was based on colonial western education. The colonial government depended upon the Christian missionaries to induce and educate the tribal since 1854. A few government schools and schools run by missionaries confined to small areas, were all that existed for educating the tribals. Lack of sufficient educational avenue left the tribal people lagging behind other social groups (Xaxa 2014). According to Xaxa (2014), two Commissions: The Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes Commission (1960-1961) chaired by Shri U. N. Dhebar and the Indian Education Commission (1964-66) closely examined the low educational levels of the tribals, with a view to address the disparity. The Dhebar commission found the problems of absenteeism, stagnation and drop-outs among the tribals which were for greater than other social groups. Nehru's Panchsheel policy for the tribes influenced the Dhebar commission in the sense that it recognized the pedagogical ingredients in tribal culture and thus aimed to make use of tribal language and culture resources, such as folklore, songs and history in teaching. Further, it recommended for the appointment of teachers from the tribal community to remove the existing cultural gulf between teachers and students (Xaxa 2014:156).

Later on, every educational commission recommended for a better educational status for the tribals through various measures but the trend of growth was slow. The National Policy on Education (1986) tried to promote tribals in higher education especially technical, professional, and para professional courses by providing several incentives. The policy also suggested expansion of residential schools including Ashram schools, Anganwadis and Adult Educational Centres. Both Operation Blackboard in 1987 and the National Literacy Mission in 1988 envisioned positive outlook for the tribals. The government drew out a program of action in 1992 with many important steps in the interest of the tribal education: (i) Opening up the primary school in every tribal habitation before the end of 8th five year plan, (ii) Coordination of balwadis, non-formal education, adult education and elementary education

under an Educational Complex, (iii) Making teachers responsible for the enrolmentdrives, (iv) Under Operation Blackboard, covering all schools within two years, (v) Preparation of instructional materials in tribal languages, (vi) Linking rates of pre-matric and post-matric scholarships with the increase in the cost of living index, (vii) Organization of special coaching, training and remedial teaching classes and also providing residential facility to those preparing for the competitive examinations, (viii) Additional scholarship to girls students, (ix) Providing quality reading material in cheaper rate and (x) Raising teachers from community to meet the storage of teachers.

The government tried to revamp the education system under the above actions through many steps: (a) Started educational complex in 136 districts for girls education in 1993-94; (b) National Program of Nutritional Support in 1995; (c) Minimum Level of Learning Programme; and (d) A committee chaired by Prof. Yash Pal prepared a report titled Learning Without Burden in 1993. At secondary education level, vocationalization program was introduced, it enhanced the level of education among tribals. The National Open School system also helped them.

Three programmes: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan and RashtryaUchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (R.U.S.A) helped improving the educational status of tribals at all levels. Further making free and compulsory education of the 6-14 years children through the Eighty Sixth Amendment to Constitution in 2002 improved the situation in a great way. The Mid Day Meal Scheme, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya also helped a lot in improving gross enrolment ratio.

Xaxa (2014: 166-167) says that the outcome of the mission was positive, i.e. an improvement across the educational level formed. Under R.U.S.A. massive infrastructure development took place. The gap between Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and other social groups narrowed down. The number of tribal households within one kilometer of the vicinity of primary school rose from 77.12% to 88.46% (Table1). Comparing to Scheduled Castes and general categories, the growth of Scheduled Tribe enrolment[6] was almost steady (Table 2). The Gross Enrolment Ratio[77]Goss Enrolment ratio (GER):GER for any stage (different classes) is defined as percentage of the enrolment in that stage to the estimated child population in the respective age group. was on the rise among the Scheduled Tribes (Table 3). The drop-out ratio among them has been contained (Table 4). Xaxa (ibid) says despite all these measures, there are many loopholes or grey areas found in improving educational status of the Scheduled Tribes. For example, the minimum facilities are not found in many schools. Low student attendance rate, teacher absenteeism continue in tribal areas. The learning level has declined as well: 93% of class V Rural student was unable to read class II textbooks (Xaxa 2014:175). Further Xaxa (ibid) reported that education has been a site of discrimination. The teaching and learning method have not been child friendly, adding to that the load of

heavy curriculum and tiring of examination continues. The traditional social prejudice against the tribal children still continues. Such prejudice not only precludes the potential for tribal children learning in the classroom, it also perpetuates discrimination and exclusion. This is found in the area of higher education as well. In the University departments low marks are given in viva-voce as well as written examinations. Tribal students are demoralized and humiliated, derogatory names are given and anti-tribal psyche is stronger in higher technical institutes as well (Xaxa 2014:176).

Several other problems persist concerning tribal education. Lack of proper teaching material in tribal language, exploitation of girl children in residential schools and problem in Maoist affected areas, the educational domain and the knowledge on tribes by experts is not proper. There has been a shortage of quality teachers. The language barrier for the tribal students continues.

There has been incidence of high drop-out rates among the tribal students. The Xaxa committee gave many recommendations to improve the situation significant among them are (a) provide education which can create capability to earn a livelihood; (b) gender gap[8] in education has to be minimized; (c) adequate infrastructure should be provided; (d) teachers should be recruited locally and they should be qualified and trained properly; (e) inclusion of local culture, folklore and history in the curriculum including music, dance, story-telling, theatre, painting and sports such as football, archery; (f) indigenous knowledge should be documented; (g) to improve quality secondary and higher secondary schools and there is need to establish Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas; (h) in residential schools sexual abuse neglect exploitation and violence against students have to be controlled; (i) Regional Resource Centers in states with significant tribal population should be established to provide training, academic and other technical support for development of pedagogic tools and education materials catering to multi lingual situation; (j) Tribal Chair should be established by the UGC in universities in every state comprising Fifth Schedule Areas.

The government has tried to improve the situation through various programmes and schemes. Of late the National Education Policy 2020(NEP 2020) has come upwhich is producing some policies for inclusion of the tribes into almost all categories of jobs, education, employment opportunity and so on. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs Annual Report 2021-22 says that 452 new Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) will be opened up in the tribal area making it a total of 740 schools having 480 students each. It said that by 2025 every block with more than 50% ST population or at least 20,000 ST persons could have EMRS functioning from its own building. The operation of the National Education Society for Tribal Students (NESTS) has been streamlined. A training program has been launched for the teachers called National Initiative of School Head's and Teacher's Holistic Advancement (NISHTHA) has been launched

Atal Tinkering Lab in EMRS schools in collaboration with ATAL Innovation Mission NITI Aayog has been established. The number of fellowships for higher studies including research to ST students has been enhanced

The Ministry has since long promoted the tribal students with pre-metric scholarships to tribal students studying in classes IX and X. This has been mainly done with the objective of minimizing dropouts, especially in transitional stage from elementary to secondary education. It also aimed at improving the participation of ST students in classes IX and X so that they perform well and have a better chance of progressing to post-metric stages of education. The government has also given a post-metric scholarship for studying post-matriculation or post-secondary level to enable them to complete their education.

All the above schemes are quite ideal and undoubtedly students are getting tremendous benefits out of them. However, there are many more actions to be seriously thought about for better performance.

The New Education Policy 2020[9]

After independence so far nine major committees, commissions and policies have been implemented in India with regard to education:

i. 1948-49 University Education Commission

ii. 1952-53 Secondary Education Commission

iii. 1964-66 Education Commission under Dr D.S. Kothari

iv. 1968- National Policy on Education

v. 1976- 42nd Constitutional Amendment, Education in the Concurrent List

vi. 1986- National Policy on Education

vii. 1992- NEP 1986 modified

viii. 2016- T.S.R. Subramaniam Committee Report

ix. 2019- Dr. K. Kasturirangan Committee Report

Again in 2020 for the tenth time another policy came up called the New Education Policy 2020 which brought a number of reforms after 34 years as the government report says (NEP, 2020) the main features of NEP is replacing the previous academic structure with the new pedagogical and curricular structure which is as follows:

Part I. SCHOOL EDUCATION

This policy envisages that the extant 10+2 structure in school education

will be modified with a new pedagogical and curricular restructuring of 5+3+3+4 covering ages 3-18.

Currently, children in the age group of 3-6 are not covered in the 10+2 structure as Class 1 begins at age 6. In the new 5+3+3+4 structure, a strong base of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) from age 3 is also included, which is aimed at promoting better overall learning, development, and well-being.

Key Highlights:

1. All higher education Institutions, except legal and medical colleges, to be governed by a single regulator.
2. Common norms to be in place for private and public higher education institutions.
3. M.Phil. courses to be discontinued.
4. Board exams to be based on knowledge application.
5. Home language/ mother tongue/regional language to be the medium of instruction.
6. Common entrance exam for admission to universities and higher education institution.
7. School curriculum to be reduced to core concepts, integration of vocational education from class 6.
8. Government plans to achieve gross enrolment ratio (GER) of 50% by 2035 and promote multi-disciplinary and inclusive learning.
9. Increasing the use of technology for learning.
10. Aims to ensure that no child loses any opportunity to learn and excel.
11. Includes setting up to of Gender Inclusive Fund and Special Education Zones for disadvantaged regions and groups.
12. Common National Professional Standards for Teachers(NPST) will be developed by National Council for Teacher Education by 2022.
13. Promotion of Indian languages by setting up Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation (IITI), National Institute (or institutions) for Pali, Persian and Prakrit.
14. Building digital infrastructure, digital content and capacity building for e-education.

Inclusion of Tribals: NEP 2020 will enhance the tribals Education in a long way, some of its features are as follows:

1. Every Childhood Care and Education:

   The Foundation of Learning will be introduced in the Ashramshalas in tribal-dominated areas. The process for integration and implementation of ECCE in Ashramshalas will be similar to that of the entire country.

2. Mother tongue/regional language to be the medium of instruction up to class 5.

3. Under the activity on 'The Languages of India' (sometimes in Grades 6 to 8) such as under the 'Ek Bharat Shreshth Bharat' initiative, students will learn about major Indian languages including tribal languages (their nature and structure, commonly spoken terms and phrases).

4. "Knowledge in India" will include knowledge from ancient India and its contributions to modern India. These elements will be incorporated in school curriculum including tribal knowledge and Indigenous and traditional ways of learning.

5. Specific courses in tribal ethno-medicinal practices, forest management, organic crop cultivation, natural farming at etc. will also be made available.

6. The policy recognises that children from STs face disadvantages at multiple levels due to various historical and geographical factors. It states that while several programmatic interventions to uplift children from tribal communities are currently in place and will continue to be pursued, special mechanism need to be made to ensure that children belonging to tribal communities recline the benefit of these interventions.

7. Measures for Socio-Economically Disadvantages Groups (SEDGs) like STs have been rolled out. Example- providing bicycles, organising cycling and walking groups.

8. Regions with large population of SEDGs (SC, ST, OBC, minority) be declared as Special Education Zones (SEZs) where all schemes are implemented to the maximum through additional efforts.

9. Women make up half of all SEDGs. Hence schemes will be designed specially targeted towards girls in SEDGs.

10. A'Gender Inclusion Fund' will be set up to provide quality education to girls 4 transgender students. Other 'Inclusion Fund' schemes shall be developed for other SEDGs.

11. Free boarding facilities for students from SEDGs, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalays will be strengthened and expanded for girls of SEDGs.

12. Within SEDGs and with respect to all policy points, special attention will be given to reduce the disparities in educational development of SCs and STs special hostels in dedicated regions, financial assistance (fee maintenance and scholarships) etc.
13. Efforts will be made to recruit more high-quality teachers and leaders from SEDGs in order to bring in excellent role models for all students.
14. Efforts will be made to incentivize the merit of students belonging to SC, ST, OBC and other SEDGs.
15. Equitable access to quality education to all students, with a special emphasis on SEDGs.

Conclusion

The objective of the paper was to dwell upon the nature and context of education among the tribal commuinities in India. It emerged that tribal children / students face problems with reference to the medium of instruction, physical access to schooling;and the diverse 'tribal' socio-cultural context.The historic and perpetual social marginalization and oppressionare the main causes for lower literacy among the tribal students.

In order to achieve the quality education to the tribal children in their own environment and in realising the inclusive and egalitarian tribal education in India; following suggestions can play significant role:

1. a two-language formula needs to be implemented rigoursly so that the tribal students can understand the classroom pedagogy in a much better way.
2. 'Bridge material' and remedial / tutorial classes should be given priority in every educational institution.
3. The expenditure and allocation of Budget should be increased manifold in the areas of Post Matric Scholarship, Ashram Schools and Strengthening Education tribal girls.
4. Provision and facility of residential facilities to tribal girl students would facilitate their retention in schools.
5. Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs) should be gievn more financial autonomy and they should be encouraged to take up action research in the areas of tribal education.

Notes

1 This paragraph including in text references has been taken from Srivastava and Chaudhury (2009)

2 For a detailed account see Chaudhury (2007)

3 The Bhagat Movement was found with plural groups like Vishnu Bhagat, Mahadev Bhagat and Kabirpanthi Bhagat. The Tanabhagat Movement of 1940 among the Oraon aimed to revive the Oraon religion, i.e., Kurukh Dharma. They wanted to abandon bad practices like consuming liquor and meat among other things and also wanted to recognise one God.

4 Dropout Rate (Classes 1-10) Dropout rate is the proportion of students who leave school during the year as well as those who complete the year but fail to enrol in the next year level the following school year to the total number of students enrolled during the previous school year. It is a critical indicator reflecting the lack of educational development and inability of a given social group to complete a specific level of education.

5 Literacy Rate (LR) of Total and ST Population during 1961-2011: Literacy Rate (LR) is defined as percentage of literates among the population aged 7 years and above. Although LR levels of STs have improved, the gap in literacy levels, both for tribal men and women, has not declined significantly (see Table 5).

6 Enrolment: Though India's education system over the past few decades has made significant progress, the literacy rate of STs has been a matter of concern. This is despite the fact that the largest population of centrally sponsored schemes for tribal development are related to the single sector of education.

7 Goss Enrolment ratio(GER):GER for any stage (different classes) is defined as percentage of the enrolment in that stage to the estimated child population in the respective age group.

8 Gender Parity Index (GPI)GPI is a socio-economic index usually designed to measure the relative access to education of males and females. In its simplest form, it is a calculated as the quotient of the number of females by the number of males enrolled in a given stage of education (primary, secondary etc.)

9 Under the leadership of Dr Kasturiranjan NEP has the vision to create multi disciplinary learning environments that catered to well rounded education for all individuals.

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Statistical Profile of Scheduled Tribes in India,

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Table 1: Distance between Household and Nearest Primary School, 1993-94 to 2007-08 (per cent)

Groups	Percentage of Households									
	1km		2km		3km		4km		5km	
	1993-94	2007-08	1993-94	2007-08	1993-94	2007-08	1993-94	2007-08	1993-94	2007-08
					Total					
ST	77.12	88.46	13.39	8.25	6.27	2.35	3.21	0.36	-	0.58
SC	84.31	92.29	12.47	6.57	2.87	0.92	0.35	0.19	-	0.03
GEN	85.07	92.15	11.46	6.58	2.97	1.03	0.50	0.19	-	0.05
Total	83.94	91.67	11.87	6.81	3.37	1.19	0.82	0.21	-	0.12
					Rural					
ST	73.86	88.00	14.85	8.32	7.45	2.52	3.84	0.43	-	0.72
SC	81.09	92.36	14.83	6.38	3.66	0.99	0.42	0.24	-	0.03
GEN	80.43	91.86	14.17	6.67	4.70	1.17	0.70	0.24	-	0.06
Total	79.43	91.31	14.41	6.89	4.98	1.36	1.19	0.27	-	0.17
					Urban					
ST	92.57	90.26	6.48	7.95	0.72	1.67	0.23	0.08	-	0.03
SC	91.35	92.11	7.30	7.05	1.14	0.75	0.20	0.05	-	0.04
GEN	91.01	92.59	7.99	6.44	0.76	0.82	0.24	0.11	-	0.04
Total	91.15	92.33	7.81	6.64	0.81	0.88	0.23	0.10	-	0.04

Source: Xaxa 2014: 167

Table 2: Educational Level-wise Enrolment, 1980-81 to 2010-11 of STs and Others (in Lakhs)

Year/ Level	Scheduled Tribes						Scheduled Castes						All Categories					
	Primary (I-V)			Upper Primary (VI-VIII)			Primary (I-V)			Upper Primary (VI-VIII)			Primary (I-V)			Upper Primary (VI-VIII)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1980-81	31	15	46	5	2	7	72	38	110	16	6	22	453	285	738	139	68	207
1990-91	49	29	78	11	6	17	97	60	157	27	14	41	570	404	974	215	125	340
2000-01	63	47	110	19	12	31	121	91	212	41	26	67	640	498	1138	253	175	428
2005-06	75	67	142	25	20	45	140	113	253	53	38	91	705	616	1321	289	233	522
2006-07	76	68	144	26	20	46	144	118	262	54	39	93	710	627	1337	298	246	544
2007-08	76	70	146	26	21	47	137	125	262	53	46	99	711	644	1355	310	262	572
2008-09(P)	79	73	152	27	23	50	138	127	265	56	49	105	700	645	1345	294	260	554
2009-10(P)	79	73	152	28	23	51	138	127	265	58	51	109	708	648	1356	318	276	594
2010-11(P)	77	72	149	28	26	54	141	129	270	59	53	112	705	648	1353	328	292	620
Year/ Level	Higher Education (IX-XIII)			Sec./Sr. Sec			Higher Education (IX-XIII)			Sec./Sr. Sec			Higher Education (IX-XIII)					
1980-81	2	1	3	NA	NA	NA	9	3	12	NA	NA	NA	76	34	110	35	13	48
1990-91	7	2	9	NA	NA	NA	17	6	23	NA	NA	NA	128	63	191	34	15	49
2000-01	10	5	15	NA	NA	NA	24	14	38	NA	NA	NA	169	107	276	54	32	86
2005-06	13	9	22	4	2	6	34	22	56	10	6	16	223	161	384	88	55	143
2006-07	15	10	25	4	3	7	35	24	59	12	6	18	229	169	398	96	60	156
2007-08	14	10	24	6	3	9	36	27	63	15	9	24	252	193	445	106	66	172
2008-09(P)	16	11	27	6	3	9	37	29	66	14	8	22	256	199	455	112	73	185
2009-10(P)	17	13	30	7	4	11	46	36	82	15	9	24	267	215	482	124	83	207
2010-11(P)	18	14	32	NA	NA	NA	48	39	87	NA	NA	NA	283	229	512	155	111	266

Source: Xaxa 2014: 169

Table 3: Educational Level-wise Gross Enrolment Ratio of STs and Others, 1986-87 to 2010-11 (in percentage)

Level/ Year	Scheduled Tribe									All Categories									
	Primary (I-V) 6-10 Yrs			Primary (VI-VIII) 11-13 Yrs			Upper Primary (I-V) 6-10 Yrs			Primary (VI-VIII) 11-13 Yrs			Upper Primary (I-V) 6-10 Yrs			Upper Primary (VI-VIII) 11-13 Yrs			
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	
1986-87	111	68	90	46	22	34	104	65	85	53	27	40	-	-	-	-	-	-	
1990-91	125	81	104	54	27	41	126	86	106	69	36	53	95	72	84	80	52	67	
1995-96	115	80	97	57	35	47	110	83	97	71	45	59	-	-	-	-	-	-	
2000-01	117	86	101	73	48	60	107	86	97	76	53	65	105	86	96	67	50	59	
2005-06	131	121	126	78	65	72	126	110	119	81	65	74	113	106	109	75	66	71	
2006-07	134	124	129	80	68	74	132	115	124	83	67	76	115	108	111	78	70	74	
2007-08	136	131	134	81	70	76	126	124	125	82	78	80	115	113	114	82	74	78	
2008-09P	143	139	141	86	78	82	130	130	130	87	84	85	114	114	114	78	74	76	
2009-10P	140	137	139	88	79	83	128	129	128	91	87	89	116	115	116	85	78	82	
2010-11P	137	137	137	91	87	89	131	133	132	94	91	92	115	117	116	88	83	86	

Source: Xaxa 2014:170

Table 4: Dropout Rate of Scheduled Tribes and Others, 1990-91 to 2010-11 (in percentage)

Level/Year	Sec./Sr. Sec. (IX-X) 14-17 Yrs			Higher Edu (18-23)			Sec./Sr. Sec. (IX-X) 14-17 Yrs			Higher Edu (18-23)			Sec./Sr. Sec. (IX-X) 14-17 Yrs			Higher Edu (18-23)		
1986-87	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
1990-91	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
1995-96	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
2000-01	31	19.8	25.7	5.8	2.6	4.2	-	-	-	-	-	-						
2001-02	-	-	-	-	-	-	37	27	33	8	4	6	38	28	33	9	7	8
2005-06	34	23	29	9	5	7	42	31	36	10	6	8	45	36	40	14	9	12
2006-07	36	25	31	10	6	8	44	33	39	12	7	9	45	37	41	15	10	12
2007-08	37	27	32	12	7	10	43	38	41	13	9	11	49	42	46	15	11	13
2008-09P	40	30	35	12	7	9	44	40	42	13	8	11	51	43	47	16	11	14
2009-10P	44	34	39	13	8	10	55	49	52	13	9	11	52	46	49	17	13	15
2010-11P	45	37	42	NA	NA	NA	57	52	55	NA	NA	NA	56	48	52	21	17	19

Sources: Xaxa 2014:171

Table 4: Dropout Rate of Scheduled Tribes and Others, 1990-91 to 2010-11 (in percentage)

ST Students	Scheduled Tribe						Scheduled Castes						All Categories					
	Classes (I-VIII)			Classes (I-X)			Classes (I-VIII)			Classes (I-X)			Classes (I-VIII)			Classes (I-X)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1990-91	76	82	79	83	88	85	64	73	68	74	83	85	59	65	61	68	77	71-
2000-01	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	50	58	54	66	72	69
2001-02	67	73	69	80	83	81	59	64	61	71	75	73	-	-	-	-	-	-
2002-03	67	71	69	78	83	80	58	62	60	70	75	72	-	-	-	-	-	-
2003-04	69	71	70	78	81	79	57	62	59	71	76	73	-	-	-	-	-	-
2004-05	65	67	66	78	81	79	55	60	57	69	74	71	-	-	-	-	-	-
2005-06	63	63	63	78	79	79	54	57	55	68	74	71	49	49	49	60	64	62
2006-07	63	62	63	77	79	78	52	55	53	67	72	69	46	45	46	59	62	60
2007-08	63	62	63	76	78	77	54	51	53	68	69	68	44	41	43	57	57	57
2008-09(P)	58	59	58	76	77	76	51	44	48	67	67	67	45	39	42	56	56	56
2009-10(P)	55	61	58	75	76	75	51	52	51	59	60	59	41	44	42	53	52	53
2010-11(P)	55	55	55	71	71	71	47	39	43	57	54	56	40	41	41	50	48	49

Source: Xaxa 2014:172

Table 5:Comparative Literacy Rates of STs and Total Population (in percent)

Census Year	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Total Population	28.3	34.45	43.57	52.21	64.84	72.99
STs	8.53	11.30	16.35	29.60	47.10	58.96
Gap	19.97	18.15	19.88	22.61	18.28	14.03

Source: Statistical Profile of Scheduled Tribes in India, 2013 Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Statistics Division Government of India

Table 6: Percentage Enrolment of ST Students to all Categories

Year	Primary	Upper Primary	Secondary
1995-96	8.8	6.1	4.9
1999-2000	9.4	6.9	5.0
2000-2001	9.7	7.2	5.4
2003-2004	9.8	7.5	5.6
2007-2008	10.8	8.2	6.3
2009-2010	11.2	8.6	6.3
2010-2011	11.0	8.7	6.4

Source: Statistical Profile of Scheduled Tribes in India, 2013 Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Statistics Division Government of India

Table 7: Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)

Classes 1-5	137	116
Classes 6-8	88.9	85.5
Classes 9-10	53.3	65
Classes 11-12	28.8	39.3
Classes 1-12	94.8	86.5

Source: Statistical Profile of Scheduled Tribes in India, 2013 Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Statistics Division Government of India

Table 8:Drop Out Rates (DOR) (in present)

Classes	Boys		Girls		Total	
	ST	All	ST	All	ST	All
1-5Gap- 8.6	37.2	28.7	33.9	25.1	35.6	27
1-8Gap- 14.4	54.7	40.3	55.4	41	55	40.6
1-10Gap- 21.6	70.6	50.4	71.3	47.9	70.9	49.3

Source: Statistical Profile of Scheduled Tribes in India, 2013 Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Statistics Division Government of India

Table 9: Gender Parity Index (GPI)

Classes	STs	All Categories
1-5	1.00	1.01
6-8	0.96	0.95
1-8	0.99	0.99
9-10	0.86	0.88
1-10	0.97	0.97
11-12	0.76	0.86
9-12	0.82	0.87
1-12	0.96	0.96

Source: Statistical Profile of Scheduled Tribes in India, 2013 Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Statistics Division Government of India

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A.K. Sinha

THE FUTURE TRENDS IN ANTHROPOLOGY OF FOOD: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

Abstract

Food is a human essentiality that has transcended time and space. It is a basic human necessity and the substratum of human survival because it provides vital nutrients that generates energy for maintaining life and stimulating physical and mental growth, leading to overall well-being.

This paper explores the dimensions of food that have expanded into the various horizons of anthropological thought and research. The paper aimed to ensure a comprehensive understanding in the academic field about the need for pursuing studies on food under the umbrella of anthropology as an emerging discipline in the anthropological teaching and learning in various institutions of higher learning.

The academic approach towards food has been attributed to the ways and works of early anthropologists wherein they contributed to the development of a new, interdisciplinary approach to study food in culture. Such studies shared the inter-mingled approach of empiricism upheld by the most often sought theoretical concepts. Miller and Deutsch (2009) defined food studies as, "The interdisciplinary field of study of food and culture, investigating the relationships between food and the human experience from a range of humanities and social science perspectives, often times in combination."

Keywords: *Human, Survival, Food Development, Interdisciplinary, Food,Culture, Relationships, Perspectives.*

A basic term used in food studies is 'food culture' or 'culinary culture' that as Skowroñski (2007), denoted "Food culture is a set of practices, habits, norms and techniques applied to food and eating." This broad definition has been taken to encompass food production, its distribution and its subsequent consumption among people. This definition connotes the range and differential usage of foodstuffs and the allied ways they are looked at. Food culture has come to incorporate various aspects of food over the years that are connected in many ways to the lives of people, their food preparations, habits and ritual significance; food etiquette is also the socio-cultural acceptance or rejection

A.K. SINHA, Professor, Department of Anthropology, Panjab University, Chandigarh, Email: ksinha_anil@yahoo.com

factor in various associated practices. Food has served as a medium that differentiates the several discerning aspects of society, with special reference to the changes and growth adopted and adapted in food cultures along the development of human settlements across the world.

McGee (2004) felt that "there existed convincing motive to understand the significance of food for individuals and society in the socio-cultural framework." While conducting a review of the available literature, it was observed that there are not enough studies focused on determining the detailed meaning of food even though there has been an increase in the academically oriented studies on food in recent years (Polat and Polat, 2020). These studies were perceived socially, culturally, structurally, economically, symbolically and also in the terms of religious, artistic and metaphorical ways.

The study of food and its related issues became an integral part of the earliest anthropological monographs on culinary cultures across communities situated across the world geographically. Food was observed to serve as a satisfying medium for studying these communities. Studies on food became popular and fostered interest in several academic discourses (Siewicz, 2011).

Franz Boas (1940) in the 'Science of Man' stated that anthropology could be understood under the purview of several allied subjects. Anthropology set out to observe three major aspects of communities: physical appearance, language, and the inherent beliefs and customs related to their overall existence. The importance of food, its interpretation and importance for human existence were considered and recognized by anthropologists. The earliest works of anthropologists and ethnologists have emphasized the socio-cultural and symbolic dimensions of kitchens as the significant and independent food manufacturing units (Cohen and Csergo, 2012).

Therefore, the anthropology of food can be defined as the branch of anthropology that "provides an understanding of the range, role, relevance and rigor of studying food related to man as a subject." Food barter has been observed to be the commonest form of non-verbal communication according to the anthropological descriptions (Ahirwar, Sharma and Gautam, 2021). This form of communication can be taken to be the sum total of conjectural and practical approaches to diet, food habits and kitchen practices, which have led to the origin of varying perspectives towards the understanding of individual cultures and societies (Polat and Polat, 2020).

The Temporal Historical Progression in the study of Food Developments "can be traced across phased changes" in the progress and development of human society and settlements. Earlier emphasis had been on studying food in terms of what was eaten and also by incorporating various stages in the production, preparation, consumption and exchange of food (Gautam, 2021). Some of the earliest works in this direction are tabulated in Table 1.

Table 1: Earliest Works in Food Studies

Sr. No.	Author	Year	Work
1	Edward Burnett Tylor	1865	Proponent of classic evolutionism who identified cooking to be 'human universal' defined
2	John G. Bourke	2017	The Urine Dance of the Zuni Indians of New Mexico
3	Garrick Mallery	1888	'Manners and Meals'. It discussed the food habits and mannerisms of man across different cultures in various parts of the World
4	Robertson Smith	1894	Conducted a discussion on semitic sacrifices and sacrificial meals in 'Lectures on the Religion of the Semites'

Source: Mintz and Du Bois, 2002.

A temporal shift occurred in the 1930s as attention shifted toward the ways in which food and food habits changed and created an impact. These anthropological studies accounted for the various ways in which food has affected the development of relationships in various populations as well as the ongoing conflict with the environment besides enumerating the functions and structures of socially accepted and interpretation of culture. Biological anthropologists have been concerned with the food studies that were related to adaptation and evolution, the impact of food on health, occurrence and prevalence of diseases, nutritional deficiencies and cardinal aspects of food related changes in human behavior (Gautam, 2021).

Most of the earlier studies included the concept of culture as pertaining to the production and consumption of food along with examining the functionalist and structuralist approaches to food related practices.

The Spatial Progression of Culture- Food Continuum

The American school of diffusionism was led by Franz Boas (1858–1942), Clark Wissler (1870–1947) and Alfred Louis Kroeber (1876–1960) who dealt with the concept of 'culture area', including 'food areas' and 'culture centers' as dominant concepts. Franz Boas gave the concept of 'natural-history', which stated that the history has influenced by the philosophy and social laws of society. His student, Clark Wissler, felt social groupings could be formed by indicating and locating varying modes of life, attributed to spatially oriented dominant traits. He presented ten culture areas in North America, four in South America and one in the Caribbean. He also devised eight food areas from the original areas. His views on culture and food areas are depicted in 'Man and Culture' (Wissler, 1940). Table 2 refers to the food categories segregation and the geographical location of the populations to which it pertains.

Table 2: Food Categories and Geographical Location of Populations

Sr. No.	Su.bstance	Areas of Habitation and People
1	Caribou	Eskimo Habitation
2	Bison	Great Plains
3	Salmon	North Pacific Coast
4	Several Kinds of Wild Seeds	California
5	Eastern Maize	South East and Eastern Woodland
6	Intensive Agriculture	South West, Mexico, Peru
7	Maniac	Amazon region, Caribbean
8	Guanaco	Guanaco

Source: Wissler, 1940

The Functionalist Approach to Food Concepts

Herbert Spencer (1910) detailed the idea that particular functions are ascribed and the purpose becomes vital for survival in the society. Emile Durkheim (1893, as cited in Jones, 1986) had thought of society as having a particular function and tended to divide the society into two types:

a) one with organic solidarity and

b) one with mechanical solidarity.

Mechanical solidarity, therefore, connotes the cohesiveness among certain communities like the tribals and hunting gathering communities, where people tend to stick together because of their beliefs, politics and other reasons. Hence, food tended to become a dependent function of the activities of a number of persons.

Bronislaw Kasper Malinowski (1935) took up after Emile Durkheim (1858–1917) wherein he highlighted the interconnections between society and culture. He emphasized that people have basic needs like food, shelter, clothing and biological coupling that are fulfilled according to the social institutions and societal norms. He visualized the culture as the function to satisfy the basic needs of individuals in society. Food production has been identified with economic institutions and industry.

Malinowski (1935) in his treatise 'Coral Gardens and their Magic' had focused on the economy, social systems and magic among the Trobriand Islanders. He reported in detail how the Trobrianders grew taro, banana, yam, pumpkin, mango, sugar cane, peas, etc., with plants forming the main part of their diet and have been associated with the seasonal gardening cycle. They used their crops as a medium of economic exchange. It was also used as a tribute to the chief or marriage gift. Symbolically, there are special connotations attributed to food in a matrilineal society; for example, the yam was shared as a harvest gift with the sister's household. The Trobriand islanders had identified three categories of food:

a) Main Food: Yam, the staple food has a special significance whereby even the storage houses for yam have special significance based on social hierarchy. The stored yams are used to resolve conflicts among people of higher status because they can be treated as gifts.

b) Light foodstuffs: Sugar cane, wild fruits, etc., are not used frequently and do not form a substantial part or an entire meal.

c) Delicacies: Edible larvae, pork, fish, birds and all forms of food materials rich in proteins.

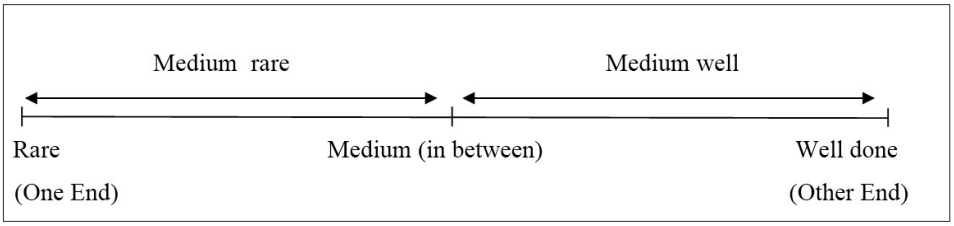
These are rarely included in the everyday diet but are offered in honour to guests.

In a horticulture-based economy, food has been connected with several functions in society. Cultures have different concepts of raw and cooked food, and also cooking and food exchange. Culture tends to determine the manner in which food is cooked or processed.

Documentation of Food Related Practices

People in Norway and Sweden have developed the habit of keeping their food in big tubes in a specific area to allow for its decomposition over time. It is kept like this for over three months after which there is a feast to utilize such foods as a delicacy for that particular culture. The balance between raw and cooked food has been seen to emanate from the two ends of the spectrum. People's preferences for the food rest on the different stages of being cooked, which have been depicted in Figure 1.

Figure1: Stages of Being Cooked and People's Preference

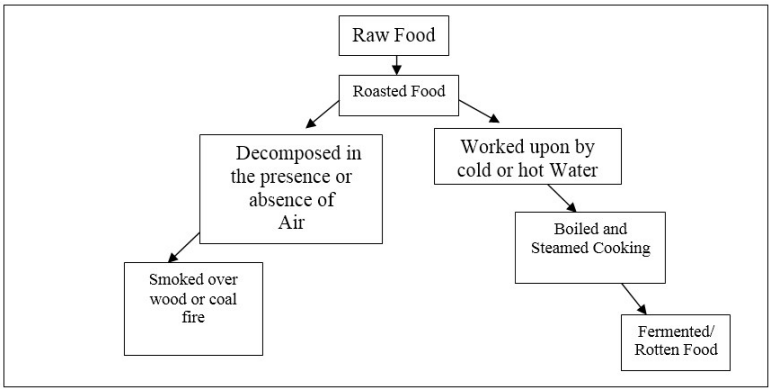


Source: Retracted from: https://medium.com/@samsonspaddockau/whats-the-difference-between-rare-medium-and-well-done-steak-fe463e0f960f

It was Claude Levi-Strauss (1966) who suggested the idea of the 'culinary triangle' (published in 1966). He discussed the food habits of the ancient Greeks, Indians of Northern and Southern America, the feasts and orgies of the XVIII and XIX century French intellectuals as well as peasants from Central Europe. He examined their cooking techniques in detail and contrasted between roasted food and food that was directly exposed to fire and boiling or the food that has been doubly mediated by water. Food has been taken to be the medium between nature and culture. Cooking is the act of changing the natural form. This aspect of food is a universal feature observed in all human societies. Ever since the

discovery of fire cooked food made its advent and became the accepted medium of change in most societies. The culinary stages triangle has been depicted in Fig. 2.

Figure 2 : Stages in the Culinary Process



Source: Retracted from: https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/agricultural-and-biological-sciences/roasting

Franz Boas (1921) had described the relevance of food by detailing the Kwakiutl Salmon recipes and their significance for the people whose lives revolved around the Salmon. Similar aspects of single materials have been discussed by several authors in anthropology and have been tabulated in Table 3.

Table 3: Contributions of other Authors

Sr. No.	Author (s)	Title	Publication Year
1	Helen Codere	"Kwakiutl Society: Rank without Class	1957
2	Cushing, Frank Hamilton	India Notes and Monographs Vol. III Zuni Breadstuff"	1920
3	Sidney Mintz and Christine Du Bois	"The Anthropology of Food and Eating"	2002
4	Edward Evan Evans- Pritchard	His book on 'The Nuer" highlighted how the Nuer depended on cattle for dairy, foodproducts, their food patterns as also their significance in sacrificial, ceremonial and religious purposes	1940
5	Mary Douglas	"Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo"	1966
6	A. F. C. Wallace and R. E. Acherman	"An Interdisciplinary Approach to Mental Disorder among the Polar Eskimos of Northwest Greenland"	1960
7	V. J. Rohrl	"A Nutritional Factor in Windigo psychosis"	1970
8	Edward F. Foulks	"The Arctic Hysterias of the North Alaskan Eskimo"	1972

9	R. Bolton	"Aggression and Hypoglycemia among the Quolla: A Study in Psychobiological Anthropology"	1973
10	J. D. Gussler	"Social Change, Ecology, and Spirit Possession among the South African Nguni"	1973
11	C. Ritenbaugh	"Human Foodways: A Window on Evolution"	1978
12	W. S. Abruzzi	"Flux among Mbuti Pygmies of the Ituri Forest: An Ecological Interpretation"	1980
13	D. Brokensha, D. M. Warren and O. Wertner	"Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Development"	1980
14	L. S. Greene	"Social and Biological Predictors of Nutritional Status, Physical Growth, and Neurological Development"	1980
15	A. B. Kehoe and D.H.Giletti	"Women's Preponderance in Possession Cults: The Calcium Deficiency Hypothesis Extended"	1981

Source: Compiled by Author

The earliest functional attribute of the Anthropology of Food was observed in 1975 when the Committee on Nutritional Anthropology (CNA) was established. The Society for Medical Anthropology aimed to collect people on a singular bio-cultural perspective on nutrition because of which the anthropological study of food gained significance and publications on the subject increased. The subjects ranged from patterns of food sharing in various different cultural groups, consumption patterns, nutritional and medical consequences, socio-cultural significance and the categorization of food besides its availability, dispersal and disposal of food products pertaining to ecology (Gautam, 2021). Studies on food through various opportunites is given in Table 4.

Table 4: Studies on Food through Various Approaches

Sr. No.	Author (s)	Publication Year	Title
1	S. Katz	1982	"Food, Behavior, and Biocultural Evolution"
2	R. A. Rappaport	1971	"The Flow of Energy in Agricultural Society"
3	E. Messer	1976	"The Ecology of Vegetarian Diet in a Modernizing Mexican Community"
4	R. Revelle	1976	"Energy use in Rural India"
5	R. S. Khare	1992	"The Eternal Food: Gastro-nomic Ideas and Experiences of Hindus and Buddhists"
6	C. S. Fowler	1977	"Ethno ecology"
7	B. E. Montgomery and John Bennett	1979	"Anthropological Studies of Food and Nutrition: The 1940s and the 1970s"

8	C. Cassidy	1980	"Benign Neglect and Toddler Malnutrition"
9	E. B. Ross	1978	"Good Taboos, Die and Hunting Strategy: The Adaptation to Animals in Amazon Cultural Ecology"
10	E. B. Ross	1980	"Patterns of Diet and Forces of Production: An Economic and Ecological History of the Ascendancy of Beef in the United States Diet"
11	A. Sharman	1980	"Dietary Choice and Resources Allocation by Household members"
12	A. Sharman	1981	"Gastro-Politics in Hindu South Asia"

Source: Compiled by Author

Note: The list is comprehensive but no doubt there are several other studies as well. It was not possible to include all.

Food Studies in the Early 1980's: A Turning Point

During the period from 1978 to 1985, the International Committee on 'Anthropology of Food and Food Problems', co-chaired by Mary Douglas and R. S. Khare (1980), boosted the anthropology of food, culture and food problems by giving it the platform to gain recognition simultaneously at the international level. The turning point in the way food studies were being conducted was observed through the studies of Sidney Mintz (1985) and Jack Goody (1982). Food was the central focus and the main factor for studying patterns of manufacturing and supplying food, sharing it the consumption and disposal. The concept of taste and communication of food as related to everyday experiences formed the substance of several ethnographies on food. This turning point in food studies after the early 1980s is depicted in Table 5.

Table 5: Turning Point in Food Studies Post the Early 1980s

Sr. No.	Author (s)	Publication Year	Title and Content
1	S. W. Mintz	1985	'Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History'. It also cast light on the transition of sugar from gourmetto everyday food.
2	J. Goody	1982	An account of the culinary cultures of Sub-Saharan Africa and Eurasia in 'Cooking, Cuisine, and Class: A Study in Comparative Sociology'.

Source: Mary Douglas and R. S. Khare (1980)

Globalization of Food in the 21st Century

The inception of the 21st century saw a distinctive subject curve shaping towards studying food and the impact of globalization. The study of food broadened its horizons to the concept of global food systems and the cultural responses manifested by the trading of food, associated barriers and facilitations across continents of the world (Gautam, 2021). The studies of this dynamic time period are depicted in Table 6.

Table 6: Depiction of the Food Studies in 21st Century

Sr. No.	Author (s)	Publication Year	Title and Content
1	J. André	1981	L' alimentation et la cuisine a Rome
2	Mary Weismantel	1988	Food, Gender and Poverty in the Ecuadorin Andes
3	Sharry A. Innes	2001	Dinner Roles
4	Carol Counihan	2004	Depicting Food Related Works and Gender Relating Through Life Histories
5	J. Holtzman	2009	Dietary Changes Among Samburu of Northern Kenya
6	R. R. Wilk	2006	Home Cooking in the Global Village: Caribbean Food from Buccaneers to Ecotourists
7	V. Isaakidou	2007	Cooking in the Labyrinth: Exploring 'cuisine' at Bronze Age Knossos
8	Auberger and Goupil	2010	Archaeology of Food Ways
9	Wilkins and Nadaeu	2015	A Companion to Food in the Ancient World

Source: Compiled by Author

Note: The list is comprehensive but no doubt there are several other studies as well. It was not possible to include all.

The Language of Food: Anthropological Tenets

Language associated with food revolves around the structural aspects of food in terms of raw and cooked as well as other considerations. It touched upon the structuralist approach of Claude Levi-Strauss (1966). These studies are shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Linguistics of Food in Anthropology

Sr. No.	Author(s)	Publication Year	Title
1	B. Berlin	1972	Speculations on the Growth of Ethnobotanical Nomenclature
2	A. D. Fina and A. Georgakopoulou	2019	The Handbook of Narrative Analysis
3	D. R. Gabaccia	2000	We are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans

Note: The list is comprehensive but no doubt there are several other studies as well. It was not possible to include all.

According to Polat and Polat (2020), the anthropological studies on food can be evaluated under six groups which can be listed as follows:

(i) Cultural Difference: These examine the differences in patterns of food procurement, its preparation and consumption.

(ii) Change and Modernization: It looks at the ways of cooking which have been attributed to modernization and the resultant change in the lives of the populations across time and space.

(iii) Communication: How food communicates with people and helps them to establish social relations.

(iv) Religion: Symbolism and myths emanating in religion tend to dictate the use of food as encrypted in various cultures.

(v) Social Analysis: Food and beverages tend to become a part of the social and cultural entitles.

(vi) Identity established through food: The preparation and serving of food is considered as a significant symbol for identity maintenance in various communities.

The Anthropology of food as a branch of anthropology has originated from various branches of anthropology to provide an understanding of the relevance of studying food as related to man's patio-temporally. Sidney Mintz (1985) has been regarded as the 'Father of Food Anthropology' for his work 'Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History'.

Studies on food established their place in ethnographic descriptions ever since the initiation of fieldwork traditions in anthropology. The anthropological observations have always taken into account the exchanges of food as a form of the very first non-verbal communication that effectively and meaningful occurs between the observer and those being observed. During the early 1930s, the focus had been on the changes brought about by food and its impact on the food habits of a population. Anthropological concerns like the relationships of human populations and social groups as well as their dependence on their environment. Food is allied with the symbolic construction of cultures as a function of the social relations and social structures of societies. As a case in point, biological anthropologists have studied the impact of food and related behaviour on health conditions like diseases and deficiencies.

Almerico (2014), in "Food and identity: Food Studies, Cultural, and Personal Identity" introduces the concept of food studies and explores the relationship of food to the human experience as an interdisciplinary field of study focused on intricate relationships between food, culture and society.

The Need for Food Studies

Food studies examine people's relationships with food revealing a lot of the information about them. Food choices exhibit individual or group beliefs, background knowledge and assumptions. Hauck-Lawson (2004) introduced the concept of food voice. Food choices apparently unveil several stories of families, migrations, assimilation, resistance, changes over times, and personal as well as group identity.

Teaching food anthropology is essential from the curriculum point of view. However, it is essential to look at the perspective tradition and modern concepts of food while examining the avenues of learning and teaching about

food anthropology.

According to Ramhota and Vivek (2017) social change "becomes a primary focus, in terms of its directions, its processes and its origins".

The idea, that the traditional rules, norms and meanings which structure human food intake, are increasingly subjected to 'disaggregation'. This disaggregation involves a breakdown of these long-established rules, and crisis thus developed lead to a state that is termed as 'gastro-anomy' (Fischler 1980: 947).

There are likely to be individual, of course, and collective attempts to restore order to eating practices and meanings attached to food. Thus, individuals may adopt dietary regimes (weight-loss diets, vegetarianism, etc.) in an attempt to restore some 'normative logic' into their eating (Fischler 1988: 291).

The dietary choices made by each person within the context of an increasing variety of menu principles on offer become ever more important devices for establishing a sense of personal identity and expressing personal distinctiveness. It may be, however, necessary to exercise some caution while applying the broad concept of the ideology of consumerism (whether in its 'mass consumption' or its 'postmodern' form) to the activity of eating (Baudrillard, 1988).

Ideas of food production and consumption can help to divulge some of the inherent contradictions in the purpose of eating itself in a given society, and the way individuals are varyingly affected by what they eat. Giddens's (2002) writings on reflexivity have its influence on both discourse and policy. Bourdieu's (2005) concept of habitus and Habermas's (1984) analysis of the colonisation of the life world by external forces take us further in theorizing why and how people eat the way they do.

Food and Identity

Group approval or disapproval of a given food has always had an impact on food choices. This is in conjunction to why some relatively unpalatable food items are preferred by certain groups. Food has been seen as an expression of identity as is apparent in the experience of going out to eat. McComber and Postel (1992) had suggested that restaurants served much more than just food. When deciding where to dine out, the consumers exercise their singular or collective choices. They may consider a variety of factors like the menu, atmosphere, service, location and cost or value of the meal. It was observed that most of the restaurants catered to specific types of customers because of which the same diner may choose a venue based on current needs. The psychological needs tend to intertwine with social factors when foods end up meaning more than the nourishment they offer or provide (Brown, 2011).

Kittler, Sucher and Nelms (2012) had coined and utilized extensively the term 'food habits' to describe "the manner in which humans used food, including everything from how it is chosen, acquired and distributed to who prepares, serves and eats it". Research on the relationship between the foods people eat and how others perceive them besides how they see themselves has been the direction taken by further food studies. Social and psychological factors have been known to influence people's food habits and choices. Larson and Story (2009) examined these influences on "the choices people make in food consumption. Social conscience and peer pressure has been known to impact food choices" (Brown, 2011).

Food as Symbolism for Cultural Identity

It can be seen from the above discussion that food has been loaded with certain symbolic meanings based on the association with other meaningful experiences. In everyday language and common everyday life, the humble bread is a good example of the symbolism of foods. For example:

(i) "When peoples sit together with friends at a meal they are said to break bread with one another. This expression symbolizes a setting where friends come together in a warm, inviting and jovial manner to eat."

(ii) "Bread has been called the staff of life."

(iii) "The type of bread consumed by a person has been known to indicate his or her individual or group social standing. For instance, white bread has traditionally been eaten by the upper class (also known as the 'upper crust' – again a bread reference) while dark bread is consumed by the poor."

(iv) "Whole wheat bread is the bread of choice in today's society by persons concerned more with their health than their status."

(v) An affluent person has "a lot of bread."

(vi) "In some cultures, bread is shared by couples as part of their wedding ceremony."

(vii) "In the Christian religion it represents the body of Christ in the sacrament of Communion."

(viii) "Superstitions about bread have also been documented. Greek soldiers take a piece of bread from their home into battle to ensure their safe and triumphant return home. Sailors traditionally bring a bun on their journeys to prevent shipwrecks. English midwives would place a loaf of bread at the foot of a new mother's bed to prevent the woman and her child from being kidnapped by evil spirits."

There are several similar corollaries governing food that can be found in the common parlance of the world. The food choices of different cultural groups are often connected to ethnic behaviors and religious beliefs. Kittler, Sucher and Nelms (2012) addressed the influence of food habits on an individual's self-identity by stating, "Eating is a daily reaffirmation of [one's] cultural identity. Many people affiliate the foods from their culture, their childhood with warm, good feelings and memories. The food we eat and associate with is part of who we are and who we become." Foods related to culture, society institutions like from our family often become the comfort foods that may tend to seek in times of stress.

Mukhopadhyay's (2011), "Anthropology of Food in India: The Scopes and the Prospects" is a collection of anthropological writings on food and beverage across various dimensions of human behavior. Studies have critically examined the traditional knowledge as well as the political and historical perspectives in addition to the recent perceptions and popular discourses on the subject.

Scope of Studies on Food in India and Other Areas

How consumption or avoidance of certain food items acts as crucial factors in determining the position of social groups in India (and in most parts of the subcontinent) remained a popular subject matter among anthropologists. The norms and rules dictating who can accept food from whom and in what form remained equally important factors for scholars in their effort to understand social distance between Indian communities especially castes. Singh (1992) wrote on food habits in rural India is one representative of that type.

Anthropological studies on food carried out in India are moderately wide in scope. However, they are as yet not thorough enough, geographically vast and culturally varied enough for a country like India. Much of the anthropological information on behavior related to beverages, especially alcoholic ones, is scantier than that readily available on food. As anthropologists remained largely busy with the study of small scale 'traditional' communities for many years, as they feel comfortable while dealing with issues like food taboos specific to any particular caste or tribe or the culture specific cognitive categories. Issues like changes in food habit in a developing country like India in terms of who eats what, when and how under the influence of different cultural, economic and political processes which are rarely accorded a central position in anthropological research agenda. There are several issues on which anthropological studies of food in India must be taken care of.

Variation on Basis of Gender, Age and Marital Status

It is common knowledge that food and beverages are not shared equally nor at the same time in most of the Indian families irrespective of social status

of a person. Usually, the male members of the family, irrespective of age, tend to receive the best and most of the food cooked in the family kitchen. The sustained deprivation of women has often been countered by their own arrangement for food. Very few men have ever tasted dishes made the left over with skin of vegetables and leftovers from previous meals. A brief description of exclusively feminine food had been made available in some of the autobiographical works or cookbooks authored by women. It is essential, however, to unveil the detailed story and social-cultural implications of such food. The food served to infants and children also requires special attention. Weaning practices can tend to vary from region to region often due to ecological reasons. There have been enumerated variations between communities due to religious and social considerations even in the same geographical region. Marital status influences the eating habits, especially in case of the widows among certain sections of the Hindu society. Such widowed women are traditionally expected to refrain from eating 'hot' foods or those edible materials that can excite them and divert them from celibacy. All such food items possessing even mild aphrodisiac properties must be avoided by the widows at any cost. Variation on basis of religion, caste, class and education can be observed.

The most important factors responsible for preference and avoidance of certain items of food are therefore religious and related to ethical considerations. Structures and objects used for procuring, producing, processing, preserving, cooking, serving and consuming food and beverages are numerous. A large tangible part of food culture has been generated by material culture in the past studies and is the precursor to several future anthropological enquiries into food.

a) The architecture of the kitchen and even or the space used for cooking is an important component of such studies.

b) Knowledge of the technology used for making the hearth and burning appropriate and adequate fuel for cooking of food is important.

c) The pots and pans kept in a household can characterize the residents.

d) The furniture used for cooking and eating is another interesting area of study.

e) All items pertaining to food and cooking like the space, utensils and furniture used for cooking and eating food, would possibly not be equally accessible for all members of the household irrespective of their age, sex and marital status, or for the outsiders belonging to the same or some other community or caste. These are aspects that require in-depth study.

The corpus of experiences, knowledge and wisdom of a people which are stored in oral and written forms contain their perceptions about food. Oral

traditions like proverbs, rhymes, stories, puzzles, poems, riddles, songs and tales contain a vast body of information on quality of food and beverages and praise what is considered good and condemn what is thought to be bad. Studying food culture or any other aspect of culture in most of the eco-cultural zones of the country requires the institutes engaged in ethnographic and anthropologists research to agree to carry and coordinate such studies on their research agenda.

Future Research Inroads in the Indian Context

The Anthropology of Food will continue to explore a number of familiar areas in the years ahead. The social crises caused by migrants and the introduction of their food has been a favorite topic in the past. Recent attention to the strengthening of old traditions in communities hosting newly arrived immigrants. Garine (2009) represents a new direction for research and suggests other viewpoints yet to be explored. Anthropologists still have much to contribute to the history of globalization from the perspective of local communities. The Anthropology of Food will become more quantitative in the future. Currently, the literature contains little numerical data and even less statistical analysis. The overwhelming shadow of food insecurity that is threatening various parts of the world remains the veritable trip of the iceberg as far as research in this area is concerned.

The importance of food in Indian culture is immense. In the Upanishads, a Hindu religious text, food has been addressed as a "panacea" because all animate life depends on it. The Upanishads say that a mother must be very careful about the type of food she takes during pregnancy, because the mental make-up of child depends on it. The sages even suggested what food should be given to the child for the very first meal. History of Indian food has been a major part of Indian society that describes the evolution of Indian food habits in different ages. Indian food is greatly influenced by a 4000-year-old history of several cultures interrelating with the country, leading to a vast assortment of flavours. The Aryans, who came to India, brought with them knowledge of new food articles, methods of cooking and of raising food crops. In the early stages of Indian civilization, people ate vegetables, meat, eggs and fish without restriction or taboos. Slowly, there was reaction against the eating of meat because of the indiscriminate killing of animals. As with many other civilizations, food restrictions which started out for one reason or the other continued for centuries when the original premise had completely disappeared. Some restrictions were firmly imposed to protect India from getting into contact with the invaders and adopting their customs, through these rules were said to be intended to maintain the purity of the food.

Anthropologists, folklorists and sociologists always have examined "the relationship of individuals and populations to their food. In the era of economic globalization with its food inequities and scarcities, precarious and often tainted food supply, concerns about diet and health and fears of genetically modified

foods and food bioterrorism, food is recognized as a 'lens' through which we view, explore, analyze and interpret society in the present as well as in the past."

Conclusion

As an emerging field of inquiry, "food studies are intriguing in that it examines food as it relates to the human experience. Close inspection of food practices reveals an abundance of information about individuals and groups including the economic, political, social, and cultural significance of food in society".

The Postgraduate Syllabus in Anthropology under CBCS had a 75 marks paper covering 60 lectures. The topics covered under this included the meaning of food, cuisine and foodways: approaches to studying food, bio-cultural perspectives on nutrition and the concept of food security.

It is necessary that this syllabus be expanded and made an essential teaching platform for graduate and postgraduate students of anthropology. It should be added in Common Value-added Course for postgraduate and under graduate courses under NEP-2020. The subject also has tremendous relevance for students in several other disciplines as well.

The syllabus also entailed the following activities:

(i) Maintaining a daily Food Log for 2–4 weeks and analyze it from the perspective of culture and nutrition.

(ii) Describe a food memory preferably inspired from childhood; Place this food memory (by talking to parents, relatives, other members) in wider perspective- culturally, symbolically, socially, structurally etc. Specify the group for whom it his meaning, the context in which it is prepared, served and consumed.

(iii) Describe one 'special' (uncommon/ strange/foreign) food, diet, or behavior while paying attention to identification (group and space), availability, cultural and social context and used for what/how.

"The staggering increase in the scale of food literature-inside and anthropology-makes bibliographic coverage, a challenge compounded by the close intertwining of food and eating with so many other subject. Culinary competence in the west declines at almost the same rate as discrimination in taste rises. Social scientists have examined the eating habits of westerners in terms of ethnic group, region and religion" (Roseberry, 1996). Much remains to be done in exploring food ways in other areas of the world. In this setting, "anthropologists are in a good position to make useful contributions to the development of policy in regard to health and nutrition, food inspection, the relation of food to specific cultures world hunger, and other subjects." By and

large, though, they have not taken full advantage of this opportunity.

In the arising food and culinary practices and their impact on health inequalities, no new theory is required, but rather a 'reflexive revisiting of what is already known'; in other words, 'met reflections, or thoughtful, independent-minded and critical reviews of the theoretical and empirical wisdom delivered by today's dominant paradigm'. The present research attempts to do just this, testing differing theories of class, human agency, consciousness and consumption in the context of food consumption and its implications for health and society as also the world teaching and learning.

This paper highlighted the significance of this vast area of study and its relevance to the teaching of anthropology across the sub- continent.

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D. R. Sahu

TRAJECTORY OF TRIBAL RESISTANCE IN INDIA

Abstract

Tribes in the Indian sub-continent hold a historicity which is professed to be as ancient as the available references on the latter. However, the history of tribal struggle with external power since their first contact with the outside world is comparatively recent. Such a contact proved to be tragically over-whelming, devastating and unfortunate for the tribes, and led to emergence of various tribal uprisings in the form of revolts and movements of varying magnitude from time to time. The emergence of tribal uprising in India coincides with the time of widespread establishment of British empire in the country. Simultaneously, the foundation of exploitation of Indian tribes resulting in their discontentment and rebellion against government was too laid in the colonial period. Considering the question of the growth, development, quality of life and livelihood, technological advancement, equality and other issues among Indian tribes, we can find that their situation still remains poorly attended. In order to understand why and how it remains so, a recourse of their historical experience in the sub-continent becomes essential. Based on the review of literature and secondary data in the form of government records and published reports, the paper thrusts upon the outlook and understanding of tribes as a social group and discusses the trajectory and state of affairs of tribes and tribal movements in independent India.

Keywords: *Indian tribe, Tribal Resistance, Insurgency, Identity Politics*

Introduction

With India celebrating its 75 years of independence, it becomes imperative to reflect upon how far the nation has come not only in terms of economy, scientific development, technological advancements etc. but also growth, development and sustainability of human capital.

The diverse and vast nation like India, using a single, over-arching and uniform approach for dealing with elaborate ethnic variation, cultural plurality, and multiplicity of human groups, would result only in a disillusioned and a flawed meeting of needs and aspirations of the citizens. It not only calls

D. R. SAHU, Professor of Sociology, University of Lucknow, Lucknow. Email: sahu.dr@gmail.com

for an intensive investment of political and administrative will but also a thorough contextual understanding as it is an essential constitutional prerogative of each citizen to have an equal share in the fruits of development (of their nation) irrespective of their ethnicity, caste, gender, geographical location, socio-economic standing etc. What has however been widely noted is that in pre- as well as post-independent India, groups and communities which were traditionally at the disadvantaged end of the pole (e.g. tribes, traditional lower castes etc.) even today largely remain vulnerable and have experienced only a gradual or marginal improvement in their over-all socio-economic, political, educational and health status.

Schedule Tribe (ST) population in India nearly constitutes about 8.6% as per 2011 census, of the total population in the country. The highest number of STs are found in Odisha (62), Karnataka (50), Maharashtra (45), Madhya Pradesh (43) and Chhattisgarh (42) (Government of India, 2014). Of the total ST population of India, the states with highest per cent share are Madhya Pradesh (14. 68%), Maharashtra (10.07%), Odisha (9.19%), Rajasthan (8.85%) and Gujrat (8.29%), according to 2011 census. The states/Union Territories (UTs) with highest per cent concentration of their total population being ST (according to 2011 census) are Lakshwadeep (94.79%), Mizoram (94.43%), Nagaland (86.47%), Meghalaya (86.14%) and Arunachal Pradesh (68.78%) (Government of India, 2014). The most populous tribes in the country are Santhal, Bhil, Gond, Mina and Oraon.

Now, considering the question of the growth, development, quality of life and livelihood, technological advancement, equality and other issues among Indian tribes, we can find that their situation still remains poorly attended. In order to understand why and how it remains so, a recourse of their historical experience in the sub-continent becomes essential.

Retrospective View on Indian Tribes' Struggle

Tribes in the Indian sub-continent hold a historicity which is professed to be as ancient as the available references on the latter. However, the history of tribal struggle with external power since their first contact with the outside world is comparatively recent.

Over here tribes had been living in a state of relative geographical isolation, largely concentrating in forest, hilly and mountainous areas, which were rich in natural resources. Tribal habitations had no or very little contact with outside world which traditionally resulted in their autonomous lifestyle, distinctive socio-cultural, economic, political and religious institutions, and exclusive customary practices and belief system, which were 'alien' to the mainstream.

Tribal communities had a close and symbiotic relationship with land and depended upon it for agriculture (mostly shifting cultivation). A similar

relation and heavy dependence was found upon forests for hunting and food gathering as well as used various forests produce for their survival. Forests also served as sacred groves for them, and were an intricate part of their belief system. Thus, sustenance, subsistence, health, and belief pattern of the tribes i.e., a cradle-to-grave arrangement as well as an autonomous life was provided to them by their natural habitat (Sutradhar, 2015). However, this isolated, autonomous and secured life of tribes was in due course disrupted by different external powers/rules which though varied in the pre- and post-independence period but resulted in a by and large similar vulnerable and under-dog position of the tribes.

Colonial Rule and the Emergence of Tribal Revolts

Verrier Elwin (1943, 1960) an expert of tribal studies, has described about the adverse impact of tribes' contact with outsiders, on their life and economy. Such a contact proved to be tragically over-whelming, devastating and unfortunate for the tribes, and led to emergence of various tribal uprisings in the form of revolts and movements of varying magnitude from time to time.

The emergence of tribal uprising in India coincides with the time of widespread establishment of British empire in the country. During the colonial expansion extensive changes were brought about at various levels, most importantly in the prevailing land systems, with new land tenure system i.e., tenancy systems being introduced in the late 18th century, which were extended in the tribal areas as well. This ushered the entry of the British sponsored class of intermediaries belonging to Hindu social organisation e.g. non-tribal contractors, landowners and moneylenders, as well as other British officers and sympathisers (including missionaries) in the tribal habitations, to help the foreign rule in maintaining proper functioning of the newly introduced tenancy system.

The new tenancy system introduced an ownership pattern, economy (cash/market based) which was in total opposition to the traditional one being followed by the tribes (Singh, 1972). Tribes which were once the landowners, having traditional and customary rights over their land, were now converted into tenants who were required to pay land rent/tax. This period also saw severe famines, which led to compounding of land tax to be paid to the British rule, inability to pay which led to their (tribals') borrowing of money from local non-tribal moneylenders resulting in a vicious cycle of usury and indebtedness, descending into generations on several occasions and ultimately turning many landless and debt-bonded. Sinha (1968) based on his work on Santhals, comments that tribes were "systematically dispossessed of ancestral land". Intermediaries, having the patronage of British rule made most and usuriously usurped the title of tribals' traditional land as latter were illiterate, had no understanding of the existing legal system (i.e. British courts), and lacked capital as well for court battles, resulting in their loss of land ownership.

Tribes' customary rights over the forest were also heavily thwarted. The initial efforts made in this direction by British government were, First Forest Act of 1865 which discussed about the regulation of collection of forest produce. The Forest Act of 1878 further limited the use and control of tribes over the forest, e.g. pasturing and even trespassing etc. were declared contrary to law. Still, the customary rights of tribes over forest were recognised to some extent. However, the First Forest Policy of 1894 regulated the customary rights of forest tribes by restricting their privileges over forest use and even their free movement in forest.

Thus, the first contact of tribes with outsiders, popularly called "dikus", proved disastrous as it was replete with exploitation and oppression. Retired army personnel were introduced in the area who lived on the outskirt of tribal villages to help contain any incident of revolt against the British rule. This prepared a burning ground for tribal uprisings across the country during colonial period.

Tribal Movements During Colonial Period and Their Consequence

Early tribal uprisings in India can be dated back to latter half of the 18th century during which Chuar, Halba, Chakma, Pahariya and similar uprisings took place.[1] The Chotanagpur plateau i.e., central India as well as eastern and southern India saw large-scale tribal revolts involving some major ethnic groups e.g., Kol, Santhal, Munda, Gond, Kondha, Bhil and Juang tribes. In north-east India, uprising among numerically large tribes e.g. Naga, Mizo, Khasi and Garo were noted which emerged mainly in the early 19th century.

Scholars invested in studying tribal movements have classified them in a variety of categories. Ghanshyam Shah (1990) in his elaborative review of social movements in India has dealt with classification of tribal movements by various scholars.[2] He however suggests that there remains a great deal of overlapping and inter-connectedness among various categories at times as any uprising, in order to take the form of a revolt, results from a cumulative impact of various factors leading to an unbearable situation for a group or community thereby resulting in a revolt.

Prabhu (1998) has critiqued that tribal movements arose not only an issue based on repercussions rather due to common class interests of the various exploitative sections having tacit approval from the state and its political economy, which had a cumulative bearing on the over-all socio-economic, political and religious life of the tribes.

A pertinent point which Shah (1990), drawing example from the works of Mahapatra (1972), Surajit Sinha (1972) and Singh, (1983), makes is that any tribe in order to organise a rebellion in the form of an assertive movement needs numerical strength and relatively less isolation. It is so because they have a practically higher chance of greater solidarity needed to present as a

united front against an indomitable rule (Sinha, 1968; Singh, 1983b). In the Indian scene, numerically small and isolated tribes were never able to come-up with any practically assertive rebellions. Large and well-organised tribal groups have thus remained at the forefront of major tribal movements over here and it is for this reason that many widespread violent tribal movements needed military subjugation even during pre-independence period.

Tribal movements in India during British rule resulted due to a variety of reasons. Guha (1983) asserts that British colonial powers' forest policies brutally and savagely destroyed the tribe-forest 'sacred grove' inter-dynamics for its own benefits. The traditionally held rights of the forest tribes, over the period of time, were curtailed through the development of such exploitative forest policies, management and legislations.

Rebellion among Santhal, Munda, Kol and Chuar tribes arose due to socio-economic exploitation of large and small scale agriculture dependent groups as a result of land alienation and heavy revenue imposed on them resulting in exploitation at the hands of outsiders/non-tribals commissioned by British rule in tribal habitations (Singh, 1972). These uprisings were largely mowed down by use of armed retaliation by British army. Mariya rebellion happened to keep the indigenous socio-cultural and religious beliefs and tribal identity intact. The Tana Bhagat (with Oraon tribe as the focal point) also had a similar appeal. Some tribes of central India, living in close proximity to Hindu castes had their elite taken over Hindu customs and practices in the process of 'sanskritising' themselves (e.g. Munda tribe) while sections of some other tribes took over Christianity (e.g. Santhal) in search of securing equality of status and to come out of the grip of varied forms of exploitation, which practically did not happen, instead developed further discontentment among them.

Among Muriya and Koi tribes the rebellion was a result of loss of customary rights over use of forest and forest produce. This however resulted in revaluation of existing forest policy by the colonial rulers.

Naga, Mizo and Khasi revolts rose for securing political autonomy as a result of secessionist tendency among these tribes. A.P. Sinha (1972) notes that tribes of north-east India have long raised their rebellion against the British rule in their area but were never a part of the mainstream national freedom struggle as autonomous and secessionist tendencies always prevailed among native tribals and Khasis were the first to revolt over here. Jharkhand movement was also on the same lines of securing autonomous status.

Siddha and Kanhu Murmu, Jatra Bhagat, Birsa Munda, Raja Jaggannath, Rani Guidallo, Chief Bisoi are some of the 'tribal heroes', lesser known in the mainstream, who drew immense reverence among their community and were treated as demi-gods. Sinha (1968) borrows Fuchs' (1965) term "Messianic Movements" for tribal movements having valourous central

figures i.e., a charismatic leader who could lead large scale rebellion.

The organised rebellion against British rule and its emissaries had serious implications which brought about changes at various levels including administration, political, policy formulation etc. The administrative outlook of the existing rule towards tribes became more serious, resulting in rethinking and distinct efforts being invested for administration of tribes.

Surajit Sinha (1972) points out that it was after recurring tribal rebellions and their crushing down by use of military might that the colonial rulers "initiated a series of protective legislations and administrative devices in favour of the groups officially labelled as 'tribals' and very soon 'tribe' as social category distinct from the Hindu and Muslim peasantry crystallised." It was now decided by the British rulers that for a better administration of tribes they should be reserved in special areas with a 'supposition' that they would be able to manage their life and livelihood well in segregation. In this direction, in the year 1874 Schedule District Act was passed in order to exclude specific areas from coming under the ordinary law in order to 'save' tribes from exploitation at the hands of outsiders as well as to keep them away from mainstream freedom struggle. The colonial rule did not want to add an increment to the already simmering freedom movement in the country thereby allowing only the representatives of British rule to enter into these areas, and declaring it as 'prohibited' for others. Thus, came the policy of "isolation" for tribal administration.

The Schedule District Act facilitated for the appointment of an officer for administration of the area, involving civil and criminal justice, matters related to revenue etc. The tribes were further isolated from the Indian mainstream and heavily populated tribal areas were converted into "excluded" and "partially excluded area" with no permission given to common Indians to visit them (including tribal areas of north-east India).

After major tribal uprisings in various parts of the country colonial rulers understood about the strength and vigour, tribes could invest in any revolt as in most tribal insurgencies British rulers won only after using an armed retaliation. Thus, pre-independence period in the later stages saw the use of approach of isolation for tribal administration.

Verrier Elwin (1939, 1960) on the basis of his extensive work among tribes, promoted the approach of isolation as he believed that the contact of tribals with outsiders has led to their extreme exploitation, making them vulnerable with a highly destabilised economy. He proposed the concept of "national-park" for tribes, believing that isolation with minimal outside contact can only save them. This approach was, however, criticized by A.V. Thakkar, a Gandhian, who asserted that tribes should not be treated as museum exhibits and left alone to deal with their situation.

Ghurye (1963) advocated the approach of assimilation of tribes into the Hindu fold. This approach was also criticised as assimilation of tribes would require them "to "melt" in the "mainstream", rather than living together but separately in everlasting relations of interdependence with other communities" (Srivastava, 2008). It would mean for any tribe to completely give up their culture, customs or practices, which in no condition is ideal. It was in much later stages that the approach of integration was adopted which even Verrier Elwin later subscribed to.

Tribes in The Post-Independence Period

Tribe as a social category

Before discussing the trajectory and state of affairs of tribes and tribal movements in independent India, it is pertinent to discuss about the outlook and understanding of tribes as a social group. Any effort invested to organise criteria or salient features to define a tribe only for the purpose of academic deliberation or use, will only provide a part view or understanding. It is for this reason that constitutional and legal standpoints are considered significant in many societies (Beteille, 1998).

Beteille (1998) points out that in India defining a tribe has remained ambiguous because of the early colonial preoccupation of describing them as 'primitive', 'aboriginal' or 'autochthon', based on their relative state of isolation, geography, level of contact with mainstream, economic activities and in most blatant case based on their belief pattern[3]. The idea however had been to place them at a particular stage of cultural development. This, nevertheless, served a very restricted purpose and more of a 'text-book' definition as in due course because of culture contact with neighbouring and outside world, the tribes were experiencing a continuous transformation, with many of them after long term contact adopting the Hindu fold while many became a part of peasantry and left their erstwhile non-cultivator or nomadic status (Xaxa, 1999; Srivastava, 2008).[4] There are cases of even those tribes who adopted other religious ideologies for a perceived emancipation from their miserable life condition (discussed earlier).

The approach of sovereign India towards tribes differs from the previous colonial rule but the ambiguity while defining a tribe or its salience still prevails. In an effort to bring about any 'concrete' difference in the life of tribes, the category of Scheduled Tribe (ST), having constitutional sanctity, was adopted in India soon after independence. However, even after several years of independence, at the level of draft national tribal policy itself it has been tough for the policy makers to get rid of a 'frozen picture' of tribes or 'value-loadedness' of assumptions or stigma associated with them, and the state has still not been able to defy the insinuations of "primitiveness" associated with tribes at a wider level even if done on paper (Srivastava, 2008).[5] Today, with nearly

8.6% of the total population of India (2011 census) and over 700 identified STs, there is still no discreet operational definition or set of criteria to define a tribe, in the absence of which the vision of proper mainstreaming of Indian tribes, keeping in mind their context specific needs, seems abjectly uncertain. It thus forms a burning ground for the simmering dissatisfaction among tribes and an element of suspicion they have for Indian state as there have been continued occurrence of instances when tribes or their welfare and development was brutally ignored by the government.

State, Development and Tribal Exploitation Post-independence

The foundation of exploitation of Indian tribes resulting in their discontentment and rebellion against government was laid in the colonial period. This period saw widespread revolts of various magnitudes along the length and breadth of the country. Socio-economic derailment of tribes was a very prominent adverse impact of British rule. Besides, the belief of tribes in formal administration as well as outsiders was reduced drastically as the administrative policies of pre-independence period used to govern them proved to be catastrophic. Their source of livelihood dwindled, survival reduced to inconsequence, their independent and autonomous lifestyle went missing, their social, economic, religious and political institutions drifted to periphery, thus in all a thorough subjugation of tribes happened.

Since 1947 with India attaining self-governance and Indian state becoming the instituted guardian of all its citizens, it was believed that the shadows of a tumultuous past of tribes would wane, which however did not happen. Rule changed but not the marginality or dismal position of tribes, or their ever-growing resentment against the state and its over-bearing policies for them as it largely focussed on the approaches of isolation and assimilation. Nature of exploitation subjected to them underwent only a slight alteration from past but the broad range impact on the life of tribes was similar as in the pre-independence period.

Post-independence period saw a major task of nation-building before the Indian state. This not only involved industrial and economic development and infrastructure building but also delivery of equitable justice and distribution of fruits of development to all groups be it mainstream or living in isolation. However, the initial major task was of generating the sources of development for which setting-up of industries was essential. This required space for setting-up industries, mining of available natural resources, construction of dams to counter instances of poor weather as well as to promote proper irrigation facilities for a successful agricultural outcome, setting-up of hydro-electric projects, strengthening communication infrastructure, and most importantly generating employment opportunities by developing and promoting human capital, as envisioned in the initial five-year plans. It was this urgent and indispensable need of rapid industrialisation to salvage the weak economic

condition of a newly independent nation that turned the needle of national level planning, policy and implementation of plans and programmes heavily inclined towards generating and securing mainstream economic development thereby bringing about a plethora of untold miseries for the tribes (Nathan & Xaxa, 2012).

State Sponsored Development: A Recipe for Tribal Miseries

It had been the worst stroke of destiny for the tribes that their habitation had been rich in various natural resources e.g. minerals, ores, forest wealth etc. This served as the ideal foundational ground for various industries and projects to be set-up there (e.g. Bokaro steel plant, Chittaranjan Locomotive Works etc.) (Vidyarthi, 1968). Such a development was perceived to lead to mainstreaming of tribes along with their rapid development which rather proved otherwise as they were now further exposed to non-tribal moneylenders, merchants, contractors and migrants which destabilized their livelihood and economy (Elwin, 1943).

Establishment of industries required clearing of large tracts of land and forest, away from human habitation or use. Forests being the mainstay of tribal economy were not an easy trade to make for the tribals as it not only provided food, timber, wood, fuel etc. to them but also held a cultural and symbolic significance i.e., a greater part of their total life depended on it (Guha, 1996). A huge share of their rights over forests was already lost in the colonial period and whatever remained was now jeopardised. Thus, the newly introduced state-sponsored development spelt doom for them.[6]

Cultivable land as well as forest cover traditionally owned and used by tribals was now acquired by state in the name of development by giving compensation in return and a promise of resettlement and rehabilitation. This however happened with only a small section of affected tribals in question, i.e., as less as a quarter of the total displaced could largely achieve a proper compensation (Dasgupta, 1964). Acquisition of land continued under the colonial Land Acquisition Act of 1894 (till post 2010) which was applicable for private land ownership as such those who did not qualify for it were not even considered project affected persons (PAPs) (Baviskar, 2019).

Efficient use and investment of capital was not in the general habit of tribals as they were more closer to self-sufficient subsistence rather market economy. They squandered the compensation money soon resulting them in working as unskilled labourer on their own land besides having no sync with formal work culture (Das, 1990). This led to widespread *development-induced-displacement* and a resultant marginalised life of affected tribes. It had its psychological impact over the tribals as well as they got uprooted from their motherland along with an adverse impact over their social institutions and undue harassment of their women and children (Narayan, 1988). [7]

Besides the development induced alienation of land and forest rights among tribes, another major reason was lack of proper and regular survey and settlement practices as well as a complicated system of land tenure. The tribal policy adopted by Indian state has remained less sensitive to tribal values as a result of which a retaliatory forced encroachment of forest land by the tribes in some areas has occurred, and legal battles coupled with violent conflicts with forest and other state officials with due support civil society have become frequent (Rao, Deshingkar & Farrington, 2006; Sen & Lalhrietpui, 2006).

Narayan (1988) suggests that in the course of nation building it has been the complex interplay of economic and political forces, along with failure of administrative machinery to keep the needs of tribals and their right-based rehabilitation into consideration that has led to their miserable condition and several tribal movements.

Rehabilitation and Resettlement: A Faltered State Practice

Rehabilitation and resettlement policy of Indian government over the years has been the weakest link and the major factor leading to various tribal movements post-independence (Rao, Deshingkar & Farrington, 2006). The basic factors leading to tribal movements in post-independence India have been alienation of land and forests among tribes who traditionally depended upon it, encroachment of the tribal habitat and their traditional livelihood sources by migrants and other better educated and technologically advanced outsiders having thick idea of market economy and serving as the controllers of the new development opportunities in tribal areas. This was coupled by state apathy and contentious policy and planning related to resettlement and rehabilitation of affected tribes, even though there had been formation of different governments at the centre over time (Sethy, 2016).[8]

Sen & Lalhrietpui (2006) while describing about the ineffective and contentious role of state in meeting the tribal needs have pointed out that "…earlier as part of its socialist nation-building processes and later as a part of its neoliberal structural readjustments, post-colonial India has set a poor track record". The burden of nation building and economic development was unwarrantedly put on tribes who bore the price of being 'nature-dependent'. Today in India a large number of "*Micro-level Movements*" can be observed, occurring against unsustainable industrialisation, mining operations etc. (Sethy, 2016).

In the decade of 90s when economic liberalisation was introduced in the country many tribal areas witnessed Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) for mining and other activities leading to an even faster pace of industrialisation coupled with widespread displacement leading to a capitalist mode of development (Rout, 2015; Baviskar, 2019).

The Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) which started in protest against

Sardar Sarovar Dam at its centre point, led to massive displacement of tribes, destruction of forest and cultivable land, with serious environmental implications.[9] The movement was not only against several small and big dams to be built over Narmada but also contentious process of compensation, and misplaced resettlement and rehabilitation of the affected tribes (Sutradhar, 2015). It posed a strong challenge to the state policies for allowing capitalist mode of development with insensitivity towards tribal plight and environment (Baviskar, 1995).[10] Contentious Polavaram hydro-electric project on river Godavari (Andhra Pradesh) is another example making the lives of native tribals (Konda Reddy tribals) miserable, with neither state or central government paying any heed to them.

Odisha which is highly rich in mineral resources like bauxite (iron ore etc.) witnessed unmindful mining projects set up in the areas of Sambalpur, Rayagada, Kashipur, Niyamgiri, Keonjhar etc. Such mining projects not only affected the tribal economy but also influenced the local environment adversely as large scale deforestation started since then over there.

Introduction of such development projects have led to severe protests and resistance movements by local tribes like Dongaria Kondha, Majhi, Santhal, Bhuiyan, Juang etc., some took over to even armed protests. It was noted that most tribals were denied compensation or proper rehabilitation by the government. Many local resistance groups were formed e.g. "Niyamgiri Suraksha Samity Manch", and similar ones, to revolt against such projects, in order to save the natural habitat as well to raise the demand for proper compensation, resettlement and rehabilitation of the affected tribes with the support of civil society (Vidyarthi, 1968; Sutradhar, 2015; Sethy, 2016). Srikant (2009) asserts that on one hand such unsustainable development projects have "become synonymous with destruction", and on the other they have brought the environmental and ecological concerns to the fore vis-à-vis development strategies of the state. Bhowmik (1988) and Baviskar (2019) critically point out that state efforts towards tribal development could not become a success as it had a capitalist mode leading to a 'trickle-down' of a larger part of instituted funds to the actual target group.

Tribal Resistance and Insurgency

Tribal exploitation has also resulted in separatist tendencies demanding autonomy and separate statehood. Case of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) as a tribal movement is a brilliant example in this context as it led to the formation of Jharkhand state (with non-linguistic base) having tribal domination, in the year 2000 (Tillin, 2011; Sethy, 2016). However, JMM today has a shrunken political presence because of a disillusioned leadership and weakening support of marginalised sections (Das, 1990; Kumar & Rai, 2009, Kumar & Panda, 2018).

Secessionist and separatist demands for autonomy have been a dominant feature of the north-east India as ethnicity remains the mainstay of tribes over here. Besides, their socio-cultural, demographic, geographic and economic marginalisation was supplemented by perceived discrimination, government policies and other factors (Ghosh, 2003).

Mainstreaming of north-eastern tribes had been a herculean task for Indian government and on several occasions made possible only by use of army as armed rebellion is common in the area (Nag, 2009). Movements making demand for a separate state have been a feature of many other north-east tribes as well. Besides this, several examples of unsustainable development projects being run in the area resulting in heavy deforestation, land alienation, large scale displacement, exploitation by non-tribals and outsiders, environmental degradation etc., are dealing a blow on the tribal life in a multidimensional way (e.g. thermal power projects, wild life sanctuaries etc.).

Long termed exploitation of tribes in the name of development at the hands of non-tribals and even state machinery has led to tribal movements with a bent towards left wing extremism. Guha (2007) laments that tribes are even more disadvantaged and deprived than their dalit counterpart as "…they have been unable to effectively articulate their grievances through the democratic and electoral process". Apathy of the state machinery has led to the increasing naxalite influence over the tribes though it has not proved to be a panacea for the long standing tribal grievances as was expected by the tribals.

In order to bring down the Maoist influence over tribal areas, the government evolved a counter-insurgency or a state-sponsored 'vigilante' mechanism called as "Salwa Judum" which has rather proved to be counter-productive as these personnel have indiscriminately devastated tribal villages, harassed tribal women and children arbitrarily, i.e. gross human rights violations have taken place with tacit state support, thereby escalating miseries of tribes and a raging civil war in Bastar and surrounding regions which later spread to southern states as well (Sundar, 2016). Its repercussion has been that naxal cadres have started eliminating any sign or personnel found associated with government (Guha, 2007). However, in the year 2011 the landmark Supreme Court judgement banned state-supported vigilante groups.

Identity Politics

Politics of identity surrounding tribes in India has a multidimensional expression. At a wider national level it attracts a 'common sense' understanding indicative of a single inclusive entity with negligible importance given to specific geography, historicity, ethnicity, socio-cultural or other factors, though difference from the 'mainstream' is surely recognised. On the contrary, at a micro level these implications become highly pronounced as they hold immense meaning to the members of each tribal group, providing

validity to the distinctiveness of each as that marks its identity.

Xaxa (2005) makes a sharp retort at the politics of identity of tribes. He has pointed that the nascent idea regarding tribal identity in post-independence period was formed by the prevailing political discourse with varying approaches of assimilation (right-wing bent) as well as those vouching for integration of tribes, which he suggests is an imposition of identity. He notes that education, continuous exploitation of tribals and the development induced miseries in their life has actually encouraged them towards reflexivity resulting in formulation of self-perceived sense of identity today.

Politics of identity has a greater role to play in tribal life. With India gaining independence and constitution of India coming into force, affirmative action and positive discrimination for tribal development, and ensuring tribal rights and social justice, have sprung up a compendium of issues.

Having a ST status carries constitutionally sanctioned privileges with it, which continuously drives tribal groups to attain it, by demanding it through organised movements based on their perceived criteria for qualification. It also carries a contentious aspect in cases when groups enjoying a reserved status in one state (or several others) do not have it in another. It results not only in a poor situation for such groups where they are 'unprivileged' but also develops a sense of resentment against the government. A case in point is of Koch Rajbanshis, a tea tribe of Assam (Pathak, 2010; Roy, 2014; Sharma, 2018). In Bihar and Assam, Koch Rajbanshis enjoy an Other Backward Classes (OBC) status, in West Bengal scheduled caste (SC) status and in Meghalaya they have a ST status. This has led to politicisation and assertion of identity and ethnicity for seeking equal rights and privileges (Sharma, 2018). Prabhu (1998) thus makes a pointed observation that today "tribal movements signal a shift from resistance to resurgence, towards ethno-development".

Another important case as to how politics of identity while pronouncing one kind of solidarity disrupts the larger solidarity and tosses up the true aim behind concretising and asserting identity for a greater cause has been noted by Kumari et al. (2021) in the Jaunsar-Bawar region, an identified 'Scheduled Tribe Area'. Local groups over here which identify themselves as traditional privileged castes enjoy the benefits of the ST status and dominate the local politics while those identified as Scheduled Castes, the actual needy, have been pushed to the periphery while standing a chance of availing the benefits of development.

Nonetheless, tribal identity has over the years experienced a vivid change. With greater and growing contact with mainstream, affirmative action, positive discrimination, education, state efforts, and secular processes like modernisation, urbanisation, globalisation, neo-liberal economy etc., the perceived stereotypes associated with tribes are not practically operative today.

Change being constant has affected and driven a sense of dilemma or "loss of identity" among many tribal individuals today. It is their culture, traditional history, customs and language that resurge the sense of 'real' identity among them, many of whom have otherwise experienced a transformative 'homogenising' influence over them due to previously mentioned factors. What has not changed though, to a great extent, is the general 'mass' outlook towards them even if lacking a practical merit. Continuous contestations of tribal identity of varied nature are thus a significant reality in the present times.

Inclusion of Tribes: A Reality or Distant Dream

Constitution of National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) (a constitutional body) under Article 338A of the constitution (89th Amendment) Act, 2003, Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas Act (PESA Act) 1996, Forest Rights Act (2006), article 342, Vth and VIth Schedule of the constitution, fundamental rights as well as safeguard of social, economic, employment, cultural and educational rights, vested in the Indian constitution by way of various articles and acts are some of the important efforts and measures made for securing tribal development.

Report of the high level committee on socio-economic, health and educational status of tribal communities of India (2014) is a commendable work in tribal development (GoI, 2014). It mentions how state has worked towards development of tribes through several secular means but has invested least effort in safeguarding them from the elements of exploitation as exploitative land, forest, development and other state policies continue to make them vulnerable.

Even after several affirmative, legal and judicial provisions being formulated for securing justice for tribes, there general situation has not altered much and a life of 'subaltern' is lived by most till today. The primary indicators of development i.e., health, education, livelihood condition and status do not show any great improvement (GoI, 2014). Thus, it clearly indicates that a very slow paced development is taking place and their lived-life is still marginalised. However, a silver lining that shines bright in this dismal picture is that recently a member of the biggest ST in India was appointed as the head of Indian state. Still, it is a long way to imagine a substantial improvement in the tribal life in general.

Concluding Remarks

Serious neglect and deprivation, widespread poverty, poor health and educational status of tribes, exploitation and oppression by traders and money lenders, absence of an effective and sensitive administration are some of the main factors that have continued to plague tribal life since ages and even today.

In order to bring about practically viable tribal development, what is essentially required, as noted by anthropologists, sociologists, civil society members, social workers at large, is not a homogenous or an over-arching approach to deal with tribal situation. In order to integrate tribes well into the mainstream, a contextual and empathetic understanding and management of tribal issues and concerns is needed on the part of the state, without compromising the tribes' specific needs and aspirations under the garb of 'greater good or development'.

Notes

1 K.S. Singh (1985) has proposed a three-phase division of tribal movements in India based on their time of emergence. He identifies first phase between 1795-1860, second phase between 1860-1920, and third phase from 1920 till Indian independence. These phases correspond to different stages of establishment, expansion and occurrence of British rule in India.

2 Shah (1990) using Mahapatra's (1972) famous article "Social Movements among Tribes of India" has discussed about three main categories of tribal movements used by him. The first category is of "reactionary" movements, second of "conservative" movements and third of "revisionary or revolutionary" movements. He further includes Surajit Sinha's (1972) classification of tribal movements into a) Ethnic rebellion, b) Reform movements, c) Political autonomy movements within the Indian Union, d) Secessionist movements, e) Agrarian unrest. Next, he includes K.S. Singh's (1983a) four-fold classification based on i) Political autonomy, ii) Agrarian and forest based issues, iii) Sanskritization, and iv) Cultural movements for script and language. For the purpose of analysis Shah has himself classified tribal movements into (a) Ethnic movements; (b) Agrarian and forest rights movements; (c) Environmental movements (d) Involuntary displacement and rehabilitation movements; and (e) Political movements around the nationality question for a separate state.

3 In India tribes are commonly referred to as '*adivasi*', 'adimjati', '*janjati*' etc.

4 Srivastava (2008) points that the ambiguity around defining a tribe goes to the extent that certain communities which are classified as tribe in one state hold the status of caste in another.

5 In the year 2006 Government of India renamed the category primitive tribal group (PTG) to particularly vulnerable tribal group (PVTG) to avoid any implications 'primitiveness' being attached to tribes.

6 Roy Burman (1982, 2006) a champion of tribal rights has continuously vouched for safeguard of the customary tribal rights over the forests.

7 Narayan (1988) has discussed about an exclusive Oraon festival named "Jani Shikhar" which came on the verge of extinction due to widespread displacement and development activities.

8 Beginning with the first dam project "Hirakud" set up in Odisha in 1950's, displaced over lacks of tribals from several hundred villages. In the decade of 60s Rourkela Steel Plant (Sundargarh district, Odisha) also displaced hundreds of tribal villages. In the following decades Cachar Paper Mills of North Cachar Hills district (Assam) reduced the tribe inhabited forest area, Tuli Paper Mills of Nagaland also acted

similarly. Establishment of several thermal power stations in north-east and other parts of the country also proved disastrous for the tribes. Various industrial plants in central and eastern India came up.

9 NBA involved native tribes, administrators, educationists and members of civil society e.g., Medha Patkar and baba Amte as lead figures.

10 In the light of NBA, in the year 1990, B.D. Sharma an IAS officer cum social worker wrote to the Supreme Court of India requesting the constitution of a commission named National Commission for Scheduled Caste (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) for delivering socio-economic justice to displaced and affected tribes by the Sardar Sarovar Dam project and their proper rehabilitation, and over-all protection of the rights of SCs and STs.

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Anurekha Chari Wagh

PUROHITAS: NEGOTIATION STRATEGIES, SHIFTING BOUNDARIES AND REFRAMING SACRED SPACES[1]

Abstract

The paper addresses the process of reframing sacred spaces from within spaces of privilege. While one recognises that for purohitas, their status as priests, places them in a position of privilege, their gender pushes them into marginalized spaces where they constantly negotiate for their rights, dignity and acceptance. The paper addresses three issues: One, it highlights how women are challenging the entrenched Brahmanical patriarchal 'religious sacred spaces', by claiming the right to perform and preside over religious rituals as a professional purohita. Two, can we think of everyday resistance in the lives of people who, even when seemingly privileged, are often pushed to the fringes. Three, if the agents themselves have no clear articulation of their agency, then would it still be considered agential? The paper based on field work in Pune, Maharashtra and using gendered theorisation of religious agency and negotitiation explores how the identity of a trained professional religious self i.e purohita, helps women to negotiate, shift and reframe the visible and invisible boundaries of the sacred spaces.

Keywords: *Purohitas (women priests), Gender, Negotiation, Doing religion, Reframing sacred spaces.*

Introduction

Purohitas[2] (Hindu women priests) in India inhabit a space that is a blend of privilege and marginalization. While being a priest is a position of privilege, their gender identification as 'women' pushes them into marginalized spaces where they have to constantly negotiate for their rights, dignity and recognition. The paper addresses three issues: One, it highlights how *purohitas* are challenging the entrenched Brahmanical patriarchal 'religious sacred spaces', by claiming the right to perform and preside over religious rituals as a professional *purohita*. This professional identity of being a *purohita*, is not only giving them new aspirations and goals, but also respect and recognition as a professional in some ways. Two, can we think of everyday resistance in the lives of people who though seemingly privileged, are pushed to the fringes.

ANUREKHA CHARI WAGH, Department of Sociology, University of Hydrabad, Hydrabad-500046, E-mail: anurekha@uohyd.ac.in

Three, if the agents themselves have no clear articulation of their agency, then would it still be considered agential? The paper draws upon gendered theorisation of religious agency and negotiation of spaces to examine the how the identity of a trained professional self, i.e., women purohita, help them to negotiate, strategize and reframe the visible and invisible boundaries of the sacred spaces. The paper is based on the narratives of women mostly from the dominant caste who have been trained as *Purohita* (Hindu priests) and have been performing and conducting religious rituals in the city of Pune, Maharashtra, India. The narratives help us to explore the process of negotiation, which is done through three processes namely; one, getting themselves trained as certified *Purohitas*/priests- '*Adhikrut Patra'* (legitimate and certified priests), by undergoing a training programme organized by Jnana Prabodhini, an organization based in Pune, Maharashtra two, their pride in their professional identity of priests and three, the way in which they challenge normative prescriptions of purity and pollution associated with 'female body'.

The chapter is organized into three sections. **Section one Jnana Prabhodhini: Training of *Purohitas*** highlights the manner in which the organization trains the women and the reasons for not dismissing women as priests **Section two, Negotiating Visible-Invisible Boundaries and Religious Agency**, highlights how women by appropriating religious spaces that are controlled and accessed only by men, create a dynamic religious self, which frames their religious agency. The third section, **Doing Religion: *Purohitas* and Negotiation of Spaces**, highlights the ways in which *purohitas* have reframed not only their religious selves, but also their practices and spaces. This section is followed by the conclusion.

Section One: Jnana Prabhodhini: Making of the Religious Self

The organization Jnana *Prabodhini* is crucial to the making of the religious self of the *Purohitas*. By training the women as *purohitas*, the organisation has played an important role in the making of their religious self. What is this organization all about? Dyahadroy (2016) states that Jnana Prabhodini 'has a political project of creating a community that poses a challenge to the state as well as those groups seeking to develop alternate anti-caste, secular identities' (2016:77).

As Dyahadroy writes (2016) Prabodhini, 'combines science (new innovations, usability in daily life), knowledge (both modern scientific and indigenous), culture (predominantly Hindu Brahmanical), religion (Hindu), and values (enforcing existing hierarchies) making space for reinventing and reinterpretation of Hindu tradition for new times and on new sites' (pp 90). By the mid1980s, Dyahadroy (2016:80) argues Prabodhini had an important place in Pune's educational and cultural practices and that there was a clear link between aspirations of the new middle class growing in the city of Pune to seek scientific leadership in building a Hindu nation. In discussions with the

purohitas, one could sense how the organization gave these women a sense of purpose, a feeling of worthiness and the confidence of becoming perceived as a person of consequence. According to them, the identity as a *purohita*, gave them a sense of life purpose, and respect.

Dr Manisha Sethe, the head of the *Santrika*[3], shared that, in 1990, the organization started a training programme on Priesthood- *Purohitas,* where they emphasized instilling the 'right *Samkaras'* (values). According to her, 'the eligibility for this training for Purohitas are men and women of all castes and classes, who are above 18 years and below 60 years and have knowledge in Sanskrit language. The idea is to make everyone '*swayampurohit*' (one who is a priest herself). The reasons behind such a move were to rebrand Hinduism as a religious practice, where the relationship to God would have no intermediaries, and believers could be self- reliant, in terms of the performance of ritual practices and maintaining accountability. Anyone can perform all the rituals themselves and thus be accountable to themselves while performing the rituals' (Interview on 16th March 2018; Tilak Road, Pune).

Dr. Shethe says, '*immense work has to be done on the individual so that one can be transformed into a disciplined, enlightened person within a traditional perspective. The first process is that of 'unlearning'*. Analysis of the one-year course design revealed a well-designed and planned structure, with equal emphasis on theory and practical. In general, the classes have an hour long duration, taking place five days a week (Monday to Fridays). The focus is on encouraging learning and chanting of mantras, so as to make its pronunciation fluent and smooth.

According to the organisation's principles[4] the role of the *Purohit* has to be freed of Brahminical domain, thereby redefining the right to perform as a purohit. It emphasizes that Religion is dynamic and diverse, where rather than the ritual, the ambience of the place, particularly its cleanliness, purity, peace, solidarity, brotherhood, faith is crucial. Further learning the meaning of mantras is prioritized over the mantras itself. The organisation also mentions that caste and gender does not decide one's eligibility, and anyone has the equal right to perform as *Purohits*. The aim is to emphasize the fact that a religious leader is not one who is divinely ordained – upper caste Brahmin male - but anyone who desires to be so, irrespective of caste, class and gender. People, irrespective of caste, class and gender, should be encouraged to perform the rituals (but after necessary training) so that it could be performed in a well-managed, disciplined and time- efficient manner. It questions the ascribed right entrenched within the caste system. Thus, to become a *purohit*, one need not be born into a family of religious priests and be born as a male, but all that they have to do is to undergo a training programme, which ranged from 4 months to 1 year, with a complete set of syllabi, classes, exams, tutorials, practical demonstration so that they could become certified *purohitas*- 'Adhikrut Patra'.

This shift, I believe, from a divinely ordained priest to one trained, challenging both gender and caste does seem to have immense possibilities for secularizing religious practices at least in theory. Though traditionally there were rules with regard to performance of *Purohit*, the organisation believes that religious rituals and practices are dynamic and thus needs to evolve so it is important that these be reframed, reworked and changed keeping in mind contemporary society.

The specific pedagogical training includes: publishing a number of booklets explaining various rituals, detailing ceremonies and mantras. Further training the *purohita* to pronounce mantras in the way they can be understood. In the classes the women are encouraged to break mantras into parts and make clients repeat after them. The idea is to engage the clients in the process so that they are involved in the rituals and feel responsible. Further in the course the *Purohitas a*re trained to explain each and every mantra so that the people recognize the value of the ritual. In the training sessions the teachers use a number of teaching and learning techniques, such as lectures and learning by rote, with an emphasis on practical training, (Head of the Santrika, Jnana Prabhodhini, Pune). At present there are 28 women registered as *purohitas* in Pune and 18 in Dombivili, Mumbai due to the demand for their services since the inception of the course (Prabodhini website).

How does one interpret this? The organisation tries to frame religious rituals as scientific, logical, and to this end seeks to build a modern rational perspective of religion. To do this the organisation claims to have built a network of "modernized and rationalised' religious priests who would link the shift from the traditional conceptions of religion that viewed castes and women, especially their body as impure, to a notion of religion which is more scientific. It is a powerful idea. As one of the *purohitas*, Tai 1[5], has received dual training, initially from traditional priests- *gurus*, and then later through the *Jnana Prabhodini* course. She was drawn towards the course and wanted to be trained to be a *Purohit. This experience of being a purohita, helped her in having a closer relationship with religion.* She says, I quote, 'me he samaj karya mahun karte' (I am doing this as social work) thus for her performing these religious activities as a *Purohit* is social work that nurtures society'. The most crucial learning that she learnt from Dynana Prabodhini is the realization that '*Streeyana adhikar ahe dharmik karya karayala* ' (women have the right to perform religious rituals).

It is a powerful expression, where women are claiming to have the right to officiate religious rituals and lead the prayer. This is done by claiming her right to be the integral part of the religious rituals, to occupy and own physically the sacred spaces and reject strongly the notion of the female body, 'her body' as ritually impure. The sites of hegemony within the practices of Hindu religion, were reframed and restructured by the purohitas, by their reclamation of the sacred spaces as persons of religious authority.

Adding to this, Tai 2, states that because women now have the right to perform *dharmic karya* (religious rituals), they also have the right to experience – *Munji* (thread ceremony performed within upper castes that signals access to learning). An important initiation ceremony to access knowledge, where traditionally Hindu women of all castes were denied access to Munji, and thereby to knowledge. Now by reclaiming the right to undergo the *Munji* ceremony, the idea is to claim access to religious knowledge as a right. What is important is the recognition that this right to knowledge, is not only as a learner but also as a teacher and interpreter of sacred texts. In arguing for Hinduism as an inclusive, tolerant and scientific religion and making it accessible to all, especially the educated middle class mobile upper caste groups, the organization emphasises connecting with Hindus in the diaspora.

Consequently, they have published booklets detailing religious rituals in both the original Marathi and Hindi along with translations, transforming hitherto complex religious rituals into simple "do-it-yourself" kits[6]. For their convenience Jnana Prabodhini has translated the rituals and rites such as Marriage, *Namakaran* (naming ceremony); *Upananyanor Munji* (Thread Ceremony), *Shashtyabdi* (Completing 60 years), *Vastushanti* (entering a new house), *Ganesh Puja, Satyanarayan Puja,* into English (Marriage Booklet, pg 1; Janana Prabodhini 2014).

Purohitas perform a number of wedding ceremonies in foreign lands. According to Tai 3, there is a high demand for 'Women *Purohita'*, particularly when marriages are mixed (inter caste/religious/nationality/language), and there is a specific requirement for the explanation of mantras in English. In particular, educated young people demand their services as they are inquisitive about the meaning of each religious ritual, offering and Mantra, used in the wedding ceremony[7] (Purohita 16th March 2018).

While reading their booklets I was reminded of the DIY (do-it-yourself) kits which are available in the market of world-famous paintings, which not only demystifies art but also makes it accessible. The demystification process is also related to the manner in which requirements for the ceremony is mentioned in the booklets[88]In the booklet on marriage, they mention the following articles needed for the ceremony. It includes the following: The organization mentions clearly in one of the booklets, 'Thousands of Hindus are settled outside India all over the world. They have strong ties with the Hindu Culture and way of life, and feel that they should, on such important occasions of life such as marriage, avail themselves of the rich, noble heritage of the Hindu thought. They like to perform *Samskara* (it is an emotional commitment expressed in traditional action) in the traditional Hindu way[9]". In this way I believe that the organization is engaging with the role of Purohitas and positioning them 'not as revered gurus but as facilitators of religious practices for the modern Hindus who want to engage with tradition and religion scientifically in the contemporary world'.

An analysis of the curriculum and its designs reveals the aim of the organisation to alter some religious practices to suit contemporary demands. This aim seems to situate religious practices within the secular domain. The emphasis on making the rituals simpler in practice and performance seems to push towards demystifying religious practices. This aim is different from the traditional conceptions of religion and its practice which seemed to be based on mystification, being dense and complex. Further the idea of training anyone to be a priest or *Purohit* questions one of the core traditional conceptions of Hindu religious practices, that purity, auspiciousness and skill is inherently ascribed. By redefining *Purohits* as a skill- based occupation that could be learnt by anyone irrespective of class, caste and gender, frames a contemporary understanding of religion and religious practices that is based on an individual's own relationship with religion and its practices.

In this manner the organisation seems to be different, but the fact that they still attach themselves to Hindutva ideology makes it challenging to develop a nuanced analysis. While there seems to be a possibility for the analysis to be framed within the larger Hindutva argument, but in such an analysis the agency of the women is completely missing or is framed as conscious believers of Hindutva politics.

Discussion with the *purohitas* on the other hand has pushed for a subtle analysis where one finds two trends that complicates one's understanding of religion, religious practices and individual agency. Though these *Purohitas* believed in Hinduism on the one hand they rejected a monolithic understanding of the religion. The importance of the organisation for them lay in the fact that it trained them in a skill and gave them space as 'right to perform', within the largely constricted religious space. Such analysis avoids simplistic reduction of perceiving Hindu religious practices with Hindutva politics. Maybe it exists, but what is important is that by providing for such spaces, it is making for a strong case for gendered understanding of religion and religious practices.

Secondly, if one analyses data from the field it is clear that the majority of the *purohitas* belonged to the lower middle class and middle, majorly upper castes with husbands in stable jobs or have retired from government jobs. Further what was interesting that most of the *purohitas* had children settled abroad, working in respectable private companies. The women thus had a steady income and secure livelihood and did not need to depend on their earnings as a purohita to maintain their everyday expenses.

Although these *purohitas* have been working together for quite some time, the development of a strong network of sisterhood between them was missing. The reason why it was difficult to develop a network of sisterhood among them, is because even when the training took place in group settings, the focus was on the individual. The idea behind the course was not to develop a collective religious agency, but to build individual capabilities, so that

purohitas can function and perform their duties as religious priests efficiently and professionally. It was essentially a skill building exercise and not perceived as building collectives among women. On the contrary one could observe that the Purohitas were extremely competitive.

Research on women coming together and framing their collective religious agency has been conducted and highlighted especially in the work of African American Muslim women who appropriated and negotiated their religious agency within Mosque (Nageeb 2007; Prickett 2015). Here in the case of *purohitas*, it was more of an individual orientation, where they tried to prove to their clients that they were more efficient than the other. It was more of a business model than that of women coming together to form a collective religious agency.

The research on women's collective agency was framed in the context where women came together as a collective to claim some of the spaces denied to them within a specific religious space. On the other hand, in the context of *Purohitas,* women identified themselves more as an 'individual agent', who trained themselves to perform religious rituals as an economic activity. The women's agency has to be analysed in its complexity, as in certain cases, it is an identified need for women, which helps them to claim and reclaim spaces that were institutionally denied to them. In other cases, agency sometimes gets created as a result of certain individual acts consciously undertaken by the women.

Further the change observed seemed to be gradual and slow. There was no conscious reflection as to how this could be a process of Hindutva consolidating. This paper did not explore in detail the process of Hindutva, rather the focus was on religious agency of women as *purohitas.* It is important to analyse how the organisation adopted a large number of practices, especially ordaining women as priests, allowing menstruating women to conduct religious rituals, encouraging widowed women, divorced women, single women to officiate religious ceremonies particularly marriages and other auspicious religious rituals. It is important to recognize that the majority of scholarship analyses Jnana Probodhini as an Hinduvtva organization. But if one focuses on the course that trains women transcending gender and caste to become certified as purohitas, then the analysis could be organized within the realm of redefining religion and its practices. While one could highlight the attempt to render religious practices more inclusive, one needs to realize that such attempt is limited as it dislodges only some of the dominant principles of exclusion embedded within Hindu religion and its hegemonic principles.

Section Two: Negotiating Visible-Invisible Boundaries and Religious Agency

Women's position within the Hindu religion may be characterized as

marginal since women framed within the discourse of 'purity and impurity' are mostly excluded from officiating in religious rituals. They are crucial as a group, but not as leaders, leading the prayer. Women's position is thus defined as 'paradoxical' given that religious communities tend to be composed predominantly of women, but governed by men.

In recognizing the importance of women shaping the religious sphere, anthropologists emphasize that women's role is always a negotiated and an acquired one, the result of their struggle for recognition within male-dominated institutions (Pasieka 2016: 38; Mahmood 2005). In this context one can draw upon the work of scholars examining the life worlds of female Catholics, who have enquired into the idea of female authority within male-dominated religious institutions and the potential of religion for women's empowerment using religious teaching and activism to re-define women's role in public and private spheres (Flinn 2010) thereby redefining religious agency.

Research on women's religious participation mostly hinges on their abilities to act and perform within constricted and demarcated institutional spaces. By using, participating and appropriating religious spaces particularly the performance of rituals, hitherto forbidden and denied to them –one observes a push towards a project of religious self-making where women consciously create an alternative religious image for themselves. This alternative space not only provides a way to bind them together and creates networks of solidarity but also facilitates growth of their subjectivity. The paper argues for a nuanced understanding of female subjectivity, that is emancipatory in the sense that it carves out spaces, particularly through access and control over institutional power. Such a perception of agency is contested where there is not much change in the patriarchal structures of religion, but through performance of religious rituals where the access and use of spaces within religion that were historically denied to them, *purohitas,* claim their agency.

Negotiation refers to the process of how women bargain to access the resources, spaces and assets not generally available to them. Thus more often than not, negotiation refers to the strategic use of the 'patriarchal codes' as a tactical move to access 'spaces, respect and freedom' to lead their life with self-esteem and pride (Hartmann 1976, Gearson and Peiss (1985). How do negotiations take place? One can state that 'negotiation' describes how women bargain for privileges and resources. The process is also based on 'accepted patriarchal values' but provides a multi-dimensional perspective as women make conscious decisions to adhere, push, certain patriarchal practices so as to create 'spaces'. Such a perspective perceives women as active agents and not 'passive victims' (Hartmann 1976, Gearson and Peiss 1985, Ranade 2007). The resources available to women are generally patriarchal codes, to negotiate with men, state and community to access privileges and opportunities. In the context of fewer resources and lack of power, women have less wherewithal to negotiate and often accept the limitations of patriarchy to derive advantages

and 'shift boundaries. It is clear that for women to access the resources and create their own spaces they have to comply and use patriarchal structures, while doing so it steadily shifts patriarchy, but does not dislodge and in some cases reinforce patriarchy. It is a continuous process of negotiations that helps in shifting the boundaries and recreating new boundaries.

The paper refers to 'agency' beyond perceiving it in terms of a binary either as agential or as passive. It is rather limiting to perceive agency as the ability of the actors, i.e women active in religious groups to one, disturb the gendered social order and two, resist male domination. Instead, agency in this paper is viewed as a capacity to act, which is created by and becomes possible within a specific relation of subordination. It argues that it is possible to think of everyday resistance in the lives of people who though seem to belong to a privileged group, in many cases are pushed to the fringes. Further even if the agents themselves have no clear articulation of their agency, it remains agential as some spaces are being shifted which may have a long-term impact.

Based on empirical research, using research methods such as interviews and focus group discussions with male and female *Purohitas*, the paper draws upon the argument of Mahmood (2005) on the women's mosque movement in Cairo, especially locating it within the context of women's agency. She argues that it is sociologically relevant to analyze how women appropriate and transform public-religious spaces and make it their own.

Leming (2007) writing on religious agency also states that it is an important sociological concept that provides a framework to sharpen our understanding of the ways that individuals claim and enact a meaningful religious identity. Leming writes,

> 'Agency is not practiced in a vacuum, but is enacted within a specific social context. Religious agency is understood here as a personal and collective claiming and enacting of dynamic religious identity…To constitute religious agency, this identity is claimed and lived as one's own, with an insistence on active ownership...religious agency thus can help us to understand ways in which individuals and collective religious agents exert pressure on institutional structures that helps to break down a monolithic perception of state religion' (2007:74).

What are then the strategies used by the religious agents to exercise their agency? The religious agents use diverse strategies that include emotional, intellectual and behavioural practices to exert their agency. Therefore, this concept of religious agency can provide a useful framework, where by one can examine how *Purohitas*, exhibit religious agency by analyzing their practices and strategies while engaging with religion. The identity of becoming a priest, the performance of performing religious rituals and the respect given to them as religious authorities are crucial towards their construction of religious agents.

In times where women are waging a war to enter temples, for instance Sabarimala, the idea of women as 'designated religious priests', is not only interesting but also crucial to the discourse of gender and religion. Denial of access to women, within the menstruating ages (10-50 years) into the Sabarimala temple is based on the argument that a menstruating women is impure and that being near her and even her presence, her touch can ruin the '*vratham*' (purification vows) of the male devotees who have spent 41 days in complete 'austerity and celibacy'. This is a complex narrative about how women's menstrual blood is impure, that while highlighting her fertility and reproductive capacity, also renders her innately polluted.

On one hand where traditional conceptions of religion and accepted religious behavior appear to be hesitant to accept women as 'legitimate devotees', the possibility of them being allowed and accepted as religious authorities is critical to the discourse of women and their right to worship. It has been well documented that situated within dominant patriarchal religion, women face not only institutionalized discrimination but also find themselves fewer in number than their men counterparts within leadership and authoritative roles in religious practices. Feminists have long argued and established that religion is innately patriarchal and has been institutionalised in such a manner so as to erase women's contribution to knowledge making, dissemination and exclude women from leadership roles. Within the growing body of work on religion, feminists have engaged with conservative religions and have highlighted the creative, novel ways women benefit from their participation in men dominated religious traditions.

Further as Avishai (2008) argues that the 'paradox' approach in analyzing religion that while it binds women, it also liberates women, assumes a false dichotomy (pitting) agency against compliance. Such an approach based on binary construction does not lead to a nuanced evaluation of experience of women's agency within religious practices. She argues that on the other hand one needs to analyze how women construct their religious selves over time through observance, conduct (pg 429) and gradually changing certain aspects of religion. Avishai terms this process' doing religion', which occurs as women simultaneously negotiate multiple identities. Such an analysis is broad based and helps us to ground women's religious practices in a more dynamic manner

Feminist theories of religion and space focusing on women doing religion, state that women while women 'do' religion, they negotiate spaces – especially in the performance of ritual and thereby create religious and social identities. Religious space matters because to determine its meanings and appropriate uses is to have power over it, along with the symbolic and material resources encoded in such space (Morin and Guelke 2007, xxv). Literature on religion and space has been used to explain how women may exert agency by inhabiting and/or appropriating the physical spaces of religious performances of rituals**.** In their negotiations of different spaces, at times the women are in

direct conflict with men trying to occupy the same space and thus, they reinforce shared gender and religious identities. With less direct institutional access, women have generally leaned on either organizational support or have formed their own networks. Either way the strategies are limited as the organisation frequently forces them to follow a particular line of thought and the networks that the women build are either weak or are structured around competitive lines. In such cases the negotiations become extremely challenging and therefore layered.

In such a context, could one argue that when *purohitas* engage within Hindu religion, they are negotiating a Hindu identity, which may reflect a 'strategy of finding personhood that could have both possibility of framing an independent selfhood and may also (very important) be susceptible to larger dominant Hindutva ideology. It is crucial to analyse the role of *purohitas*, as they have, even within male dominated religious organisations with limited symbolic and material spaces for women, successfully exerted agency over their own religious experience and staked their claim over the power of knowledge creation and dissemination.

Religion and Space: A Contested Relationship

To understand religious practices in everyday life, one needs to examine the role of space in religion (Korteweg 2008). Women's abilities to engage religion at the local level, are contextualized within and across different spaces. One way would be to focus on ways in which religion or religious beliefs are expressed in everyday life practices rather than top down approaches that theorise religion as a set of beliefs imposed uniformly on believers. The interviews with women highlight how *purohitas* have managed to carve a distinct set of identities, and negotiated their rights. They also have been able to make certain changes within the practices, which have had a gradual impact on their lives, by conducting ritual practices such as 'pujas' by single women, particularly widowers and divorcees.

They have also encouraged funeral rites being performed by mothers, which is a very important and strong step towards dislodging the patriarchal practices. Within Hindu religious rituals, funeral rites are mostly the domain of the man and the women play a silent supportive role. But the *purohitas*, by encouraging mothers to perform the funeral rites, help them to deal and cope with grief and slowly and gradually but consistently displace patriarchal institutional structures.

The *purohitas* have also developed their own little differences in approach. For example, while planning the funeral rites; they specifically share crucial information on organ donation. This is a reflection of how the contemporary demands of society are woven integrally into traditional rituals. Though they do not have any data to show much any of their clients have

donated organs after their counseling, the *purohitas* share that their experience has been extremely positive.

The reframing of religious spaces was used to analyse how space gets expanded to include those on the margins but within a particular structure. It was interesting to see the presence of *Purohitas* who belonged to castes other than Brahmins. But before one gets too excited about it, the majority of the non-Brahmins belonged to upper caste non-Brahmins. Though one could see how the caste issue is being addressed, it is not enough to challenge the hegemony of caste.

Another interesting possibility is the presence of *purohitas* who are widows and divorcees, who perform all kinds of 'auspicious' rituals. Within Brahmanical patriarchy, widows are perceived as harbingers of inauspiciousness, are stigmatized and are said to represent ill luck. Their very presence during religious ceremonies was avoided because a women's state of auspiciousness depended on their husbands. As long as a man lives, his wife is auspicious, but upon his death, his widow is rendered inauspicious. In such a context the fact that widows not only participate in the ceremonies but are themselves conducting the religious ceremonies is a very promising way of carving out spaces within a highly institutionalized and patriarchal religious practice.

This expansion in defining religious agency, leads to reframing of the religious practices to make it more inclusive. One could further argue that through defining themselves as *Purohitas* women were using the spaces now made accessible to them to redefine not only religious practices, but also how they could relate to religion. Religious rituals and practices which were once forbidden to women could now be accessed and redefined to empower themselves. This paper does recognise that the spaces available within religious domains could be limiting. But what is interesting for us to understand is that accessibility to limited spaces within larger hegemonic religious practices, could go a long way in carving out significant meaning in the quest for redefining their relations with religion.

Further to focus on how religion is spatially structured provides a framework to assess women's agency. Control of space accords the ability to regulate those within it (Morin and Guelke 2007, xix). While doing so I focus on how the right to create, impart and disseminate religious knowledge, is highly gendered within Brahmanical Hindu religious practices. Thus the right granted to women to perform religious rituals – '*Adhikrut Patra*' (Legitimate right to perform) through the course structured by *Jnana Probodhini* gives them social, religious and cultural legitimacy and provides some of them economic and livelihood support. Although priesthood did not guarantee monetary sustainability, it was an important way to earn a livelihood with dignity. [10]

Such analysis of religious spaces emphasizes that gender relations are constructed differently across settings and these constructions enable, regulate and constrain women's mobility (Massey 1994). This approach that structures religion as dynamic and not a monolithic entity, avoids essentialist notions of religion as innately patriarchal or misogynistic by reconnecting agency to subjectivity (Korteweg 2008). It is also reflected in the manner in which the Purohitas shared their photos where they are seen conducting rituals with pride, confidence and happiness.

The focus on Hinduism and women, especially women's performance as Devotees – presence of Hindu women at religious gatherings is not new. Women have always been a visible presence at religious ceremonies. Hinduism has always encouraged women to be present in all religious ceremonies but mostly as devotees, followers, workers (such as preparing the hall, cleaning, preparing the food, the Prasad, organizing the religious ritual) but not as leaders of the rituals. What is new and distinct about this analysis is the role that women are playing now as officiating religious ceremonies, directing the performance of the ritual, organizing the performance and advising the male to perform in the right accepted manner, being a religious leader is extremely crucial in their negotiation of religion.

Within Hinduism one generally found different rules and regulations for men and women in the performance of rituals. There is not only physical segregation (certain castes), but also during religious practices and rituals along with systematic exclusion of women from leadership roles, which institutionalised the privileged role of men. What is thus striking was the strong visible presence of the women as *Purohitas*, - the priest to conduct the ceremony. Performance as a *purohita,* which gives them a legitimate authority to lead and direct religious ceremonies was interpreted by the women as a novel, inspiring and positive experience. This role was for them a crucial way to engage with religion, with respect, dignity and authority. It is a crucial way of negotiating both visible and invisible religious boundaries.

Section Three: Doing Religion: *Purohitas* and Negotiation of Spaces

The majority of research on women's religious participation focuses on their ability to act within constricted institutional spaces (Pricket 2015). As mentioned above through the process of religious self- making, women participants can over time successfully exert agency over their own religious experience. Individual religious self thus emerges with individual acts of observation of religious rituals and ceremonies and being part of a network (Avishai 2008).

In my analysis of *Purohita*, the focus is more on gender and caste negotiation. Majority of the *Purohitas* belong to middle class households belonging to the dominant caste –the Brahmins, who generally experience

'gender invisibility' within their homes and are attracted towards priesthood as it gives them meaning and a sense of purpose in their lives. The focus of this paper was to analyse how women use the institutionalized religious spaces-such as religious rituals and make it their own and thus religiosity is a social construction grounded in observance and achieved through performance.

How does the identity of *Purohitas* as forming a social space for women at the societal level is leading to the appropriation and transformation of a public/religious and highly masculine space through performance of religious rituals is an important question? This transformation of space is slow and gradual within the social, religious and cultural context.

Purohita narratives demonstrate the way in which religious authority is expressed and asserted. It gives a sense of how women are making their own authority through gendered experiential knowledge. DeNapoli states that religious performance 'not only demonstrates their religious expertise (knowledge) but also contributes to the production of their prestige (influence) as leaders (2013: 125). Hindu women in Maharashtra embody the role of *Purohita*, defined in classical Hindu tradition as an authoritative male figure. What is interesting is the subversion, where single women such as widows, divorcées (considered to be marginal - inauspicious for the widow and transgressive for the divorcee), who are *Purohita*. Such new age *Purohitas* find gendered ways of resituating themselves within the religious orders by expressing their religiosity being religious priests. Through such 'doing religion' religious performance the *Purohitas* negotiate the social order and develop agency for themselves.

It is important to focus on the gendered strategies by which female priests authoritatively transform tradition and renegotiate the social order.

a. **Redefining menstruation as natural**, therefore significant, important as a life continuation process. Such a perspective delinks menstruation from the 'purity-impurity' framework and frames its meaning as a process that is natural, thus normalizing it. *Purohitas* perform religious rituals even if they are menstruating and also encourage women in the client house to participate despite menstruation. While this is true, one could also see the dominant presence elderly women in their post-menopausal stage as Purohitas.

b. **Subverting the 'inauspicious'** tag of widow and resituating themselves as pure, auspicious enough to conduct religious offerings; rituals and ceremonies. This is powerful as it establishes the right of the woman, without it being dependent on her relationship with a man, particularly her husband. It removes the idea of priesthood from the religious patriarchal structure to a rather more secular and professional domain. *Purohitas* are religious priests, who are trained to perform as highly skilled religious professionals .

c. **Pushing the envelope** – with non-brahmins also trained as '*Purohitas*'- one could one analyse it as reconfiguration of caste expression within the traditional Hindu structures as only two out of twenty-six purohitas are non-brahmin In this case, then who is redefined as a *Purohita*? It is anyone 'anyone of an impeccable character; and the one who understands the Mantra and the action (Booklet – The Hindu Marriage Ceremony, Jnana Prabodhini, Pune).

d. **Framing newer ways of religious rituals**. Eg- encouraging 'Mother' to perform *Shradhha* (Funeral Rites) for her child, especially if she is a single mother. The *Purohitas* believe that it was the mother who had connected with the child, so she is the best person to perform the last rites. Priests who perform funeral rites generally do not eat in the house where the last rites were performed. They take money or dry grains instead. One of the *Purohita* said that she does not believe in such regulation. She says, I quote, 'There is no problem in eating in the house of the client. It is much better than eating at restaurants (especially if you have travelled to perform the ritual). Further it is not in our culture that women go out and eat alone at a restaurant, so I think it is good if we eat in the house of the client' (Women Purohita, 73 years).

d. **Performance as religious leaders**- very crucial in spaces where religious knowledge was denied to women. As interpreters of rituals, the *purohitas* interpret the meanings of various religious discourses, are celebrated by clients who claim that the *purohitas* perform the rituals in a manner that reflects professionalism and excellence; disseminate religious knowledge; become family priests.

Towards a Conclusion

The narrative engaged with through this article is about women's agency and the need to go beyond perceiving agency and compliance within binary constructs. Rather this article makes a case to locate agency as self-defined by the agent themselves. The analysis highlights how the *purohitas* with their choices and actions have redefined some of the religious practices and through it not only claimed a dignified identity for herself but also managed to shift in different ways religion itself. The paper pushes for an argument claiming that through such redefinition of religious practices, the religion does not remain the same. Though the alternation may not be visible enough, it is significant and crucial within the larger discourse of agency. This personal strategic claiming of religion through practicing it, adding on to it and changing certain aspects of it in the manner of one's choice, is what 'doing religion' is all about. This dynamic interpretation gives an agential role to women's intervention within the religious domain.

What are then the strategies through which they claim their role within the largely dominant patriarchal religious practices?

First, I believe is to claim their identity as *Purohitas.* This identity as legitimate priest is crucial as it empowers them to reframe the religious discourse while placed within it. It helps in redefining who is a *purohit,* and important step towards being accepted as a person of religious learning.

Second, refers to the respect they receive from the people who have invited them to officiate at their religious rituals. This larger acceptance by the people from the community is interpreted by the *Purohitas* as important steps towards their recognition as legitimate interpreters and performance of religious practices.

Third, the right the *Purohitas* have to interpret rituals and add their own interpretation in small but significant ways is crucial towards their framing as independent agents within religious practices. Here I draw attention to the manner in which they subtly encourage the 'mothers' to perform funeral rites, challenging the entrenched patriarchal practice of denying strategic roles to women in the death rituals.

Fourth, one finds a positive engagement with religion and religious practices. The focus here is on the performance as the priest, a *purohita*, the demeanor, conduct and the dignity through which they define their role as a priest.

Finally, the religious rituals are conducted by the *Purohita,* even when the women are menstruating in significant way redefines the established notion of innate impurity among women. It also in significant ways redefines the manner in which *Purohitas* change some aspects of the religious terrain they are part of it.

Some questions are left unanswered. How much value does possessing such agency have?, Would it have an impact on the larger idea of Hinduism?. Further sociologically, is the fact that some privileged women claim to have a better religious agency, that has brought positive values to themselves in terms of self- belief, confidence worth emphasizing? But these are questions for another paper. For now, by 'doing religion', the *Purohitas* are redefining and changing significantly, what one refers to as religious practices. This dynamic interpretation of the role of *Purohitas* gives an agential role to women's intervention within the religious domain.

Notes

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2 Purohit, in the Brahmanical Hindu context, means family priest, from the puras meaning 'front' and hita, 'placed'. The word is synonymously used with the pandit which also means "priest" (Wikipedia). The organization Dyanaprabhrodini, that offers a training programme refers to purohita as 'someone who would lead others especially in the right direction, i.e in the 'Yogya Dishala'. In Vedic times, a king's chief priest or court chaplain, a position of immense political influence. The term is now used for a domestic priest who performs rituals for a particular family or group of families (Oxford Reference Dictionary).

3 An amalgamation from (Sanskrut (Sanskrit language) and Sanskruti (Culture) and Sanshodhika (Researcher), was established to conduct research on Sanskrit, culture and Indology. The aim of Santrika was to conduct research and present culture expressed within Hindu/Hinduism framework, particularly to present Hindu religious practices and rituals as scientific, logical and rational

4 This Prabodhini ideology is explained in their '*Mahitipatra*' (Information booklet).

5 The names of the purohitas are mentioned anonymously using the nomenclature of Tai (in marathi, Tai means elder sister). I have numbered them.

6 It includes courses that deal with religious ceremonies that deal with 'Shanti' (peace and blessings) such as Vastu, celebrating 60 years of individual. Further there are various pujas such as Vat Savitri (a religious ceremony where the wife prays and fasts for the longevity of her husband), Satyanarayan, Dipawali (festival of lights), Ganesh puja (worship of the God, identified as 'Elephant God' and many more, including different Samskaras (religious functions marking important moments of life) such as Namakaran (naming ceremony); Marriage, Funeral rites, Organ donation, etc. One of the interesting rituals that the organization performs is the ritual of Hindukaran (Conversion into Hindu). It is performed mostly in context of eloping couples, having mixed religious marriages. For this they require certain government documents such as an affidavit, consent letter from the person who is planning to convert, Aadharcard and an Identity card for performing this ritual. Thus in the context of increasing discussions on inter caste and inter religious marriages, that challenges dominant religious perceptions of endogamy; it is interesting as to how an organization tries to use religious rituals and practices to bring into fold, the acts that seems to challenge dominant notions of religious principles of caste and gender.

7 In February 2021, actor Dia Mirza's wedding was conducted by a women priest and it was celebrated in the popular media as a act of feminism, with hashtags #RiseUp and #GenerationEquality.

8 In the booklet on marriage, they mention the following articles needed for the ceremony. It includes the following:

1. Kumkum (Vermilion) and Haldi (Tumeric) powder
2. Rangoli (design made for a religious, social or cultural function)
3. Incense – Agarbatis
4. Wooden seats- (if available)- 8
5. Metal Urns- 2, Metal glasses- 4, metal Bowls (small)- 4, Meatl dishes- 2, big

metal bowl- 1 spoons- 4

6. Oil lamps- 2

7. Garlands- 2

8. Mangalsutra- necklace with black beads

9. Gold chain or a gift for the bridegroom

10. Electric heater or similar arrangement for Homa

11. Darbha (dry grass); Samidhas (dry wood) about 25 pieces. If possible few pieces of sandalwood

12. Coconuts- 3

13. A kalash- copper pitcher filled with water, decorated with Mango or similar leaves and topped with coconut

14. Rice grains (Akshata) mixed with slight kumkum

15. Antahpat- the holy piece of cloth to be held between the bride and bridegroom before the Muhurta (Except new moon day and eclipse, all days are considered auspicious by the shastras). The auspicious time is the one that is convenient for the family members of the bridegroom and bride.

What does it reveal? One, has always associated marriage practices as extremely complicated ceremony, with a large number of requirements to proceed with the ceremony. The organization has restructured the ritual in such a manner that it does not involve too many rituals and offerings. A lean version of the ritual is offered and presented as a logical, rational and scientific way of engaging with religion. By limiting the number of things required for the ceremony and doing away with notions of auspicious time, it places the marriage as a ceremony that marks two individuals deciding to live together, rather than as a religious ceremony that is marked by rituals and practices not understood by anyone but something which has to be done to please the family. Further when these practices are performed by women, it does bring about a shift *(maybe limited)* in the manner religious practices are framed and practiced.

9 The authorities at Prabodhini, explain that for them *Samskar* (religious rituals) is structured around four concepts: *Sarthata* (important to explain meanings of rituals and mantras to all present for the ceremony); *Samshikata* (everyone present needs to be involved in the ritual); *Shistabadhtata* (need to be disciplined in thought and action) and *Samabhav* (Inclusive without making distinctions between caste, religion, class and gender). One could see that accessibility of religious practices, responsibility of all involved in religious rituals, discipline and inclusion of all are the four core ideas of framing a modern, rational and scientific outlook of Hindu religion.

10 The *purohitas* are paid very less- eg 1000/-rupees for wedding and 800/- rupees for *Vastu Shanti* (Religious ritual performed by practicing Hindus, to bless the house and kind of inauspiciousness from the house)not economically sustainable as a stable form of livelihood. Most of them thus come from stable middle-class families with children settled abroad and their average earning as a *Purohitas* is approximately 15,000/- per month.

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Sumit Saurabh Srivastava

AGENCY AND RESISTANCE IN FEMINIST DISCOURSE

Abstract

The idea of agency is a key concept in feminist theory and gender politics. It is also understood as a manifestation of relational autonomy countering systems of exploitation and oppression and subverting patriarchy. Seen in this way, agency aims at resistance from within oppressive situations. How agency has been conceptualised in social theory and feminist theory is the singular objective of the paper. It begins with conceptualising key variables like agency, structure, resistance and their interlinkages. Subsequently, the agency-structure debates so central to both sociological and anthropological enquiries are addressed. The paper then shifts to selective major feminist cross-cultural analytical engagements with gender and agency both at the conceptual and empirical levels. The paper concludes by posing questions the answers to which are still being scripted.

Keywords: *Agency, Structure, Gender, Resistance, Power*

Introduction

"Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please;
they do not make it under self-selected circumstances,
but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past."
The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon (Marx 1852)

"All women actively make choices,
but many of the circumstances under which they act are not of their own making"
(Walby 1996: 16).

The notion of agency has an important as well as contentious place in the social theory. Broadly understood, the concept of agency is interlinked with the notion of action's freedom and free will. At a very basic level it means any individual's ability to act despite odds, free will, autonomy & relative autonomy among others. Thus, when an individual tries to transform the

SUMIT SAURABH SRIVASTAVA, Assistant Professor, Centre for Development Studies, University of Allahabad, Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh 211002, Email : sumit.manjula@gmail.com, sssrivastava@allduniv.ac.in

overarching structural framework in whatever way, she activates / practices her agency and thus is termed as acting as an agent. It involves the discourse on power and power relations also as there will no need to be in agency mode if there is nothing to be resisted. It emphasizes the power-negotiating capacity of the individual in society howsoever micro in its locale and approach. Agency is about more than observable action; it also encompasses the meaning, motivation and purpose which individuals bring to their activity; their *sense* of agency, or 'the power within'. Feminist scholarship, activism, and politics in contemporary times are in the process of unravelling not only the structures of female subordination but are also actively engaged in culling out the micro sites of resistance and subversion of the same. The present paper is an attempt to briefly sketch the broad contours of such emancipatory epistemological engagements which are feminist in nature and thus are liberative in perspective.

Unpacking Agency, Structure and Resistance

> "…. there is no fact of the matter, no evidence, however tentative or questionable, that will serve adequately to identify actions "chosen" or "determined" for the purposes of sociological theory" (Loyal and Barnes 2001: 507).

The debate centered upon action and structure is a perennial issue yet to be resolved and addressed to its optimum in social theory. Significant insights are sprinkled across the conceptual, definitional and theoretical rugged terrains of social science in general and sociology in particular. The troublesome question posed has two variables within; first, the individual who is capable of enacting his/her agency and thus overrides the strictures of any given social structure; and on the other hand, is the second variable wherein the socio-structural boundaries inhibit the free-flow of the individuals' actions and thus limits them to a 'bounded' and patterned form of existence. In such a scenario, there emerges a kind of dualism between agency and structure wherein both appear to be diametrically in opposition to each other. There seems to be no way out as they keep on clashing in the day-to-day existence in the social world. Over a period, in the sociological analysis has emerged a mid-way out wherein instead of standing in opposition, there is a degree of mutual 'symbiotic' relation (relational) interlinkage between these two. As a result of such a sociological argument, both agency and structure 'impose' each other and thus are "cause and effect" of each other's actions and existence. The emphasis is on how the structure is produced, reproduced and transformed through human agency i.e. a delicate equilibrium between defiance and compliance.

Anthony Giddens outlined his theory of structuration (implying that 'structure' must be regarded as a process, not as a steady/ static/ unchangeable state …. the processual nature of structures … and structurally reproductive agency) wherein the society is seen as the output of the "social practices across space and time" (1984: 2). Structures are thus to be understood as enabling as well as constraining. According to him:

> "Structure: Rules and resources, recursively implicated in the reproduction of social systems. Structure exists only as memory traces, the organic basis of human knowledge ability and as instantiated in action" (1984: 377).

His theory of structuration argues that both structure and agents (capable individuals) are product of each other and most importantly, the actor / agent 'could have done otherwise'. According to him, "The concept of structuration involves that of the *duality of structure*, which relates to the *fundamentally recursive character of social life, and expresses the mutual dependence of structure and agency*. By the duality of structure I mean that the structural properties of social systems are both the medium and the outcome of the practices that constitute those systems" (Giddens 1979: 69 [italics in original]). Thus, neither the structure is static and dominant over the individual; nor the individual can act according to his/her whims and fancies. He notes that "in and through their activities agents reproduce the conditions that make these activities possible" (1984: 2). At this juncture it would be pertinent to take note of what he stated about agency; for him " 'Action' or agency, as I use it, thus does not refer to a series of discrete acts combined together, but to *a continuous flow of conduct*. The concept of agency as I advocate it here, involving 'intervention' in a potentially malleable object-world, relates directly to the more generalised notion of *Praxis*' (Giddens 1979: 55-56 [italics in original]). As a result of such a dynamics between 'agent' and 'structure', a social structure "exists, as time-space presence, only in its instantiations in such practices as memory traces orienting the conduct of knowledgeable human agents" (1984: 17). Thus, structures not only shape people's practices, but it is also people's practices that constitute (and reproduce) structures.

Interlinking power, agency and structure, Giddens outlines that "'Power", along with 'agency' and 'structure', is an elementary concept in social science" (1984: 7). He defined power as "a sub-category of 'transformative capacity', to refer to interaction where transformative capacity is *harnessed to actors' attempts to get others to comply with their wants*" (Giddens 1979: 69 [italics in original]). He further states that "... to be an agent is to have power. Power .... means 'transformative capacity', the capability to intervene in a given set of events so as in some way to alter them" (1984: 7). According to him:

> "To be able to 'act otherwise' means being able to intervene in the world, or to refrain from such intervention, with the effect of influencing a specific process or state of affairs. This presumes that to be an agent is to be able to deploy (chronically, in the flow of daily life) a range of causal powers, including that of influencing those deployed by others. Action depends upon the capability of the individual to 'make a difference' to a pre-existing state of affairs or course of events. An agent ceases to be such if he or she loses the capability to 'make a difference', that is, to exercise some sort of power" (Giddens 1984: 14).

From the above it becomes clear that for Giddens, in the overall framework of structuration, 'knowledgeable' human agents (i.e., people who know what they are doing and how to do it), and agents act by putting into practice their necessarily structured knowledge. Thus, we see that what he is terming as agency can be understood as 'resistance' as individuals are not passive and docile observers of the rules and structures of domination of the society at large. Rather, most of the time, the individuals attempt to transgress and transcend the barbwires and act according to their available 'choices'.

Elaborating on the agency-structure debate, where in the latter the actor is denied any kind of 'agency' as he/she is entrenched in the structural location; Apter and Garnsey observe that "the debate on agency and structure is concerned with the questions: What capacity do individuals have to act independently of structural constraints? From this stems a further question: What are structural constraints when these refer not to material or biological structures but to deeply ingrained patterns of social interaction?" (1994: 20). These queries have been responded in the study with reference to the theories which are of immense importance in the structure-agency debate. Michel de Certeau in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984) talks about strategy and everyday tactic. Strategy, for him is "the calculus of force-relationships which becomes possible when a subject of will and power (a proprietor, an enterprise, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated from an 'environment'" (ibid: xix) whereas a tactic "insinuates itself into the other's place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance" (ibid: xix). Ortner has bracketed the issues pertaining to agency-structure within the modern versions of 'practice theory' which accepts that "society is a system, that the system is powerfully constraining, and yet that the system can be made and unmade through human action and interaction" (1984: 159). At another place she has similarly noted that "Within a practice framework, there is an insistence, as in earlier structural-determinist models, that human action is constrained by the given social and cultural order (often condensed in the term 'structure'); but there is also an insistence that human action *makes* 'structure' - reproduces or transforms it, or both" (1996: 2).

It is important to note that agency tends to be operationalized as 'decision- making' in the social science literature and it can take several other forms. It can take the form of bargaining and negotiation, deception and manipulation, subversion and resistance as well as more intangible, cognitive processes of reflection and analysis. It can be exercised by individuals as well as by collectivities" (Kabeer 2000: 29). Similarly, Kumar contends that "…. protest does not have to take only well-recognised forms but that it can appear in various other permutations of daily life: evasive tactics, counter-culture of language, genres of song and dance, myths full of double entendres, private correspondence and diary writing, and many pressure tactics…" (1994: 3). Additionally, agency is explored in social sciences with a focus on the actor as

a subject and his/her social action having a purpose and context of meaning. According to Ahearn, "Agency refers to the socio-culturally mediated capacity to act" (2001: 112). Human agency can be also understood as the "temporally constructed engagement by actors of different structural environments – the temporal-relational contexts of action – which, the interplay of habit, imagination, and judgement, both reproduces and transforms those structures in interactive response to the problems posed by changing historical situations" (Emirbayer and Mische 1998: 970). In similar way, McNay states that agency "yields an understanding of a creative or imaginative substrate to action" (2000: 5).

It needs to underlined that the notion of agency is intricately bound with power and domination on one hand and resistance on the other. As McNay has flagged that "agency is inseparable from the analysis of power and, therefore, is not so much a thing in itself as a vehicle for thinking through broader issues, such as the nature of freedom and constraint" (2016: 39). Similarly, the notions of coercion, autonomy and choice are also built in the agency-structure dynamics. Madhok et al. have noted that "Those writing within political theory and philosophy, for example, are more likely to engage with notions of autonomy, while those working within social or cultural theory are more likely to talk of agency" (2013: 5). Viewing autonomy as both a status and a capacity concept, Mackenzie talks about feminist conceptions of autonomy which is a gendered reading of self-determination, self-governance and self-authorization (2017: 515-527).

Foucault's writings on 'counter-power' or 'the antimatter of power' crucially points to the scenario that power, agency and resistance are intertwined. According to him, "The term 'power' designates relationships between partners .... of an ensemble of actions which induce others and follow from one another" (1982: 786) and thus "power .... makes individuals subjects" (ibid.: 781). He further outlined that "power is not a function of consent. the relationship of power can be the result of a prior or permanent consent, but it is not by nature the manifestation of a consensus" (ibid.: 788). Significantly, the counter to power through various modalities of struggle and resistance exist and operate side by side. For him, "Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (Foucault 1978: 95-96). At another place he argued that "most important is obviously the relationship between power relations and confrontation strategies" (Foucault 1982: 794). Such an argument interestingly coincides with what Ortner has to say that "resistance, even at its most ambiguous, is a reasonably useful category, if only because it highlights the presence and play of power in most forms of relationship and activity" (1995: 175). One can see that Foucault fundamentally changed the view of power, and thus logically, resistance. As Nealon has stated, "In Foucault's work, it's first and foremost a descriptive claim: as power becomes increasingly

more invested in the minute details of our lives, so too our modes of resistance become increasingly subtle and intense" (2008: 108). Similarly, Pickett has stated that in Foucault's writings it appears that "Resistance is what threatens power; hence it stands against power as an adversary. Although resistance is also a potential resource for power, the elements or materials that power works upon are never rendered fully docile" (2005: 44). Interlinking the writings by Foucault and how these have led to a renewed debate within the feminist discourse on power and resistance, Sawicki contends

> Foucault's analyses of the dimensions of disciplinary powers .... overlapped with those of feminists already engaged in the project of exploring the micropolitics of 'private' life. His analytic of power/knowledge could be used to further feminist explorations into the dynamics of patriarchal power at the most intimate levels of experience..... The history of modern feminist struggles for reproductive freedom might be understood as central to the history of bio-power (1996: 160).

Agency as resistance is another significant analytical category which is central in understanding agency though Ortner is of the firm conviction that many a times, ethnographies have failed to bring out the novelty and multi-textured sites of resistance (Ortner 1995: 173-193). The feminist scholarship on resistance tends to respond to the questions like "Does the act of resistance include a conscious intent on the part of the person resisting, or can any transformative practice be identified as resistance?" (Fruzzetti and Tenhunen (2006: ix). Various acts of resistance can be seen as manifestations of agency though agreeing with Parry that ".... proposals on how resistance is to be theorised display fault-lines within the discussion that rehearses questions about subjectivity, identity, agency and the status of the reverse-discourse as an oppositional practice...." (1994: 172). In *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (1985) based on his study of a rice-growing village in northern Malaysia, James Scott makes a powerful argument for identifying "between abject unquestioning deference and violent outrage ... the massive middle ground in which conformity is often a self-conscious strategy and resistance is a carefully hedged affair that avoids all or nothing confrontation" (1985: 285). It is worth mentioning here that Scott's "everyday forms of peasant resistance" refer to the innocuous acts undertaken by peasants such as foot-dragging, arson, sabotage, slander and feigned ignorance. Such actions often avoid direct confrontation with the authority but nonetheless served to limit and undermine the domination of more powerful groups. Furthermore, he speaks of the 'public transcript' i.e. people endorse and embrace their own subordination in 'public' on one hand; and, the 'hidden transcript' i.e. when the authority is out of the sight, those who are weak will 'mock and humiliate' the former. Dirks et. al. have argued that "The general discussion around the trope of resistance is further motivated by a reaction against totalizing formulations about power and domination" (1994: 19). Interlinking power, subordination and resistance, Chandra has conceptualized resistance as "to

minimally apprehend the conditions of one's subordination, to endure or withstand those conditions in everyday life, and to act with sufficient intention and purpose to negotiate power relations from below in order to rework them in a more favourable or emancipatory direction" (2015: 565). More than often, such position on power, agency & resistance is contrasted with omnipotent social structure through which the individual is shaped and constrained. Power "may operate at the level of ideas, persuading the mind of its legitimacy, or it may work as a material force directly coercing the body" (Mitchell 1990: 545).

Agency & Resistance in Feminist Discourse: Key Signposts

Unravelling the human agency and resistance within structures of subordination has been (and still is) the core tenet of feminism, feminist activism and scholarship as noted by Oksala that "Conceptions of power that fail to account for the possibility of some measure of resistance will make it impossible to theorize feminist transformations - transformations of the self as well as political transformations" (2017: 687). According to Mahmood, "A central question explored within this scholarship has been: how do women contribute producing their own domination, and how do they resist or subvert it?" (2001: 205). Similarly, McNay has raised important question regarding women and agency like "how women have acted autonomously in the past despite constricting social sanctions and also how they may act now in the context of processes of gender restructuring" (2000: 5-6). In responding to these issues, we come to two different opposing responses. The first one highlights some limitations at least at the conceptual level whereas the latter appears to be more positive in locating the agency of women both through her macro and micro forms of resistance & subversion of power hierarchy. Regarding the former, concerns have been raised by Isaacs wherein she argues that "Given conditions of oppression presupposed by a feminist understanding of social structures, feminist agency is paradoxical. … because feminist assumptions about women's socialization seem to entail that women's agency is compromised by sexist oppression" (2002: 129). Sangari further problematises the link between women and agency stating that "However, women's agency remains problematic in both theory and practice: because women are simultaneously class differentiated and subject to the frequent cross-class expansion of patriarchal ideologies" (1999: 364). Seen in this way, in the context of feminist writings, "The concept of agency has caused and continues to cause great anxiety within feminisms that wish, on the one hand, to register 'women's oppression', yet on the other, to avoid the figure of 'woman as victim'" (Lovell 2003: 14).

It is in this wide & heterogeneous canvass of women positing her agency and resistance to subvert the powerful structure of dominance; the works by Lila Abu-Lughod and Saba Mahmood need special attention. Lila Abu-Lughod in her work *Veiled sentiments: honor and poetry in a Bedouin society* (1986;

1993) studied women in Awlad 'Ali group of Bedouin community which is a sex-segregated society in Egypt's Western Desert and attempted to explore the nuanced nature of women's agency & resistance in the same. Marking a conceptual shift from the ongoing debates in the women & agency framework, she argued to perceive resistance as "a diagnostic of power" (Abu-Lughod, 1990: 42). During the study, she elaborated various strands of acts of resistance practiced by Bedouin women to overcome traditional structures of power in this community. According to her, the sexually segregated space of the household works to an advantage for the Bedouin women. Herein she is the queen and acts according to her whims and fancies. In her daily routine, she continuously defies the patriarchal strictures. For instance, "They often collude to hide knowledge from men; they cover for each other in minor matter...." (Abu-Lughod, 1990: 43). Second site of resistance is the process of solemnizing marriage proposals and marriage. Though this process is under the absolute control of men, yet due to its intricacy the women of the household also get involved in the same. If at any point of time, they see that her daughter will not be happy in the proposed groom's family, then she tries very hard to block the marriage proposal. Many a times, it works and thus the bonding between the mother and daughter gets further strengthened. Even if they fail in their attempts, they make it a point to publicly ridicule the groom and his family when the marriage is taking place. The third kind of resistance as noted by Abu-Lughod is what she terms as "sexually irreverent discourse" (ibid.: 45). The enactment of this kind of resistance often involves making fun of the maleness and masculinity of the men, particularly the older men. As the practice is, it is the man belonging to the group of elder / older men who gets married to their much younger girl relative; his sexuality in terms of sexual prowess is openly discussed among the women within the household and kinship circle. The fourth modality of resistance is reflected in the poem / songs (*ghinnawas*) wherein the opposite sex though being a relative, is depicted with less regard or concern. Thus, Abu-Lughod outlined the micro-capillary and day-to-day forms of resistance practiced by Bedouin women.

On the other hand, Saba Mahmood's work *Politics of piety: The Islamic Revival and the feminist subject* (2005) locates itself in the problematic terrain of women and Islam as a religion. She outlined a particular notion of human agency in feminist scholarship - 'moral agency' – 'pious' agency — 'political and moral autonomy of the subject in the face of power - (Mahmood 2001: 203). She through an ethnographic account of the women's mosque movement (itself a part of a larger piety movement embedded in Islamic Revival) in Cairo, Egypt attempts to explore Muslim women's agency and resistance in a very different way. The movement emerged as a response to "increasing secularization of Egyptian society ..... erosion of a religious sensibility .... Crucial to the preservation of 'the spirit of Islam'" (Mahmood 2005: 43) primarily under the influence of the 'West'. In addition to it, the aggressive and pervasive writings on the liberal-feminism originating from the 'West' seriously undermined the

women's ability to cope up with the patriarchal strictures. She argued that agency can exist outside the framework of western European liberal framework. Her aim was to "explore those modalities of agency whose meaning and effect are not captured within the logic of subversion and resignification of hegemonic norms" (ibid.: 15). Thus, for her, agency should not be always seen as something which is always opposite to the notion of power, rather it is a discursive notion (some sort of compliant agency) i.e. piety can be a source of agency. For her:

> "I want to suggest we think of agency not as a synonym for resistance to relations of domination but as a capacity for action that historically specific relations of subordination enable and create. This relatively open-ended understanding of agency draws upon poststructuralist theory of subject formation but also departs from it, in that I explore those modalities of agency whose meaning and effect are not captured within the logic of subversion and re-signification of hegemonic norms" (Mahmood 2006: 33-34).

Significantly, her ethnographic study of key women teachers who use textual and other religious resources within the Mosque movement tries to subvert the religion-secularism dichotomy. The goal of such women and their 'students' is to develop piety rather than an abstract notion of equality. In an important way, she underlines the importance of '*sabra*' (patience) as an important aspect of agency. It is through practicing *sabra* that women tend to surpass the domination of patriarchal norms. It is not the open revolt or revolution, through which these women aspires a sense of egalitarian existence, rather it is through the awareness of her position within a wider community that she develops different modalities of agency. Pointing to the significant contribution of Saba Mahmood's work to feminist understanding of agency, Clare states that "Mahmood's framing of agency away from the language of consolidation or subversion of norms allows feminists to talk about agential practices without normatively judging the ends of these practices and without tying the definition of agency to liberal politics" (2009: 53). Most importantly, "Mahmood demonstrated ethnographically ….. that agency does not always equate to resistance" (Wright 2016: 8) and uniqueness of her study lies in the fact that while studying "acts of veiling and the other pietist practices of female participants in the mosque movement in Egypt as a deliberate process of ethical formation oriented not to the refusal of dominant norms but toward the establishment of a meaningful and valued role for themselves within the terms of their culture" (McNay 2016: 47).

One can also engage with the work by Torab studied *Jalaseh* ritual discourse in urban Iran and invoking the notion of piety wherein it is suggested that through their particular constructions of piety, women "construct ideas of faith and intention in ways that sustain and dignify their actions, and also allow a sense of well-being and agency. Through their ritual discussions and performances, the women can alter themselves and their circumstances, as well as those of others, in a positive way in this world and the next" (1996:

248). Similarly, building and further elaborating upon Saba Mahmood's works, Rinaldo in her work on Muslim women activists in Indonesia spoke of Pious critical agency (PCA) which "is the capacity to engage critically publicly with religious texts. It is a type of pious agency in that emphasizes being a religious subject. PCA does not necessarily mean women are directly involved in exegesis of religious texts, though more women are engaging in such activities" (2014: 829). Charrad has located 'gendered' agency in the Middle East at the intersection of Islam and State which is based on critique of Orientalism and colonialism (and thus 'West') (2011: 417-437). Thus, a distinct form of religiosity and religious adherence has been placed along with the similar plane as agency. Sehlikoglu has noted that the feminist Middle Eastern scholarship while dwelling into the Muslim women's agentive capacities has undergone four distinct 'epistemological and ethnographic' stages; First Wave from the late 1960s to the late 1970s; Second Wave from the 1980s till the late 1990s; Third Wave from the 2000s till the 2010s; and Fourth Wave is the 2010s onwards (2017: 73-92).

On a different plane, Kandiyoti in *Bargaining with Patriarchy* has raised significant issues pertaining to gender and agency primarily within the context of relational agency. In her study, she focussed on two ideal-typical models of householding; the less corporate forms prevalent in some parts of sub-Saharan Africa contrasted to more corporate forms found in the Middle East, East and parts of South Asia. For her, patriarchal bargains entail "Different forms of patriarchy present women with distinct "rules of the game" and call for different strategies to maximize security and optimize life options with varying potential for active or passive resistance in the face of oppression" (Kandiyoti 1988: 274). Thus, according to her, the micro-capillaries of resistance are often built into or have the possibility of easily working within subordinating structures without destabilising and /or undermining them. In her own words, "By so doing, I was both presenting women as rational actors deploying a range of strategies intelligible within their normative universe and pointing to the essentially circumscribed nature of the same strategies…" (Kandiyoti 1998: 139). One can also look into what Rogers has to conclude on the basis of her ethnographic account that "a kind of dialectic operates in peasant society, a delicately balanced opposition of several kinds of power and authority; overt and covert, formal and informal, direct and indirect. For this reason, the claim that one sex group is necessarily in a 'primary' or dominant role and the other in a 'secondary' one is a specious over-simplification" (1975: 727-755).

Enacting Gendered Agency in India: Texts and Contexts

> "The task of feminist historiography is to understand the complex ways in which women are, and have been, subjected to systematic subordination within a framework that simultaneously acknowledges new political possibilities for women, drawing on traditions of dissent or resistance while infusing them with new meanings" (Nair 1994: 96).

At the outset, it needs to be underlined that scholarly feminist engagements in Indian context making visible the action-structure dynamics in a way are in sync with questions raised by Fruzzetti and Tenhunen which include "What venue of resistance is available when they challenge the code of conduct expected from them? What are the alternatives to ingrained patriarchal structures? Is women's search for different sources of empowerment a form of resistance?" (2006: ix). One comes across various studies which have studied and focused on women's agency in the context of Indian society. Feminist agency in Indian context depends on the positioning of the women in ordered and hierarchical system of both caste & patriarchy. In India, traditionally, the Hindu women have been at the periphery of the discourse. It stems from the scriptures and has the traditional base of legitimacy. However, as Dube has argued that "By ignoring women as social actors who contribute to continuity and change in society, the social sciences has seriously impaired their understanding of the total social reality" (1986: xi). In this context, the concept of *Shakti* testifying the power being centered in female is one such case. In this context, the study by Gold (1994) of a Rajasthani village deserves attention. Through listening & analysing narratives of Parvati (*Shakti*), Hadi Rani and Shobhag Kanvar; she contends that "They unite positive and negative evaluations of female power as creative and destructive. …. these narratives as manifestations of *shakti* all subvert or deny such conventions of restraint" (Gold, 1994: 42). Taking into account women's oral traditions and women's use of language in rural Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, Raheja and Gold have employed the framework of James Scott' 'hidden transcripts' as evident in 'gendered' stories, ritual songs, personal narratives, and ordinary conversations in the field (1994). According to them, such 'hidden transcripts' are "implicit in women's speech and song, the often veiled, but sometimes overt and public, words and actions through which women communicate their resistance to dominant North Indian characterizations of 'women's nature' (*triya charitra*) and of kinship relationships" (ibid.: 1-2). Menon's study of Bhubaneswar, a temple town in Orissa points to a different form of agency enacted by women (2002: 140-157). Jain while exploring women's agency in the context of family networks in Indian Diaspora pointed out that women's "discursive capabilities and practical consciousness and the dialectic of control are often reflected in modes of coping with new and many times oppressive social environments" (2006: 2312).

Oldenburg in her study on courtesans (*tawaif*) in Lucknow has discussed how keeping two different account books showing their income and expenditure can be seen as subtle ways "the courtesans had cultivated to contest male authority in their liaisons with men and add up to a spirited defense of their own rights against colonial politics" (1990: 261). Subsequently, she argues that "their 'life-style' is resistance to rather than a perpetuation of patriarchal values" (ibid.: 261). She during her study found that in contrary to the public imagination, majority of the women being courtesans had actually ran off or

escaped with some help from their abusive family to become courtesan. Family poverty as well as abusive family relations was two major reasons for running away from family. In the process of linking her work with James C. Scott's study on everyday forms of peasant resistance, *Weapons of the Weak* (1985); she argues that "The courtesan's *nakhre*, which include blackmail, theft, confidence games, and even feigned heterosexuality...." can be seen as 'hidden texts' of subversion of patriarchal values. Jennett while studying Attukal Pongala, a women's offering to the goddess Bhagavati at Attukal Temple in Kerala, describes these women devotees as 'a million 'Shaktis' rising' as this ritual which is entirely centered around women (2005: 35-55). Interestingly, earlier this ritual was restricted within the women of Dalit communities, however, today the scene has changed and women across religion and communities participate in this. In this ritual, men simply assist the women devotees and play secondary role in the ritual; as she states "Women were doing the offering, and the deputized male priests were helping them in this context" (ibid.: 54).

Hindu women negotiate with the boundaries and scriptures of rules and regulations in various ways (Young, 1994: 100-101; Bacchetta, 2004: 74-75; Bedi 2006: 51-68). In most of the cases, these women at the forefront militantly exhorted their men to save the country from the 'outsiders' and to restore the glorious 'Hindutva' past. Elaborating on the nature of such participation Sangari observes that "female incitement - women calling upon men to act - exists at an intersection between the 'political' and the 'domestic', between gender relations and other power relations, occupies an uneasy boundary between the respective logics of women's consent and resistance while rearticulating their relationships in different ways" (1999: 384-385). Such participation can be also seen in the context of benign patriarchy (Kalpagam 2000: 176; Sangari 1999: 364). The case of *Brahma Kumaris* can be also located in the framework of negotiation & resistance (Babb 1984: 399-416). In a novel way, Toppo and Parashar in their study on the tradition of Jani Shikar among the select Adivasi groups of Chhotagpur region have located 'silence' as a form of resistance by tribal women which is deployed to negotiate with patriarchy (2019; also see Toppo 2018: 16-28). Thus, in an interesting epistemological 'shift', "'Agency' thus comes to be conflated with 'resistance', so that feminists have focused on women's agency in resisting patriarchal structures…" (Sax 2010: 89).

Concluding Gender, Power, and Agency: Towards a Problématique

> "... the messiness of social reality has always exceeded the explanatory power of our conceptual frameworks and that this is all the more so in the area of gender" (Kandiyoti 1998: 150).

Understanding the existence, nature and dynamics of the social world has always fascinated and intrigued scholars and philosophers alike. Such unending quest led to the emergence of epistemology and its associated issues.

Knowledge and its creation became the foci of the human intellectual enterprise and soon the understanding/s of the social world became the norm of the day. With each 'epoch' and perspective of knowledge creation, the messiness of the social world began to be organised, categorised and classified and studied on the basis of similarities and differences. Feminist scholarship was a late entrant in such a trajectory of knowledge building exercise. Owing to its distinct feminist vantage point i.e. feminist standpoint harping on feminist research methodology & feminist epistemology; it was initially 'unwelcomed' in the broader 'scientific' knowledge framework. The reasons for such epistemic exclusion included too much focus on subjectivity and transformative in focus.

As feminists began to pursue and explore a woman-centered theory of knowledge, it became clear that the oppression of women is not universal and perennial in nature rather it is frequently punctured by the gendered agency and modes of resistance. There appeared to be a distinct mode of inquiry looking into the world of women through the eyes (empathy) of women. In whatever point of time it began and at whichever place it happened, it can be safely assumed as the enactment of agency through gendered lens. The male-centric/ androcentric knowledge suffered an epistemological 'crack' and women started to become the foci of knowledge system. However, with the passage of time, the universal and homogenous social category of 'women' suffered another fission on the lines of the 'West' and 'East', Orient/ Occident, Global North/ Global South binary and similar other axes. As a result of this 'epistemic break', subsequent versions of western 'Eurocentric' feminist theory underlined by context specific for Western women's movements ('Universal Woman' and 'Sisterhood is Powerful') have been strongly critiqued by the 'anti-colonial' and 'Islamic feminism.' Can it be argued that the latter set of feminist writings by the Third World feminist scholars are marked by some sort of feminist epistemological agency to counter the hegemony of 'White women' along with countering the essentialised notions of (group) identity? Can the Black Feminism of varied hue and colour be seen as the manifestation of Black women's agency against the centuries of slavery marked by brutal violence and humiliation? Is there a continuity between Black women, agency, and the Black Feminism as so passionately made visible in *Ain't I a Woman?: Black women and feminism* (1981) by bell hooks?

Stretching the argument further, as and when the South Asian feminist writings challenge the 'racial and sexist' oppression and colonial hegemony of the West, can one see gender and transformative and meaningful agency materialising in a different connotation as evident in Chandra Talpade Mohanty's '*Under western eyes: feminist scholarship and colonial discourses*' (1984) and *Feminism without borders: decolonizing theory, practicing solidarity* (2003)? How far can one keep on going while elaborating upon and further 'fragmenting' the gender, agency and power? These are not simply conceptual constructs in the sociological and Feminism/ Gender/ Women's Studies discourse; rather

these are 'living and breathing' aspects of everyday gendered lives. If one enters the patriarchal caste-based social order of society in India; can the non-Brahmanical gender specific protests against the oppressive Brahmanical social structure be flagged as 'Dalit women's agency' posing serious threat(?) to their exclusion, differentiation and oppression? Can agency have a religious identity per se as evident in the visible and aggressive activism and presence of women belonging to specific religious identity vilifying the presence of the other religious gendered identity? What about ethnicity? Does it submits to the gender and agency debate as being 'objective' devoid of any subjectivity, reflexivity, plurality and diversity? These are very difficult questions which make us uncomfortable at the level of epistemology, theory, pedagogy and practice oriented towards a more humane, inclusive feminist politics, praxis and knowledge. As McNay has noted "It is in these entangled issues of gender inequalities with emergent forms of social vulnerability and empowerment that one of the principal challenges for future feminist theory on agency lies" (2016: 58).

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Saroj Kumar Dhal

ANTHROPOLOGY OF MIGRATION: FROM TRADITION TO POST-MODERNITY

Abstract

Migration is indeed not a new phenomenon; it is certainly as old as human civilization. It is not merely about biological movement rather something beyond. From the period of antiquity to modernity to post modernity, migration has been a continuous process to understand the demographic structure of any country. It can be looked from both local and global level. The social structures have been hugely influenced by the process of human migration. From Marxian perspective, migration can be interpreted as product of capitalism, how this process has alienated the individual from the native place and attracted towards the industrial cities of capitalism. The narratives associated with migrations are usually mostly economic but in a post modern context such narratives has been changed. The conventional meaning of migration has been deconstructed and leading towards a new meaning or multiple meaning.

Keywords: *Migration, Modernity, Post-modernity, Capitalism, Industrialization, Urbanization.*

Introduction

From antiquity to modernity, migration has been a continuous process in all the society. Sociologists may give sociological explanation, economists may explain this process from economic point of view, and demographers can locate this as a process of population dynamics, likewise different disciplines has tried to give different explanations in different perspectives. Migration is at the heart of early sociological concerns. August Comte's view that human kind gradually evolved from a theological to a metaphysical and finally to a scientific state was based on the idea that greater concentrations of people led to higher and higher stages of civilization. (e.g. Mesopotamia) Comte's eminent successor E. Durkheim, was also concerned with the disruption of 'mechanical' solidarity with the coming up of specialized occupation, a feature of urban society, which one can relate to migration. Urban concentrations produced a new and more specialized division of labour. But he argued, the utilitarians

SAROJ KUMAR DHAL, Department of Sociology, University of Lucknow, Lucknow, India 226007, sarojdse@gmail.com

had over emphasized economic changes at the expense of understanding the moral and legal basis of the new order. Instead of mechanical solidarity, based on blind obedience to custom and tradition urbanized, societies required 'organic solidarity' rooted in a mutual need for each other's services. Durkheim was sensitive to the dangers of unrestrained, hedonistic individualism which, he saw, could never produce social cohesion or a beneficial moral order. But Comte and Durkheim saw the changes which they described in peaceful, evolutionary terms. Marx was probably the first of the great 19th century thinkers to see migration as a more violent process. Detaching the peasant from the soil for industrial purposes was a traumatic business. As he saw it 'great masses of men (were) suddenly and forcibly torn from their means of subsistence and hurled on to the labor market as free, unprotected and rightless proletarians. The expression "free" proletarians alluded to Marx's idea that labourers were now free from their own means of production and subsistence and 'free' but of necessity required, to sell their remaining possession, their 'labor power' in the market (Cohen, 1996).

Migration is a subject, which touches the boundaries of different disciplines. Hence it is a subject that cries out for an interdisciplinary approach. Each discipline brings something to the table, theoretically and empirically. Anthropologists have taught us to look at networks and transnational communities, while sociologists and economists have tried to find out the causes and consequences of migration from a holistic approach. Anthropologists (Brettell, Caroline, 2003) have brought our attention to look at networks and transnational communities, while economists (Prakash, 1998, Skeldon, 1997, Joseph, 1988, Todaro, 1980) draw our attention to the importance of economic rationality and remittances. Political scientists (Hollifield, 1986) help us to understand the play of organized interests (of migrants) in the making of public policy. Some others in literature like Salman Rushdie (in his novels like Midnight's Children, Satanic Verses etc) and Arvind Adiga (in his famous novel The White Tiger) portray the migrant experience in all its complexity, giving us a much greater empathetic understanding of the hopes and ambitions of migrants. Demographers (Zacharia, and S.Irudaya Rajan 1997, Bhagat, 2010) have perhaps the best macro level empirical grasp on the movement of people across boundaries, and they have the theoretical and methodological tools to show us how such movements affect population dynamics in the sending and receiving societies.

Migration is undeniably a journey during which old values and systems yield to new ones, with varying degrees of resistance, and concomitant stress and strain on the individual, the family and social life (Daniere & Takahashi, 1999). Migrations, in that sense, are a pulse measure for our societies: they reveal tensions and challenges that cannot easily be dismissed. Therefore, migration issues are never sufficiently or adequately addressed when only the migrants themselves are looked at, and not the societal and structural realities

that surface in realities of migration as Leuven's work on Europeans in the context of right to migrate (Leuven, 2008). The work like F. Osella and Katy Gardner's (2004) on Migration, Modernity and Social Transformation in South Asia has given a detailed picture of migration from and within South Asia especially in the context of historical as well as cultural and economic conditions. It is here, at the interstices of practice and representation of popular and institutional narratives, that they find an intimate relation between aspirations to 'modernity' and migration as a vehicle for their possible realization.

Migration and Social Structure

Migration also plays an important role by linking people with spaces and transferring people from places of lower opportunities to those of higher opportunities and a subsequent transfer of resources. The trend of rising unemployment is compounded by the existence of regional imbalances in development within the country, which have collectively accelerated the phenomenon of migration. All theories of migration concede that migration occurs when the region of origin lacks the opportunities which the destination promises. It is inherently a combination of pull and push factors. There are profound relationships between migration and social structure reflecting the varieties of migration types, the complexities of social structure and the reciprocal ways of migration and social structure are interrelated over time, in different societies, for different communities and social groups. Almost every thread of social structure may be linked to migration patterns at macro-and micro-levels of analysis, cross-section ally and longitudinally, with variation over the life cycle, connections to the socio-economic development and relationships to social class. Migration may be linked to social structural changes through the diffusion of new ideas, attitudes and behaviour.

Migration from one area to another in search of improved livelihoods is a key feature of human history. While some regions and sectors fall behind in their capacity to support populations, others move ahead and people migrate to access these emerging opportunities. Industrialization widens the gap between rural and urban areas, inducing a shift of the workforce towards industrializing areas. There is extensive debate on the factors that cause populations to shift, from those that emphasize individual rationality and household behaviour to those that cite the structural logic of capitalist development (de Haan and Rogaly, 2002). Moreover, numerous studies show that the process of migration is influenced by social, cultural and economic factors and outcomes can be vastly different for men and women, for different groups and different locations. In recent years, migration from Punjab to other states of India and to countries abroad has become so rampant that its effect is felt in every aspect of life in the state. From low sex ratio to other social and demographic consequences has devalued the heavy remittances coming from other states and countries. Though migration is a global process but it is

influenced by the ways in which local people experience and make sense of their world. Migration brings economic, social and geographical mobility. Yet in other ways it also heightens social and economic dependence. In some cases it binds families together and some other cases it also pulling them apart. It is a central source of advancement and a symbol of power and also resisted through stress upon local sources of power. (Gardner, 1995)

According to Brettell Caroline (2003) moving from one place to another is nearly a major event .It is one those events around which an individual's biography is built. But for a migrant, identity becomes a heated matter and biographies become jigsaw puzzles, whose solutions are difficult and mutable. However, the problem is not the single pieces of this mosaic, but the way they fit in with each other. From identity crisis to health problem is the major setback of the migrant's life. The feelings associated with migration are usually complicated, the decision to migrate is typically difficult to make and the outcome usually involves mixed emotions. Migration is a statement of an individual's worldview and is therefore, an extremely cultural event. But migration is customarily conceptualized as a product of the material forces at work in our society. Hence the migrant is seen either as a "rational economic man" choosing individual advancement by responding to the economic signals of the job and housing markets, or a virtual prisoner of his or her class position and there by subject to powerful structural economic forces set in motion by the logic of capitalist accumulation. (Caroline, 2003) but Breman views the creation of migrant 'wage hunters' as representative symptoms of the larger processes of global capitalistic development resulting in a race to the bottom. Given that capitalistic production is motivated by profit as the only determining factor, it would invariably lead to regional imbalances and employers would hire labour at the lowest available cost. This trend of rising unemployment is compounded by the existence of regional imbalances in development within the country, which have collectively accelerated the phenomenon of migration. All theories of migration concede that migration occurs when the region of origin lacks the opportunities which the destination promises. It is inherently a combination of pull and push factors. Migration within and between countries in the region, is a desperate search for a better life. This intense movement of people is accentuated by the growing mismatch between pockets of economic activity and deprivation brought about by the new global economic order. Migration is a process that is governed by various push and pull factors. In simple terms, push factors force people to move, while the pull factors lure them to seemingly greener pastures. (Breman, 2004) The push factors include**:** Low agricultural productivity, lack of local employment or opportunities for advancement, landlessness, marginalization, Population pressure, Domestic or community conflict, War, political unrest, natural calamities etc. The Pull Factors include: Rapid urbanization and industrialization, Consumerism and increased access to information. Better opportunities for livelihood, education, improved system of mobility, Spirit of exploration etc. (Todaro, 1980)

Changing Places, People and Social Structure:

Ideas of 'home' and 'belonging' are often highly subjective and conceptual. However, in order to understand what it might mean for people to 'feel at home' or to 'belong' we need to recognise that there must be some*thing*, some*one* or some*where* to belong *to*: a representation of 'home' with which the individual can form an attachment. While this 'thing' can be both material and immaterial (in the sense of intangible, or conceptual), the other receptors of belonging or attachment – people (someone) and places (somewhere) – are usually considered to be inherently material (or tangible) due to their physicality. Such notions of belonging may be particularly important within the context of migration (including forced migration), border change or displacement, which result in people taking their own perceptions and memories of 'home' into new territory. Indeed, various academic literatures have explored feelings of belonging and understandings of home in these contexts, including: place identity and place attachment; identi- ties and belonging; emotions, affect and loss or attachment. I argue that the *process* of attachment is as significant in understanding belonging and a sense of 'home' as either *place* or *people* individually. Belonging is tied up with understandings, constructions and articulations of identities, as well as with place, people, things and experiences. Hazel Easthope's (2009) work on mobility, place and identity, argues that both mobility (including migration) and place are 'fundamental attributes of *all* identities' (Easthope 2009: 78) within contemporary societies. She argues that this is the case, no matter whether we conceive of identities as rooted in place (for example Duyvendak's critique of political instrumentalisation of the 'nation-as-home' [2011]); rooted in the sense of being hybrid and flexible, following Giddens' (1991) and Bauman's (1997, 2001) 'liquid modernity'; dynamic and incomplete (Rutherford 1990); positional in relation to an 'other' (Said 1979); self-constructed within relations of power; or as a combination of various aspects of each (*cf.* Easthope 2009: 62–70).

Human mobility or migration, plays upon borders of nation, language and identity and keeps turning them porous. Deconstructing the structures at play that stigmatise and often marginalise the migrants. It draws attention to the power dynamics between the host and migrant community, which controls and enacts the episodes of hopes, of integration and negation. Concerns emerging with long-settled migrants, issues evolving with the second and third-generation migrant population such as growing up as children in diaspora, succumbing to family expectations as well as the fate of women under anxious and cautious patriarchal customs are also taken up by these papers to show the evolving nature of migrants' concern and ambitions in the host land. As we witness a global increase in migration, as more and more nation-states in Asia, America and Europe reel with the influx of migrants, we also notice the scope of new debates on migration, on possibilities and challenges for inclusive growth and development. These debates though will remain centered around

local resistance against migrants finding a refuge, around the processes of dehumanisation migrants undergo as well as the cultural differences but are also bound to concentrate on the new nuances such processes of resistance and dehumanisation involve (Castañeda Heide, 2016).

Histories of colonial institutionalising of religion into communities and its terrible outcomes in the form 'Partition' seemed repeating themselves once again though in a different form. Terms such as outsider, illegal refugee started making an appearance once again in everyday discourse.

The question of 'identity' is being questioned and debated in modern social theory. One way of life is giving one identity and another way of life is giving another identity, which leads to the identity crisis. The formation and transformation of identity is really a matter of concern and introspection in today's post modern world. (Dhal, 2022) We can explore how interactions between local community members, internal migrants, and external migrants are shaping new forms of social relations as well as new discourses about migration, citizenship, and deservingness. The analysis of such encounters reveals the ways contemporary migration complicates simple binaries of sending and receiving countries of origin and Destination and considers the impact of these flows for the relation between state and civil society.

Conclusion

Migration is an essential and important ingredient of global social change. It is a phenomenon that has been taking place for thousands of years and continues all over the world. It happens when people can no longer sustain themselves within their own milieus. They migrate to places where resources are more easily available as discussed by the push-pull and economic theories of migration. In earlier periods people migrated from one place to another in search of food, shelter, and safety from persecution. Today, people tend to migrate more frequently and long distances too. However, it is not in distress always, rather in search of better career opportunities and better quality of life. Migration is undeniably a journey during which old values and systems may gradually yield to new ones, with varying degrees of enthusiasms and/or resistances, and concomitant stress and strain on the individual and the family in social life. Also it is a social process that is induced, structured, and shaped by the individuals who participate in it directly and indirectly though links with those who migrate. These people: bring their desires, aspirations, needs, incentives, skills, and experiences to the event. What is the purpose of migration for an individual and for a family? People migrate not just to earn money. They migrate with lot of ambitions, aspirations and dreams. People migrate for a sense of purpose and a hope for satisfaction. If migration does not provide this then migration will lose its real value i.e. mobility both in spatial and social sense. If the purpose of migration is achieved then there is often very little left to feel alienation at the place of destination otherwise migrant status will always haunt the individual for a long period

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Ananta Kumar Giri

NEW EDUCATION POLICY OF INDIA: LEARNING, LANGUAGES AND TRANSLATIONS AND THE CALLING OF A NEW BHARAT-HIND-VISWA YATRA

We, the educated classes, have received our education through a foreign tongue. We have, therefore, not reacted upon the masses. We want to represent the masses, but we fail. They recognize us not much more than they recognize the English officers. Their hearts are not an open book to neither. Their aspirations are not ours. Hence there is a break. And you witness not in reality failure to organize but want of correspondence between the representatives and the represented. If during the last fifty years we had been educated through the vernaculars, our elders and our servants and our neighbors would have partaken of our knowledge; the discoveries of a Bose or a Ray would have been household treasures as are the Ramayan and the Mahabharat. As it is, so far as the masses are concerned, those great discoveries might as well have been made by foreigners. Had instruction in all the branches of learning been given through the vernaculars, I make bold to say that they would have been enriched wonderfully.

—Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1947), *India of My Dreams*, p. 124-125.

The network of agape involves a kind of fidelity to the new relations; and because we can all too easily fall away from this [..], we are led to shore up these relations; we institutionalize them, introduce rules, divide responsibilities.

Charles Taylor (2007), *A Secular Age*, p. 739.

You long to wander far and wide and are preparing for a speedy flight; be true to yourself and true to others, then even narrow confines will be wide enough.

—Goethe.

I am not a born traveller. I have not the energy and strength needed for knowing a strange country and helping the mind to gather materials from a wide area of new experiences for building its foreign nest.

ANANTA KUMAR GIRI is a Professor with Madras Institute of Development Studies, Chennai, India. Email: aumkrishna@gmail.com / ananta@mids.ac.in website: www.mids.ac.in/ananta.htm

—Rabindranath Tagore in a letter to Victoria Ocampo in Ocampo (1961), "Tagore on the Banks of the River Plate: West Meets East," p. 38.

New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims at initiating new visions and practices of learning. It discusses many aspects of education in India and future trajectories. In this article, I discuss mainly its thoughts on language and possible inter-cultural leaning and the challenges of experiencing the plurality and diversity of India and the world.

NEP (2020) puts a great deal of emphasis on learning with our mother languages in early years especially in the primary school and also learning other languages. It calls us for learning three languages as a stepping stone for learning many languages of India and the world. It invites us to open ourselves to all the classical and contemporary languages of India as well as Pali, Persian and Prakriti. It calls for us to learn Sanskrit as one of our modern languages as well as other equally significant classical languages of India such as Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Odia. For development of our contemporary Indian languages in the 8th Schedule of India, it plans to set up an Academy of 8th Schedule Languages.

NEP also emphasizes on learning foreign languages such as German, Spanish etc. But what is the missing from the list is Chinese as possibly some other important languages. After Chinese aggression on India in Ladakh in June 2020 and the continuing stand off, we are justifiably hurt and enraged and we want to create our own space of dignity, honor and place in our neighborhood and the world. But Human Resource Development Ministry has taken Chinese out of learning options for many as Institutes and universities teaching Chinese language and literature seem to be under scanner. China funded Confucian Institutes are also under scanner. But here we need to move with caution as well as openness. HRD closing of Chinese language option is a case of thoughtless jingoism. India and China are two neighboring civilizations and we have so much to learn together in our intertwined worlds. A geopolitical difficulty now should not blind our approaches to our own responsibility to learn each others' languages, cultures and our ways of tackling contemporary challenges such as climate change, corona virus, authoritarianism and building what is enshrined in Chinese constitution as an ecological civilization for all of us in the world.

NEP refers to the outstanding centers of learning in India such as Nalanda and Takshashila. NEP wants to create world class universities now and make India become Viswaguru, teacher of the world. But there may be hidden and toxic pride in this which makes us oblivious of our own responsibility to learn other's languages and cultures and become a *Viswachatra*—a student of the world. Only when we become students of the world, learn the languages of the world, we can perform our humble role as a Viswaguru—teacher of the

world. In Indic tradition, no true Guru tries to claim himself as Guru. One offers oneself as a humble seeker and servant of Truth and others consider one as a Guru. Indians take pride in the fact that Hiuen Tsang from Xian, China came to study in Nalanda and also visited many centers of learning such as Pusphagiri in present day Jajpur, Odisha. On his way back, he with great difficulties brought thousands of manuscripts back to his monastery in Xian. Hiuen Tsang spent the rest of his life translating these manuscripts into Chinese. I was visiting Xian in 2004 and visited the monastery where he was living, leaning and translating which was a great spiritual experience for me. But how many Indians had visited China, learnt the language and also offered their whole lives like Hiuen Tsang to translate works in Chinese to Indian languages? Despite the so-called Indian openness to the world which we assert by referring to the following lines in Rgveda, "let noble thoughts come from us from all corners," there is an entrenched parochialism in Indian engagement with the world. This is reflected in, among other things, our current knowledge and ignorance of Chinese language and other languages and cultures of the world. In post-independent India, we have been happily imprisoned in domestic studies of India in humanities and social sciences and our departments of international relations have been primarily concerned with geopolitical issues and rarely concerned with wider issues of philosophy and cultures. Our current geopolitical standoff with China must not be allowed to be used as an excuse to deprive us of our rights and responsibility to learn languages and cultures of China as well as other parts of the world.

But this lack of openness to learning other languages is also seen in India. A case in point is the reaction to three language policy in NEP in Tamil Nadu. The then Chief Minister Palaniswamy and then Opposition Leader and now Chief Minister Stalin and other political leaders opposed it. The editorial in The Hindu on August 5, 2020 on this also endorsed this political stand. The editorial in The Hindu asserted that the two language formula in Tamil Nadu—Tamil and English—has done well (also see Samas 2020).[1] Three language policy in NEP is a way to impose Hindi in Tamil Nadu through the back door. Though this apprehension is understandable against the backdrop of the anti-Hindi agitation in Tamil Nadu and resistance against granting Hindi primacy as a link language of India but is it still possible to move forward on this issue? The author of this editorial seems not to have done justice to the letter and spirit of what is written in NEP:

> The three-language formula will continue to be implemented while keeping in mind the Constitutional provisions, aspirations of the people, regions, and the Union, and the need to promote multilingualism as well as promote national unity. However, there will be a greater flexibility in the three-language formula, and no language will be imposed on any State. The three languages learned by children will be the choices of States, regions, and of course the students themselves,

> so long as at least two of the three languages are native to India. In particular, students who wish to change one or more of the three languages they are studying may do so in Grade 6 or 7, as long as they are able to demonstrate basic proficiency in three languages (including one language of India at the literature level) by the end of secondary school.

NEP makes categorically clear that it is a flexible policy which the State would implement as it chooses. Tamil Nadu may choose to teach Kannada, or Malayalam, or Hindi. Similarly other States such as West Bengal may like to teach Odia and Odisha Bangla as one of the languages which would lead to much needed regionalization and cross-fertilization of our languages, literatures and consciousness helping us overcome the limits of linguistic provincialism as well as colonial legacy in our treatment of each other's languages as in case of Bangla, Odia and Assamese. Two language formulae of Tamil Nadu faces with the limits of the two in any interaction and the creative possibility of inviting a third to our learning and consciousness which may help us open up with the third to fourth, fifth and many more. Here we can benefit from the critical and creative social theory of triple contingency which urges us to realize the significance of three not just numerically but as a matter of opening consciousness to the third as a starting point for the plural infinite and understand the limits of the double contingency of the self and the other, in this case possibly Tamil and Hindi, and even Tamil and English (see Strydom 2009). This editorial as well as reproduction of the earlier anti-Hindi agitation of an earlier generation does not take into the account the way the two language formula in Tamil Nadu has deprived many students especially in the rural areas in Tamil Nadu in learning Hindi. Here what E. Balagurswamy, the former VC of Anna University, tells us deserves our careful consideration:

> By favouring two-language formula, only the poor and rural students studying in government schools are deprived of learning any additional language while the rich and urban joining CBSE, central and private schools have the freedom to study any language they wish. You are very well aware that the children and grandchildren of the leaders who oppose the three-language formula are all studying (or have studied) Hindi happily. Not only this, many of these leaders are running CBSE schools where Hindi is compulsory (Balaguruswamy 2020).

During a discussion at University of Madras on draft NEP 2020, I had shared that the NEP challenges us to learn our mother languages and each other's languages. One of the panelists, a respected friend of a mine, narrated his own experience of studying Hindi in Tamil Nadu in his school days where the Hindi teacher was a butt of a joke. But what is the point of repeating this "butt of a joke" narrative now? My respected friend is a deep votary of inter-religious dialogues but he seems not to be able to bring his openness of heart in religious and inter-religious matters to matters of languages. Moreover,

from the perspectives of human development, we are all called upon to be stages of human growth and maturation where we are called upon to grow from my reactive stages to a fuller understanding of mutual worth and mutualization. This is also the calling of science, spirituality, religions and creative calling such as art, poetry and literature.

Languages and translations go together. NEP speaks of establishing Departments of Translations in Institutes of Higher Education. But what about translations in schools and colleges? India has her own tradition of translations. Mughal Emperor Akbar had made translation integral to school systems during his reign where each school had training in practices of translation. Even before Akbar, the Muslim rulers of Bengal had commissioned "Bengali translations of the Sanskrit epics, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*" (Sen 2021: 133). As Amartya Sen tells us: "Indeed, several of the early Muslim kings, who learned Bengali despite their origins elsewhere were sufficiently impressed by the multicultural history of Bengal to commission good Bengali translations of the Sanskrit epics [..] This was in the fourteenth century, and these early translations are still among the most read versions of these ancient epics" (ibid). Akbar took great efforts to translate the *Ramayana* into Persian and he tried his best to employ some of the finest Persian artists to illustrate and illumine his translation. It is such cultures of translation that created such exemplary translators as Akbar's great-great grandson Dara Shukoh who translated the Upanishads into Persian. One of Dara Shukoh's books was entitled *Majma-Ul-Bahrain*, *The Mingling of Two Oceans* (Dara Shukoh 2006). It is a great tragedy of history that Shukoh was killed by his younger brother Aurangzeb in his struggle for power, but the spirit of Dara Shukoh is a spirit of translation as well as a spirit of love and *Satyagraha*. Dara Sukho did not translate to become a Viswa Guru nor even a Guru and those of us who are intoxicated with our anxiety to become Viswaguru can read the following from his *Compass of Truth*: "There is no asceticism in it, everything is easy, gracious and a free gift [..] Even the blessed Prophet used to call his disciples by the words companions and friends. And there was no mention of *Piri* and *Muridi* (Teacher and Disciple) between them. Therefore, whenever, in this book there occurs the word "friend," understand by it the seeker of God" (Dara Shukoh 1912: 5). In learning and translations, we can cultivate this way of friendship rather than *apriori* enmity and hatred and realize this as our walk with Truth, our Satyagraha. It is no wonder than that Gandhi who lived a life of Satyagraha was also a humble learner of languages as well as translator Gandhi wrote his seminal work *Hind Swaraj* in his mother language Gujarati, and was learning Bangla during his work for peace in Noakhali at his ripe age of 78. Gandhi also translated Tolstoy into Gujarati.

NEP talks about going through fun museum of languages of India at the school level where we can find similarities and common words between and among our languages as it writes:

> Thus, every student in the country will participate in a fun project/activity on 'The Languages of India', sometime in Grades 6-8, such as, under the 'Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat' initiative. In this project/activity, students will learn about the remarkable unity of most of the major Indian languages, starting with their common phonetic and scientifically-arranged alphabets and scripts, their common grammatical structures, their origins and sources of vocabularies from Sanskrit and other classical languages, as well as their rich inter-influences and differences. They will also learn what geographical areas speak which languages, get a sense of the nature and structure of tribal languages, and learn to say commonly spoken phrases and sentences in every major language of India and also learn a bit about the rich and uplifting literature of each (through suitable translations as necessary).

In the above paragraph, NEP refers to translation only parenthetically but now we can give it a primal significance even at the school level where students and teachers are engaged in creative translations of the two Indian languages they study. NEP talks about learning languages creatively and artistically. It talks about art integration at the general level of pedagogy and art integration also can be brought to language learning and here art integration and translations can be woven together.

Learning and translations make us realize that we are all finite and grateful passages with the gift of life and languages and we are not possessors and proprietors of any language including our mother languages. Like all of us coming from one source, our languages Tamil, Sanskrit, Hindi or Chinese come from one source of Nature, Human, Divine and Transcendence. With our difficulties of histories and societies we all cannot afford to forget this and our gratitude to our own mother languages and all the languages or the world. All the languages of the world are our mother languages when we start loving them, learn and translate them. This has been the peripatetic wisdom of all the teachers of humanity such as Thiruvallavaur, Buddha, Kabir, Nanak, Erasmus, Swami Vivekanand, Sri Aurobindo, Gandhi, Pandita Ramabai (who translated Bible from original Hebrew to a beautiful Marathi) and philosophers such as Wittgenstein and Heidegger, the latter urging us to realize language as a way making movement. With our learning, love and translations languages become way-making movements, movements of weaving threads among each other and not only accentuate threats such as the danger of imposing Hindi though the this flexible policy of three language policy. While being cautious and vigilant let us also be open and courageous in our trust and responsibility and realize the limits of our own pride and open ourselves to our own cross-currents of co-learning and mutual responsibility.

New Education Policy and the Calling of Bharat-Hind-Viswa Learning Yatra

Such courage of co-learning and responsibility is awaiting us in fields of undertaking travel or *yatra* to learn languages as well as life worlds which animate these which is different from being a tourist. The New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes on touring across the country on the part of the students to realize the unity and diversity of India. It writes: "The Policy recognizes that the knowledge of the rich diversity of India should be imbibed first hand by learners. This would mean including simple activities, like touring by students to different parts of the country, which will not only give a boost to tourism but will also lead to an understanding and appreciation of diversity, culture, traditions and knowledge of different parts of India. Towards this direction under 'Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat', 100 tourist destinations in the country will be identified where educational institutions will send students to study these destinations and their history, scientific contributions, traditions, indigenous literature and knowledge, etc., as a part of augmenting their knowledge about these areas." But this misses the creative challenge of making students learning travelers to other places and institutions of learning in our vast country. The policy suffers from a poverty of creative imagination and policy making in this regard. We do not realize the multiplicity and creative and critical diversity of India that is Bharat by visiting only tourist destinations. Moreover, it does not understand the limitations of tourist mode of being with the world, which is ephemeral and the need for developing a learning-traveler mode,—a yatra-mode of being with diversities of India and the world.

India is a vast and diverse country and here we realize the unity and plurality of India with our own individual and institutional learning, experience and realization. In this context, we need to make it compulsory on the part of our newly envisioned four-year degree program for learners to spend a semester in another part of India with a Higher Education Institute (HEI). In this new place of location and learning, along with learning in colleges and universities, they also need to intern with local civic and voluntary organizations working in the fields of social action, community development and cultural regeneration in the fields of local languages, literature and cultures. These civic organizations can provide civic mentorship to students. With such many-sided academic and experiential learning, students can realize the beauty, depth and oneness of India across space and time which would also help us realizing India as a thread of our minds and hearts. Despite all our efforts in nation-building, national integration including logic of military centralization in post-India we have not yet realized the oneness of India. Our brothers and sisters of India in different parts of India are yet to develop habits of minds and hearts in this regard. Such an educational program would help us in this. Our brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers and children in different parts of our country such as Kashmir, Nagaland, Manipur and other parts of North East have complex and structural

grievances against the way they have been dealt by Indian State over the years. Here we need to send our students to these parts of our country and enable them to experience their realities and experiences of injustice, marginalization, degradation as well as their struggles for autonomy, dignity and belonging to India with their heads high. Our student participants as *yatrees*—learning travelers—would be able to develop a different perspective on our differential realities of Indian belonging and learn how to weave new threads of head and heart. They would be able to realize our oneness of India with love and mutual learning in the midst of challenges instead of just mouthing slogans such as *Ek Bharat*, *Srestha Bharat*. We need to realize One India, Great India with our works and meditations of love, labor and learning and not just throwing these as stones from the top by the powers that be.

In contemporary India, there is a politically charged discourse about patriotism, nationalism and anti-nationalism. But in India we do not have any program where young people such as school and university students can visit and spend a semester in another center of learning in another part of India. In European Union, Erasmus program named after the great traveler and soul-touching bridge builder Erasmus who through his travel and letters had created a Republic of Letters has helped European Union to create a bond of European consciousness despite many challenges. In India travelers such as Buddha, Shankara, Guru Nanak, Swami Vivekananda, Pandita Ramabai, Gandhi, Vinoba and P.V. Rajagopal-the inspiring and hard-working nurturer of Ekta Parisha—had created such a journey of pan Indian awareness and consciousness. The proposed learning yatra can draw inspiration from both the Erasmus learning program in European Union as well as travelling learners from India.

When learners undertake such a yatra, they including some of their outmoded teachers and political masters would realize that India is not just Bharat that is mentioned in our Constitution. India is also called Hindustan and *al Hind*. Jai Hind—our energizing slogan still mechanically uttered—does not bring us to the Hind and Hindustan dimension of our existence realizing the signal contributions of Islamic culture and civilization as an interlinked and integral part of Bharat-India to the making of Bharat-India. In North India, Hindi and Urdu grew as sister languages mutually influencing each other, and in the Deccan also there was a long tradition of interaction of Persian and Arabic with local languages of the land. Our discourse of India-Bharat with a political valorization of the discourse and symbol of Bharat Mata does not realize that we are also Hind, al-Hind as told to us in the immortal lines of Alama Iqbal: *Sara Jahan Se Achha Hindustan Hamara*. NEP's reference to *Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat* calls for a radical interrogation of its possible closed, one-dimensional reading of Bharat that is India as the utterers of this term seem not to have the experience of the confluence of Hindi and Urdu, the Ganga-Yamuna culture that is part our journey that is India that is Bharat. We also might lack similar experiences of making and realization of India with

our plural contributions from each part of our land from Kanayakumari to Kashmir, From Lakhwadeep to Leh, from Punjab to Assam.

Bharat, Hind, India are part of our manifold worlds historically and contemporaneously. Our journey with Bharat-Hind-India is not only spatial but also temporal. When our students visit other spaces of India as well as visit other times of their locations and destinations they can realize this vastness of India and the world both temporally and spatially—temporally realizing the many layers of history and future that lie with us and awaiting for our touch and regeneration. We need to travel not only within India but across in South Asia as well as the world. The NEP talks about internationalization of education but it seems to forget our immediate South Asian neighborhood. India once had taken a lead role in the formation of SAARC but now SAARC seems almost dead. There is a South Asian University in New Delhi as part of SAARC which is doing a bit by bringing students and teachers from South Asian countries. Given the challenges of poverty, underdevelopment, terrorism, war, pandemic and climate change, we need to foster closer learning exchanges with our SAARC neighbors such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, the Maldives, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bhutan. We also need to create special fellowships and admission policies for students and teachers from such countries. NEP is totally silent on this as the current political regime which has given rise to it is happily abandoning its responsibility towards reviving SAARC and is unfortunately imprisoned in an anti-Pakistan rhetoric and policy making which is self-destructive not to mention the irreparable damage and harm it does to fostering cultures of exchange, learning and peace in our South Asian neighborhood. A case in point is denial of visa to scholars from Pakistan at the last minute in the 2018 ASA (Association of Asian Studies) in Asia conference held in Delhi in July 2018. Denying visa to the students and scholars? Why? Are they going to blow us up? The inauguration of the Conference began with a protest against it by the organizers such as Ashoka University as well as the key note speaker Professor James Scott of Yale University. Professor Sugata Bose, a noted historian and then Member of Parliament, withdrew his panel from the Conference in protest and held it later in India International Center. I attended this and it was inspiring to listen to Professor Bose's reiteration for the need for greater South Asian dialogues and his reference to Netaji Subash Bose and Mahatma Gandhi's work on it. For this, we must not be a victim of a short sighted political blindness and open ourselves to seeing, meeting and learning with each other. For this, we need welcoming visa officials for our South Asian scholars and especially from Pakistan.

India as a Global Destination of Education and Viswa Guru?

NEP wants to promote India as a global study destination as it writes:

> India will be promoted as a global study destination providing premium education at affordable costs thereby helping to restore its role as a

> Vishwa Guru. An International Students Office at each HEI hosting foreign students will be set up to coordinate all matters relating to welcoming and supporting students arriving from abroad. Research/ teaching collaborations and faculty/student exchanges with high-quality foreign institutions will be facilitated, and relevant mutually beneficial MOUs with foreign countries will be signed. High performing Indian universities will be encouraged to set up campuses in other countries, and similarly, selected universities e.g., those from among the top 100 universities in the world will be facilitated to operate in India.

These are laudable goals except that we need to foundationally rethink and re-realize the visions and practices of internationalization of education. Internationalization of education is not only a matter of structures such as building International Student Offices or building campuses overseas by Indian HEIs or vice versa. It is primarily a matter of consciousness; it needs new consciousness work, of developing our hands, heads and hearts. Internationalization of education is not only a matter of establishing right networks—social, digital, technological and infrastructural—but also developing love, labor and learning with other cultures, societies and educational institutions of the world (see Beteille 1980; Giri 2013). It calls for a mode of agape or love and Rasa or flow which would help us overcome our conscious and unconscious boundaries, veils of ignorance and arrogance and walls of separation. It would help us realize that born in Bharat-Hind-India we, at the same time, belong to both India and the World as to our Mother Earth and our learning journey is not only for realizing the oneness and greatness of India but also our world. As Vinoba Bhave used to sing, *Jai Jagat*, *Jai Jagat*-Victory to our world, Victory to our World. Vionba was a tireless walker walking the length and breadth of India and around and PV Rajagopal and friends of Ekta Parsihad drawing inspiration from him had started a year-long yatra from Delhi to Geneva on the last birth day of Gandhi, 2nd October 2019 (see Reubke 2020). All these visions and practices can challenge us to undertake a creative contemporary Bharat-Hind-Viswa Yatra as part of our journey with education and learning and sing with Rabindra Nath Tagore in his *Gitanjali*:

> Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high
>
> Where knowledge is free
>
> Where the world has not been broken up into fragments
>
> By narrow domestic walls
>
> Where words come out from the depth of truth
>
> Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection
>
> Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way
>
> Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit

Where the mind is led forward by thee

Into ever-widening thought and action

Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

Notes

1 While celebrating the two language formula of Tamil Nadu, Samas (2020) also writes: "Our students suffer a serious handicap while dealing with English and Tamil languages. And they do not have command over either. Yet this is not the failure of the two language formula per se but of its implementation and the present Indian educational ecosystem."

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Obja Borah Hazarika and Sarmistha Das

WOES OF ONLINE EDUCATION IN ENGLISH MEDIUM SCHOOLS: REFLECTIONS FROM LOWER INCOME GROUPS OF ASSAM

Abstract

The article aims to uncover the challenges faced by the learners and their parents in response to the sudden transition from offline to the online mode of education during the Covid-19 Pandemic, especially among the people from the lower-income groups in Assam. Aspirations among lower-income families in sending their children to English medium schools and the challenges faced by them to support the schooling of their wards during the Pandemic forms the mainstay of the article. The initiatives put forth by the schools and the government are explored to understand how these efforts are faring in ameliorating online school-related problems faced by such households.

Keywords: *Online education, low-income group, Access to Education, Basic Education, Learning Opportunities, Equitable opportunities, Covid-19 Pandemic*

Introduction

Education over the years has changed its meaning in multiple ways. It has been dynamic both in terms of reception and transmission of knowledge. In this process, language played a crucial role as a mode of communication. It not only facilitated exchange but also helped in developing intersubjectivities and the creation of a dialogue. At this juncture which language occupies the highest position becomes a point of inquiry. In India English, as a language occupies a privileged position as it is believed to be spoken by a particular class of people who garner cultural capital through the language which helped them with social mobility. The cultural capital of English helps in establishing 'networks' to access career opportunities with economic and social benefits. To this, the physical classrooms add up, the classrooms in this context were living realities that manifested different forms of heterogeneity in terms of ideas, questions, and production of knowledge systems. As students and

OBJA BORAH HAZARIKA, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Dibrugarh University, E-mail-Obja11@gmail.com; **SARMISTHA DAS,** Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Tezpur University, E-mail: sharmishtha.k@gmail.com

teachers from different socioeconomic backgrounds interacted in such spaces. These were spaces where people with different aspirations interacted. The idea of the physical classroom was completely rebuked with the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic. Virtual classrooms and online meetings became the new-age modes of knowledge production. The online school system became a significant aspect of the lives of children and parents in India and elsewhere during the Pandemic. For many, this was the first time they were bound to access education in an online form, which presented them with a range of learning opportunities and challenges. However, not all categories of households faced similar challenges, mainly due to different socio-economic backgrounds. While the offline mode of classrooms did adhere to the protocols of the world health Organization it did create a lot of barriers in access vis-à-vis aspirations of the citizens.

The primary intent was to uncover the challenges of carrying out and aiding online schooling of lower-income group families. Studies (Kundu 20202; Mazumdar 2020) have shown that online schools hampered educational prospects in India and elsewhere due to the shift. This study aimed to explore the challenges of carrying out online schooling in India per se and examine the experiences of a particular group of people- the plight of those families from lower-income groups of Assam. They sent their wards to English medium schools. While studies on education have abounded, for instance, scholars like Durkheim while addressing education did not only refer to it as a means of providing shared values and meanings to attain a form of solidarity (Pickering et al 1998). It was also seen as a tool which helped in socialization and social integration. It further, help transmit certain kinds of skill sets for enhancing the diversity of the workforce in an industrial setup. Critiquing the idea of mass schooling (Illich, 1971) and the production of one kind of narrative suggests a model of learning where informal networks and voluntary relationships help in transferring skill sets and knowledge. Such strands reflect that education may create a kind of solidarity, yet the process of standardization creates a lot many inequalities and disparities (Pathak, 2021). The creation of online classrooms in this regard has created a new standardization that was not equal across the groups. It had a different impact on the first-generational learners attending English medium schools, parents of these children do not have any grasp of English, adding yet another layer of challenge. It doubly burdened them as they were utterly unable to help their wards in their online school during the Pandemic as it was conducted in English. They did not complete schooling but harbored an aspirational goal of seeing their children study in an English medium school. They associate such education with greater career prospects and thus social mobility. Lack of knowledge of English made such parents significantly disadvantaged when trying to aid their children in their online school, which was conducted in English. They also faced other difficulties that have been documented by earlier studies on the woes of online schools, such as access to electronic devices and digital illiteracy, which were

exacerbated due to their financial constraints. Initiatives by schools and the government in Assam are also examined to understand how these efforts fared in ameliorating online school-related problems faced by such households. Thus, the article focuses on the inequalities in the online education system and the aspirations among parents from lower-income groups and the challenges they face in their lives.

Methods

For this study, 20 respondents were contacted. They belonged to the informal sector of the economy and worked as drivers, household helpers, and vendors with an income of Rs 8000-10000 per month. The parent's education level varied from class 5 to class 9 in non-English medium schools. Small-scale interactions were held with 20 such people, out of which 8 were women (household helpers-5, vendors-3) and 12 were men (household helpers-2, vendors- 5, drivers- 5). The sample was collected from the districts of Dibrugarh (50%) and Sonitpur (50%), located in Assam. They were asked about their experiences providing online schooling for their children from April 2020 to April 2021. Their children study in classes ranging from 1 to 9. The interactions with 40% were carried out via phone as they were hesitant to meet physically due to covid-19 concerns. 60% of the interviews were carried out in a face-to-face manner. The article first looks at the challenges of online schooling faced by lower-income groups and contextualizes them and the respondents' experiences in this study. Secondly, it examines the difficulties faced by these families in supporting their children who attend English medium schools.

Challenges of Online schooling

Shifting online

The Covid-19 Pandemic led the governments of many countries, including India, to take decisions to lock down the country, including the closing of schools to prevent the spread of the disease. While students and teachers could no longer go to physical schools, they had /were supposed to shift online without much preparation for this fundamental change. The main reasons to change to online mode were the possibility of a long duration of the closure, not being certain about when they would reopen, constricted academic calendar probability and learning discontinuity from such conditions (Reddy et al. 2020). Moreover, completion of syllabus, evaluation, and promotion to higher classes were other reasons that pressured experts and policymakers to suggest a shift to an online model as a solution (Biswas 2020). The new National Education Policy of India, released in July 2020, promoted the adoption of online education as a game-change in the educational process. (EPW Engage 2021a)."

Since the Pandemic, schools have been advised to proceed with the syllabus through virtual lectures and massive open -online courses in India.

Still, in several cases, both teachers and students lacked the requisite digital infrastructure to enable meaningful teaching and learning opportunities (Kundu 2020). Online education was touted as TINA—there is no alternative to it- but research has shown that 'online' school presents problems for students and their parents. While there was an obvious adjustment problem for students, teachers, and school administrations to adapt to the online system on account of hitherto not being used to such a system, several other challenges arose once this system was enforced. It has been stressed that the decision to implement an online school was taken without considering the poor nature of digital infrastructure and the lack of skill and familiarity among teachers and students in functioning online (Reddy 2020).

Low internet density in India

One of the main problems was access to the Internet. It has been noted that many households, especially those in rural areas and the poor in urban areas, do not have access to Internet-enabled devices and lack electricity and the wherewithal to access the Internet per se to attend school in a virtual form (EPW Engage 2021a, Cherian 2021). India has the second-largest internet user base of over 630 million subscribers (Devara 2020). Thus about 49.80% of India's population access the Internet (Devara 2020). The rest of the 51.20% of India's population does not have access to the Internet (Devara 2020). The National Statistical Office (NSO), under the guidance of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI), in 2017–18, showed that across India, only 23.8 per cent of households had internet facilities, with a coverage of 42 per cent among the urban areas and 14.9 per cent among the rural (Mazumdar 2020).

Internet service users in the Northeast lag behind the rest of the country. On 30 July 2017, Ravi Shankar Prasad, Minister of Electronics and Information Technology and Law and Justice, announced the vision of Digital Northeast 2022 to enhance people's lives in Northeast India in the digital model to ensure inclusive and sustainable growth (Mazumdar 2020). According to data released in 2018, only 35 per cent of people in the northeast was covered by the internet while 8600 villages suffered from a lack of mobile communication (Kalita 2018)." Overall, areas some areas receive less reliable internet, especially those in hill tor rural tracts and low-income families (Parsheera 2019).

In our survey, 10 of the respondents noted that they did not have/use the Internet on their mobile phones before the lockdown. They indicated that they had to seek help to activate the Internet and recharge their phones during the lockdown. The other 10 noted that they had Internet on their phones, but the recharge on that would often lapse before the lockdown as they were not bound to use the Internet. Post-lockdown, they stated that there was not even one day when they were not connected to the Internet, which enforced an

entirely new dynamic in their homes which began to revolve around phone usage.

Internet-related woes of students

Online schooling is fundamentally dependent on access to the Internet. According to data from India's National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), in 2017-2018, students with access to digital infrastructure were only about 9% (EPW Engage 2019). Another study states that digital services including smartphones was accessed by only 25 per cent of students in India as of 2017-2018. Among current students, the top income groups and those from advantaged social groups have the highest access to computers with the Internet (Reddy 2020).

Access to computers with internet facilities was only 8% among the Other Backward class and only 2% among the poorest income groups. Equitable opportunities in access were found to be equally appalling among students from Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Scheduled Castes (SCs) (Reddy et al. 2020). Some socio-economic groups are particularly disadvantaged due to the digital divide. For instance, Kerala and Punjab have reported suicides of Dalit girl students in response to struggles to access online education (Patil 2021). Internet access has hardly been available in schools and homes in northeast India even before the Pandemic (Mazumdar 2020).

In our survey, all 20 respondents noted a lack of a laptop with Internet (they all arranged smartphones), and they also cited a lack of 24/7 electricity which hampered charging their mobile phones. Some noted that they did not even own a smartphone before the lockdown. For instance, a 28-year-old house help stated that when the government of India announced the lockdown in 2020 March, she remembered that she did not have any money to buy her son a smartphone. From March to October 2020, her son did not attend any online classes. A lady from the house where she worked for the past eight years, was generous enough to help her with a smartphone in October 2020. After getting the smartphone, she had to go through many problems accessing learning opportunities on the Internet and operating it on the phone. Studies have also shown that many families have just one smartphone, which they are often unable to share with their children (Devara 2020). In our research, ten respondents noted that they had two or more school-going children, and therefore it was difficult to share the only phone that the family owned.

There was also a cost aspect of recharging data packs for those who managed smartphones for their child, which has also been reported in other states (The New Indian Express 2020). This problem was noted by several of the respondents. For instance, a 30-year-old driver by profession and a father of two children stated that by managing odd jobs like washing cars, he managed to earn an extra income besides his salary. Through this, he supported the newfound expenses in the family related to providing internet access to his

children. A respondent, who works as a vegetable vendor, noted that in the pretext of attending an online class, his son got into the practice of downloading games. He stated that he spent more money on recharging and buying data for the phone. He feels that his sons overused his phone and spoilt the phone battery. His son also demanded that the phone be recharged with packs almost daily. He lamented that while studies should not suffer, he was also wary of children's overuse of the Internet and technology.

A weak data signal is yet another issue for low-income people (Bhattacharya 2020). Several learners had to search for a reliable network outside their homes, which was impossible due to lockdowns respondents noted that the internet signal was weak in their homes which hampered online classes, and they could not go to the points nearby where '*net pai'* (internet signal is strong) due to the lockdown.

Internet availability is not simply about having a mobile phone with the Internet, as it is difficult to attend class or teach on the phone. This meant that laptops were needed for online schooling to be viable, which were available in even fewer homes than smartphones (Bhattacharya 2020). A respondent noted that he was using a tiny phone for his son's online classes, but it was tough to operate as it was old. His employer had given him a better smartphone, but he had tried to repair his employer's old laptop as he felt that a smartphone was not enough. All the respondents noted that their mobile phones were not enough for such online classes as the screen was too small, and they felt a bigger screen would be more conducive to learning opportunities. None of them reported owning a laptop, but they aspired to do so.

Struggles of Online schooling in English among low-income groups

Aspirations

While online schooling has been a struggle for all homes, it has adversely impacted specific categories more than others. Those families belonging to lower-income groups, where the parents do not know any English but aspired and managed to send their child to English medium schools, were faced with numerous problems. There is an aspiration among many Indian parents to send children to English medium schools (EPW Engage 2021b). They feel that the cultural capital of speaking English helps establish networks to access career opportunities across India. However, studies (EPW, Engage 2020) indicate that children from the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) enrolled in private English medium schools suffer from the trauma of speaking in a language that is not theirs and is therefore alien. At the same time, students enrolled in Hindi medium school in Delhi, where English is taught like any other subject, are more experimental with speaking the language.

Some studies have shown that lower-income group families

want to send their children to an English medium school and do not care about what they learned in them. They remarked: "Our child goes in ABC uniform; this cools our bosom! We are not bothered about what he learns at school (Sujata and Sucharita 2016 : 29). However, our respondents had a very different approach to their child's primary education. Even with the lockdown, which hurt their lives, they wanted to ensure that the child's primary education continued. Though it was difficult to oversee their child's school online due to the language barrier, respondents were determined to continue their classes. They believed that with English medium education, at least their children will have more options in the future than with a non-English education. This showed that the perceptions and attitudes of the groups discussed in this study demonstrated a trend that was dissimilar to that found in earlier research.

The respondents stressed that such English medium schools would ensure better learning and career opportunities for their children. For instance, a respondent who is a house help narrates her dreams of raising her 13-year-old son well enough so that he can live a respectable life. She recounts how she had settled for the English medium school instead of the non-English medium government school the other children from their locality attended. People made fun of her as she decided on the school, but she was firm as the other government school was known for its 'notorious boys and inattentive teachers'. After separating from her husband, it was difficult for her son to commute 15 km to school every day, but she was determined, and she would accompany him regularly on the bus journey. Another parent narrated that he insisted on English medium education for his son, as he felt that it was the only way to ensure a better life for his child. A respondent noted that though he had to pay more for his daughter's English medium education, he was willing to do extra work to put her through school to have a better life than his which he felt was not assured in a non-English medium government school.

Access

Studies have shown that other challenges made online schooling extremely arduous among those fortunate to have access to the Internet. For instance, students and their parents unfamiliar with the online world also struggled with making sense of instructions sent by audio, and struggled to understand assignments, evaluation and the overall internet-based teaching narrative (Cherian 2021). It was challenging for students to learn in this medium if they and the teachers were new to the Internet. This burden increased if the teaching was in a language alien to the parents. A respondent noted that his child, aged 10, could not attend online classes in the initial phase of online school. He said he had never heard of applications, let alone a zoom app. Once he figured out how to operate zoom, he had problems figuring out the app's functions. It took him over a week to figure it out. On entering the classroom, the teacher began to teach, but since all communication was in English, the

child could not follow, and since the parents did not know the language, they could not help. A parent whose child is six years old noted that he could not figure out how to open an email account as he had no idea what email was supposed to be. Other parents said that it was extremely difficult for someone like them who did not know any English to follow online instructions in English, both on the Internet and those of the teachers.

A parent noted that primary education was essential to succeed in life. She felt that online schooling took that away from her daughter's life as it did not provide equitable opportunities for the less fortunate. Though both she and her husband wanted their daughter to study, the circumstances were such that they could not ensure an education for the child during the Pandemic. Her daughter, a 13-year-old girl in a family of 5 boys, said she had to help her mother with all household chores starting from cooking, cleaning, and feeding the cows during the lockdown. She strongly felt that so-called online learning opportunities took away her space and freedom, which she experienced when she attended offline school. Earlier she could go out of her house, attend class, and come back and help her mother but during the Pandemic, with the new model of online learning, she had no time for lessons as she was busy with household work. This narrative provides a glimpse into the mindset of children. It helps gauge how they understood the shift and how a gendered experience of the transition to online education was prevalent. Parents also noted Health-related anxieties. A parent who is a household helper said that his son attended online schooling despite all odds. However, he feared that since the Pandemic had killed many, he had requested his employer to hire his 12-year-old son in his place in case anything should happen to him if he contracted the virus. Thus, the fear of the lack of access to hospitals also added to parents' worries as this narration shows that parents fearing death due to Covid-19 could worry little about educating their children. They were contemplating how to ensure that their children would be hired in their place in case they fell victim to the Pandemic.

Lack of Dialogue and Discussion

Dialogue and discussion in class were restricted within online platforms, which impacted understanding and learning opportunities (EPW Engage, 2021c). Respondents noted that their children never asked questions or participated in any dialogue while in an online class. They were concerned about the ability of their children to participate in an online class, as they were often hesitant to ask questions on account of it being difficult to figure out how to do so apart from being extremely shy and under-confident in speaking English. For instance, a vegetable seller respondent expressed his concern over the lack of guidance for the child at home as online schooling was conducted in English, with which he could not help his children. He rues that his shy son was not confident in asking questions if he had not understood anything in an online

class. Another parent noted that the child was not confident in asking questions, and the teachers did not seem to want anyone interrupting their class. This observation of an impatient teacher is insightful. The plight of the teachers who had to adapt to the online class quickly and complete a given syllabus also needs to be kept in mind while assessing the hardships that followed the shift online. He felt that in class one, the child should have been fluent in English as he had sent him to a playschool which was also an English medium, but due to online schooling, his child had not learned how to read, write, or speak English apart from the English alphabet which he feared, his child had forgotten. He noted that online learning had not provided equitable opportunities for people like him who did not have the financial wherewithal to afford laptops and other gadgets that were essential for an online school to be in the least bit meaningful.

Assessment Woes

The respondents noted that the exams held for their wards online were not up to mark as the parents had to help their children, and it mainly consisted of filling in worksheets that were already sent to them on WhatsApp before the exams. They noted that their child did not learn anything during the entire semester, and since the teacher gave instructions in English, the parents could not help them out with their work. Like reports in other states, the respondents noted that since government schools did not require exams for children in junior class, this should have been the case in private schools (National Herald, 2021).

A 15-year-old son of one of the respondents lamented his parents' aspiration of sending him to an English medium school. He stated that the support required at home was missing during the Pandemic. The situation, he noted, was different when he attended physical school as his friends helped him with his studies. Still, there was so much disconnect during the lockdown that he could not even approach his friends as he did not have a personal phone, and he could only use his father's phone for his classes. The physical school had thus created a layer of academic aid for such children who could learn from their peers, which was absent in the case of online school. So, he preferred to be quiet most of the time during online sessions. Several respondents felt that their children suffered a great deal due to online schooling and noted that their test results had slipped significantly because their parents could not help them out. Still, none of them wanted to shift their child to a non-English medium school as they were hopeful that their child would be able to 'catch up' once school physically reopened. The Annual Status for Education Report (2020) indicated that children in the higher classes suffered more due to a lack of parental guidance or home guidance compared to younger children in the rural areas in the state of Assam. The inability to help students at home due to the parent's lack of English knowledge could be one reason for

this situation.

Gender Gap

There is a gender gap in digital access, which was also noted by some of the respondents. In India, only 21% of women use the mobile Internet, while 42% of men have access to the Internet (Devara 2020). A parent noted that her husband was the only one with a smartphone in the family, but he refused to give it to her 14-year-old daughter for her online classes. As her daughter was effectively out of school due to the lockdown and lack of a smartphone, she took her daughter to help at her employer's house, but her daughter refused to help her with the household chores saying girls in her school don't work as maids in people's houses. She noted that sending her child to an English medium school came with its price as it caused her daughter to be dismissive of taking up a maid's job, which was considered beneath a person with an English education. This observation is insightful as it shows that while attending English medium schools was regarded as a panacea by several lower-income groups, the Pandemic made it harder for them to cope with online challenges. They were faced with a situation where their children who attended English medium schools imbibed a disdain for the jobs that their parents undertook. This deterred them from joining the same sector, which was problematic. There were no other scopes of employment for such children who were suddenly devoid of education due to the Pandemic. Five households responded that only the father owned a smartphone, and the entire family was dependent on that phone for everything since the lockdown. Even though less educated than the fathers, mothers were as much if not keener than fathers about ensuring that their children did not drop out. However, the mothers also lacked the money to ensure that their children had access to adequate digital infrastructure to provide schooling, as the fathers mostly controlled the finances.

Apathetic Teachers

Studies (Sujata and Sucharita 2016) have shown that some academic coordinators do not empathize with lower-income group parents' aspirations. An academic coordinator noted that the EWS students' classes had not been considered as of yet, and they are focussing on those children who are able to use the internet. The coordinator continued that remedial classes would be provided to those without internet as these children were not among the top-performing candidates, and therefore, the learning gap would be considerable. (Cherian 2021). This seems to underlie that such academic officials believed that the value attached to education by poor families was low or that technology was not understandable to them (Cherian 2021). However, contrary to these observations, our respondents pointed out that they were desperate to ensure that their children did not drop out of school despite the online system not

providing equitable opportunities. They had sent them to English medium schools to ensure that they had a better life than their parents. Lower-income groups were serious about providing an education for their children, unlike officials' assumptions, as stated in earlier studies, who felt they did not value education as much as others. The steps taken to adapt to the new challenges were evidence of the seriousness of their children's education. The respondents noted that they were trying to adjust to the online mode as fast as possible. For instance, a respondent indicated that aspiration for a better life for her son led her to stay back in her employer's house and earn a little more as it also saved the cost of her eating at home. With the money saved, she would recharge her son's mobile and download some apps to help him with English. None of the respondents noted having been given any extra help from the school authorities despite their financial background. They said that teachers expected parents to be digitally savvy and act as tutors for their children and ensure that the child memorized whatever lessons were taught in class.

Adaption

Parents also tried to pursue other measures to ensure the continuation of their child's primary education. A respondent noted that their house located next to a university enabled students to help their son with the extra work before the lockdown. However, with the lockdown, extra care/tuition was absent as the students at the University had to go home, which also points to the crucial role of location in education. Since the Sustainable Development Goals require universities to serve the community, they could initiate programs to encourage their students to locate such children they could tutor to bridge the educational lag brought on due to the lockdown and online schooling. A respondent noted that as soon as the lockdown was eased, he hired a tutor for his 6-year-old. Another said that he was trying to locate a tutor for his ten-year-old and would hire one even as Covid-19 raged on if he could find one willing to take tuition for his son under such circumstances. The government of Assam had made it mandatory for all teachers not to engage in any private tuition (Assam Government Portal). However, the respondents noted that tutors were available before the Pandemic and hoped they would be available after it. The notion of tuition and the central role it played before the shift to online schooling indicates more significant problems that the school system in India is facing. Since tuitions mean that the education in schools is not enough and they also require additional fees, the challenge for lower-income groups increases due to the requirement of tuition, a parent noted: "similar to banks, administrative offices, law courts, …schools could also have been left open with at least the teachers coming to their place of work during the Pandemic and lockdown. They are adults, if adults in other professions were mandated to come to work…then why not teachers? We could have then gone to the schools on allotted times in a staggered manner once a week and to get some doubts cleared."

Unfamiliarity with Governmental and Non-Governmental interventions

Digital material was created by government and non-governmental organizations to help students cope with online education and alleviate the country's learning gaps. Interventions included **P**ratham's energy efficient PraDigi or Room to Read, which worked with panchayats, student management committees (SMCs), parent bodies, Anganwadis, and ASHA workers to bridge the learning gap among marginalized students (Cherian 2019). Government measures elsewhere in the country also included the low-cost "Aakash" tablet (Chattapadhyay and Phalkeey 2016). The NCERT also designed curriculum and content for such platforms to ensure that the learning gap is bridged (Cherian 2021). The government of Assam also undertook few measures that had been put in place to counter the educational lag due to covid-19 lockdown and online schooling.

The state government tried to aid in the continuity of learning by employing various means- Including a dedicated TV channel called "Gyan Brikkhya" to provide academic support to the children of classes I to Class XII. Radio Learning Programme "Biswa Vidya" has been broadcast through All India Radio in Assamese, Bengali, and Bodo mediums. The YouTube channel "Biswa Vidya" has been launched for students of classes VI to X with E-classes for Science, Mathematics, and English Vocabulary and Grammar. Students have also been reached out through Swayam Prabha educational channel, DIKSHA portal and narrowcast of Community Radio.

The state government also set up a Tele Education helpline with Toll-Free No. 18003453578 at the State Mission Office of Samagra Shiksha. This has been functioning from 4th November 2020 to clarify academic doubts of children of classes VI to X and address psycho-social issues of children, teachers, and parents. The helpline has 40 experts/teachers in English, Social Science, Science, Assamese, and Hindi. The time for the helpline is 10 am to 12 noon and 1.00 pm to 3.00 pm every working day from Monday to Saturday. Samagra Shiksha, Assam has been exclusively utilizing Jio TV to broadcast e-contents of Science, Maths, and English subjects for the students of classes I to X through an educational channel, namely-"Gyan Brikshya". Jio Saavn has been utilized to broadcast the audio content for the students of the elementary level. Jio Chat has been used to disseminate various information related to red-letter days, the timetable of Gyan Brikshya educational channel, etc., amongst teachers/students.

The state government also Developed Distance Learning Support (DLS) package for Pre-Primary students during the COVID-19 Pandemic. About 5,500 e-contents (Audio, video, practice resources, interactive contents) from class-I to XII are uploaded on DIKSHA, Assam portal (under PM e-Vidya) in five mediums- Assamese, English, Bodo, Bengali, and Hindi during the pandemic period. One hundred fifty-two textbooks (Elementary, Secondary & Higher

Secondary levels) are energized with 2564 QR Codes. The state government also carried out online capacity-building training for 2000 Teachers and Teacher Educators on e-content development (Audio, Video, Interactive Content, and Practice Resources, i.e. MCQ, Fill the Gap, Drag and Drop Image Hotspot). Video classes have been telecasted through Swayam Prabha and other regional TV Channels, and Audio lessons have been broadcasted through AIR in regional mediums. Under NISHTHA online training for Elementary Level in five mediums viz. Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, English, and Hindi were carried out. The academic package was prepared in six mediums, viz. Assamese, Bodo, Bengali, Manipuri, Hindi, and English.

The respondents noted that the learning opportunities provided by the government, which were online in nature, were problematic as they would face the same problems accessing them that they were facing when trying to access online education provided by schools. They noted that for any such interventions to be meaningful, the mode of interaction and education had to be offline. This is insightful as it shows an inherent contradiction in the objectives of using online measures to combat the educational lag brought on by the onset of covid-19 by government and non-governmental organizations. None of the respondents noted any relaxation in fees due to the lockdown. However, the government of Assam had ordered a reduction in school fees even for private institutions due to Covid-19 related exigencies (India Today Web Desk 2020). They noted that a decrease in school fees would have gone a long way in helping them pay for the extra expenses incurred due to the shift to online school and access to the measures put in place by the government.

The state government of Assam has planned an exercise of quality assessment of schools under a program called Gunotsav to be held shortly. This assessment was conducted twice before the Covid-19 Pandemic. The next round, as informed to the authors by one of the master trainers of this exercise, will include certain portions where an assessment will be carried out to understand the educational lags in schools owing to the lockdown and online schooling, which could help the government plan ways to bridge the gap.

Conclusions

It is apparent that the government of India took cognizance of the challenges faced by the learners of the lower-income group and has tried to reach out to them. The NEP 2020 can be taken as one such example. While the nation was prepping with the policy, it was suddenly hit hard by the onslaught of the Covid-19 Pandemic. With the Pandemic, new forms of learning opportunities were introduced across the states to ensure uninterrupted academic progress for the learners. While the method seemed exciting, the procedures seemed parched. Without basic facilities like electricity, free data packages, and parents who were not digitally literate, the new learning system could not create equitable opportunities. Matters of poverty, class, caste, and

gender further complicated access and affordability of schooling during the lockdown making online education inequal.

The article aimed to interrogate and examine the challenges that learners and their parents faced with introducing the new system of online learning since the Pandemic. This study on the lower-income groups showed that their challenges with online schooling were seemingly impossible, especially for those who had sent their wards to English medium schools. Yet, they were found to be resolute in their attempts to provide a continuation of education for their children. There is a need to explore and understand the nuances of these challenges and develop a robust policy that considers the condition of all categories of households, especially the lower-income groups, about online schooling. This becomes pertinent as online education is being touted as a game-changer that may continue alongside physical schools as a blended learning model is being encouraged.

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Shree Bhagwan Roy

DIGITAL ETHNOGRAPHY, CULTURAL RESILIENCE AND CLIMATE RESILIENT TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT

Abstract

Application of Digital ethnography, the computer-mediated social interaction, developed in IBRAD helped in understanding the cultural resilience, the natural, financial and social capital of the tribal and the development of social institutions for the adoption of appropriate technology. This required change of worldview, and cognitive stimulation, building the capacity of the community for biodiversity conservation and trade-off analysis while changing their course of action for climate- resilient livelihood. The Participatory Action Research following the seven social sequential steps has encouraging outcomes in terms of the adoption of organic farming, water conservation for irrigation and fishery, and conservation of biodiversity for the herbal garden. The IBRAD model is not only appreciated by the Government of India but all the states of India have been advised, vide letter dated 9th August 2021 of the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change to apply such methods of Digital Ethnography

Keywords: *Ethnography, Cultural, Participatory, Action, Tribe, Pesa*

Introduction

Digital Ethnography is a fast-growing discipline which is playing a supplementary role in furthering the traditional ethnographic approach to studying communities, their culture, institutions, natural habitat, and processes of co-adaptation as acculturation is a natural process of social interaction. The application of digital technology and a perpetually digital lifestyle have become an intransigent presence in the manner of living our lives.

I consider digital ethnography, the computer-mediated social interaction, a game changer because we find a significant shift in the current methods for the default approach for the study of culture, market research, health care, social development and of course academic research. I must add here, that all such studies through computer-mediated interaction may not be considered ethnographic studies. I will explain in the following pages under

SHREE BHAGWAN ROY, Chairman, Indian Institute of Bio Social Research and Development (IBRAD) kolkatta. Email: sbroy111@gmail.com

the heading- essentials of ethnography.

Before I go on to deal with the notion and application of digital ethnography for tribal development, I propose to discuss the fundamentals of ethnography, and how the emic approach- the insider perspective, the belief, values and morals of a particular culture can help understand the cultural resilience of the community towards the application of digital ethnography for climate-resilient tribal development. The valuable scientific theories and methods of Anthropology, ethnography in particular, often poses challenges to traditional researchers. Especially how both qualitative and quantitative data of the understanding of social reality have greater utility with applied value to the world. I will discuss and illustrate – how qualitative and quantitative ethnography can help researchers and development practitioners address these challenges to the community.

I am sure it will be accepted widely that there are not many examples of the application of ethnography, where the ethnographer has involved the community as a partner of Participatory Action Research in identifying their hard-pressed problems of sustenance and livelihoods, in the context of climate change or any issues of development as and worked further for the application of Anthropological or Social theories for facilitating the socio-ecological process with an intended outcome. I am sure one must agree that the ethnographer must have some purpose for the study and intended outcome. Here, I intend to study how the tribal community face the challenges of the degradation of forest, depletion of water and biodiversity and then have a series of focus group online discussion and involve the community as my partner to find different options of livelihood as climate resilient action at the local level. I will discuss- what we mean by climate resilient action and how the ethnographer can facilitate such development it may appear to be a utopian idea. But I with the team of IBRAD could demonstrate the unique approach in the history of digital ethnographic studies and participatory action research.

I will present my discourse in five parts- (1) The essentials of ethnography (2) The uniqueness of digital ethnography (3) Understanding cultural resilience (4) Applications of digital ethnography for facilitating development (5) The outcome of the experiments and conclusion

1. The Essentials of Ethnography Traditional Approaches

The term "ethnography" has its roots in the nineteenth century, when it was used to describe parts of a community's or culture's characteristics that were typically seen as primitive or unusual. Although there has been an increase in its usage in a variety of forms in applied and commercial research, like in the field of marketing studies, ethnography is still used in academic research at a steady rate (Venkatesh 2015).Ethnographic features may focus on revealing the ways of life of particularly little-known groups, their issues, the situations

they face and cope with the problems they withstand and how they see themselves. They may see themselves as being of low or high social status and even marginal or central to economic and political power in the context of public policy and practices(Hammersley, Atkinson 2019,Page 169).Malinowski propounded the concept of functionalism where the institution and cultural activities were for meeting the physiological needs of the people.

It is my assertion that ethnography is the study of people and their culture in the natural environment, and gives a holistic understanding of the basics of structural functionalism. That means that the ethnographer would have an understanding of the interconnectedness of institutions like family, kinship, religion, economic and political systems that operate with the natural ecosystem and where the community co-adapts to the socio-ecological system in the framework of the public policy. I must add here the importance of assessing cultural resilience to know the nature of cultural traits and the ability of the community to cope with the disastrous situation. How the community uses its specific indigenous knowledge to overcome the state of crisis is also significant. Once the ethnographer assesses cultural resiliency he or she can facilitate the process of climate-resilient development by pursuing consumption patterns that ensure social and economic development while reducing the use of natural resources and maintaining ecosystem services. This means that understanding cultural resilience is important for facilitating the climate-resilient development.

I proposed the following aspects for study.

(i) The worldview, emic in particular and cultural practices related to the specific issues in the context of climate change

(ii) Social institutions, family, kinship, economic and gender construct

(iii) Institutions which instil morals and act as a control mechanism for ways and means of economic activities

(iv) The capability of the community for economic use of the natural resources for survival and development

(v) The process of co-adaptation with other communities

(vi) Political institutionsare the framework of public policy and public institutions

Therefore, I assert here, again that the ethnographers cannot justify the rationale of the existing cultural practices and emergent social institutions without understanding the' functionalism and bottle neck as compulsions' of the community to co-adapt.

The Ethnographer need to understand public policy as well as government institutions and compatible social institutions (Roy 1992) and

relevant indigenous knowledge that enables natural resource conservation while facing the challenges in meeting the survival and development needs. The social action, as cultural practices of the community, is focuissed on conserving the natural resources to meet their survival needs as also the requirements of public policy of Forest Right Acts 2006 and the procedures. as systems of incentives and sanctions in the context of the degrading natural landscape.

2. Approaches to Building Cultural Resilience

In the literature of the social sciences, the idea of cultural resilience for climate adaptation is increasingly being studied. The ability of a culture to preserve and advance its cultural identity as well as essential information and practises is referred to as cultural resilience. It takes into account how a person's cultural background—including traditions and customs—helps them overcome challenges (Clauss-Ehlers 2015).

It is "both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to health-sustaining resources, including opportunities to experience feelings of well-being, and a condition of the individual's family, community and culture to provide these health resources and experiences in culturally meaningful ways" (Ungar, 2008).

While tribes work to make visible their own stories of history and geography, some of the indigenous knowledge, traditional art, skills, and crafts as well as production systems can be crucial to tribal identity. We need to look at cultural activity, particularly economic activity in resilient communities, which has not received much attention from anthropologists. Culture is a dynamic process, therefore it's crucial to understand how rural communities grow and change over time—whether as a result of external pressures or internal factors—to co-adapt with the neighbours.

3. The uniqueness of Digital Ethnography for Climate Resilient Development

Climate change has a severe impact on the life of human society and is a threat to tribal communities in particular for future sustainable development. It requires Climate Resilient Tribal Development. I must mention here, what we mean by 'Climate Resilient Development'. Climate resilient development is all the actions which help in the reduction of the greenhouse gas emissions. Here, the tribal has to act to minimise the use of fossil fuels, coal or any other to minimise emissions of greenhouse gases. The approaches to implementation of adaptation options include increasing green cover, conservation of biodiversity, soil and water and improvement of soil moisture and soil health by using organic manure and indigenous seeds that provide nutritious food. A unique type of "digital ethnography" has been applied for climate-resilient

development. They include a narrow focus on computer-mediated communication and networks, the study of virtual worlds, the use of digital technology to record the features of the landscape, the degree of degradation and analyse elements of daily life, and the use of social actors and digital resources to write and reconstruct the results of ethnographic research. Many of the social worlds where we now conduct fieldwork are suffused by digital technologies of various kinds of training for the community. In particular, the use of smartphones, Tablets, and laptops is now deeply embedded in the lives of many people enabling global as well as greatly increased local connections (see, for instance); In short, the social relationship of many people are digitally mediated (Hammersley, Atkinson 2019 Page 139).

Ethnographers are experimenting with creative ways of using Digital Ethnography to study human society and culture in its natural habitat. Digital tools like smartphones and digital cameras provide an opportunity to scan several documentary sources. These have added tremendously to the repertoire of ethnographers, both 'in the field' and beyond (Pink et al.. 2016). Digitalethnography has become one of the essential methods for field workers who wish to conduct their academic research despite their not physically accessing the 'field'. The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in impeding several fieldwork plans. This uncertain situation continues to loom large over the prospect of ethnographic research. Under the circumstances, digital technology has become the order of the day for all disciplines in this rank and file.

According to some social anthropologists, long-term "conventional" fieldwork may soon be rendered impossible. As a result, researchers are developing new techniques to carry out their studies (Miller 2018). In this "political economy of knowledge," the situation is made all the more difficult for researchers who are just starting out (Nagar 2014). They do budget-constrained, time-sensitive research. Although some experts may have concerns regarding the efficacy of digital ethnography, there is a clear benefit. IBRAD's digital ethnography model for sustainable tribal development has been acknowledged by the Indian Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change, which has sent letters to all the States requesting that they train their field employees in digital ethnography's tools and methodologies.

This chapter offers an exploratory panorama of aspects that are critical to certain key issues and pose challenges of significance to some key issues.

These are related to how people face problems of dwindling suitable livelihoods and focus on the challenge and even to what kind of social relationships exist in the form of cohesive groups for collective action.

4. Application of Digital Ethnography for Understanding Cultural Resilience

The application of Digital Ethnography for Tribal Development is

emerging as a unique discipline which is time-saving and effective for cost-effective methods of field studies. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has officially recognised it as an effective model for tribal development while issuing a letter on the 9th of August, 2021 to all States of India to engage such approaches effectively wherever needed.

Understanding the nature of cultural resilience through digitally mediated communication, either through a smartphone, zoom, google, or any other computer-mediated interaction platform has been a challenging issue. Cultural resilience is more than resources, technology or defence forces. It denotes how to conduct a scientific inquiry and assess the human values, empowerment of the community, social cohesion, leadership, accountable governance, public service provision, and national solidarity that stand inherently the community.

How can the community be strengthened so that it can endure the consequences of deforestation and swiftly and effectively recover from a hazard? This would include the maintenance and restoration of the ecosystem's fundamental structures and processes. Degradation of the forests affects the livelihoods of forest-dependent tribal communities as it has reduced the quality and quantity of their collection of non-timber forest products and hurt the socio-economic as well as cultural traits, and traditional knowledge of tribal populations.

Humans learn and remember events as they occur in sequential order in time. The temporal order or sequence of interactions and behaviour has an impact on the outcome of social actions. The sequence, an intrinsic feature of all behavooiural phenomena, has been largely ignored in attempts to explore and understand these phenomena (Thomas, Frank 2013). More generally, "Efforts to analyze given actions while ignoring their interactive context seem misdirected, error prone and noise generating" (Duncan, Kanki, Mokros and Fiske, 1984, p 1346)

To better comprehend such knowledge, inventions, and practises, ethnographers, can investigate and document the finest practices from traditional cultures and natural landscapes that are significant to the conservation and sustainable use of biological variety as climate-resilient action. Others in the same region will benefit from Indigenous people's efforts to preserve biodiversity. Thus, the Forests Right Act of 2006 will serve as a follow-up to the Indian Biological Diversity Act of 2002 in that it will encourage the community to promote the conservation of natural resources and the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from such conservation and application of cumulative knowledge innovations and practises sustainably.

In my opinion, traditional ethnography has no real equivalent in digital form. However, it can show and use certain other options. When the ethnographer has already spent time in the field investigating institutionalised

forms of authority, cultural practises, and social phenomena, it can serve as a useful addition. There are several areas, like tribal capacity-building, sustainable development, and the study of culture, nature, and social institutions, that digital ethnography may expand upon. Community members' worldviews were shifted, a new social order was established, and institutions were established for the management of natural ecosystems thanks to the widespread use of smartphones, video conferences modes, and constant interactive Focus Group Discussions facilitated by computers. While we acknowledge that digital ethnography is not a replacement for ethnographic practice, we also recognise its potential for enhancing field investigation techniques in situations where physical fieldwork is not an option. The fundamental characteristic of digital research is its openness and adaptability. It takes form in relation to specific research issues, institutional settings, and the involvement of study participants (Pink et al., 2016).

I must mention here that I have applied digital ethnography not only for the study of the community, and their culture in the natural environment but also involved the community and public forest front-line staff, to be partners in identifying the challenging issue of livelihoods and facilitated them to work together in finding the solution besides opening the option for the adoption of appropriate technologies for sustainable livelihoods. Participatory Action Research is a collective inquiry through which the researchers focus on the specific problem and the existing social institutions. Researchers and participants can help the community become more self-reliant by conducting a study to better understand and enhance existing practices.

Background and Rationale of the Study for Facilitating Climate-Resilient Tribal Development

One of the greatest dangers to the cultural, social, and ecological well-being of indigenous peoples is the effects of climate change. Being a globally recognised scientific phenomenon, climate change poses a threat to the cultural stability of nations and communities everywhere. Deforestation and climate change have exacerbated inequalities within and between the community of the same tribal landscapes. The livelihood commonly adopted for the sustenance of the indigenous community depends upon the rich biodiversity, water, arable land and their compatible traditional practices. The degradation of biodiversity, depletion of water bodies and soil pollution have been instrumental in driving migration, displacement, and instability. To maintain the global average temperature under the 1.5 degrees safe limit stated in the Paris Agreement, we need collective action, political leadership, and funding. To properly manage risks, however, you need to anticipate a variety of adverse outcomes associated with different warming scenarios and deal with unexpected concurrent threats like the one that arose after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Forests with their rich two-thirds of all terrestrial biodiversity and the

indigenous tribal community with their traditional knowledge and belief system have a symbiotic relationship. The ecological stability, resistance, resilience, and adaptive capacities of forests depend upon the cultural and social resilience of the tribal community.

With the successive trends of deforestation, I strongly believe in the ability of the tribal to withstand external pressures, and cultural resilience can help them to 'bounce back' to their pre-disturbance related state and be enabled to adapt to the changing conditions. The issue of cultural resilience and climate change, the capacity of indigenous communities, their role in mitigation and adaptation is receiving increasing attention currently.

The concept of cultural resilience examines how one's cultural background (i.e., one's culture, cultural values, language, practises, and norms) influences one's ability to bounce back from adversity.

The concept of cultural resilience postulates that people and communities can face and overcome hardship not just because to the strength of their own individual traits, but also with the help of larger socio-cultural forces.

We do not find much of ethnographic studies in scholarly literature to understand the nature of cultural resilience as most of the research relevant to climate change is restricted to etic, survey analysis (Paranich 2018). I have applied both etic and emic perspectives as essential for ethnographic study to obtain a detailed understanding of the worldview, cultural beliefs both sacred and profane, knowledge, morals, kinship patterns, hierarchy, leadership, social, political and economic institutions at the tribal village, and their spiritual connections like totemism with nature in particular which will be the soul of forest biodiversity conservation.

Deforestation and climate change have exacerbated inequalities within and between the community of the same tribal landscapes. The livelihood for the sustenance of the indigenous community depends upon the rich biodiversity, water, arable land and their compatible traditional practices. The degradation of biodiversity, depletion of water bodies and soil pollution have been instrumental in driving migration, displacement, and instability. The 1.5 degree Celsius safety limit stated in the Paris Agreement can only be maintained via concerted international effort, strong political leadership, and sufficient funding. Prudent risk management, on the other hand, is getting ready for a variety of unfavourable outcomes linked with different warming scenarios and efficiently addressing unforeseen concurrent dangers like the post-COVID-19 crisis.

The overall objective of Climate Action by the Tribal

The main objective of the project was to raise awareness and build the capacity of the tribal, in the form of cultural resilience for ecosystem restoration

as a part of Climate resilient development. It is essential to sensitise the community who can then have an assessment of their situation and find options for sustainable livelihood support through site-specific, nature-based innovative methods of natural farming and reduce the risk and impact of climate change with measures through the application of their traditional knowledge as fruitful adoption of appropriate technology and public support for soil, biodiversity and water conservation, organic farming and the cultivation of drought and flood-tolerant indigenous seeds.

Background of IBRAD's work in Digital Ethnography

IBRAD, a not-for-profit professional institute established in 1985, was founded mainly by Anthropologists in Kolkata, West Bengal, India. This institute has been involved in action research, training for the community, and the Government functionaries in sustainable natural resource management and institutional development in different parts of India and other countries. The institute is a recognized Centre for Excellence under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India. The concept of digital ethnography for tribal development evolved while conducting a series of online trainings through a smartphone for the remotely located Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) under a national programme - GOAL (Going Online As Leader). It is a joint endeavour of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and Facebook.

As IBRAD has been working on issues of tribal development it highlighted that Scheduled Tribes (STs) continue to be way behind in terms of health, education and various socio-economic or Human Development Indicators (Roy and Mukhopadhyay 2020). Therefore, it was considered a prioritized need of the ethnographers to apply the digital ethnographic methods for tribal development.

This has been a milestone in the history of digital ethnography where the Government of India has recognized the importance of the method and issued a letter to all the States to train the frontline staff for enacting such scenarios of digital ethnography locally for attaining sustainable tribal development. IBRAD utilized the concepts and techniques developed for "Bilateral Matching Institution, Participatory Biodiversity Management, Skill Development for Non-Destructive Harvesting of Non-Timber Forest Produce, Application of Traditional Knowledge and women empowerment" through the blended digital technology approaches based on the academic strengths of ethnography as a part of the broader anthropological perspective.

Prerequisites to Approaches for Human Development

The development practitioners working for Action Research for facilitating development may have different notions, perceptions, aspirations and approaches to assess the nature and degree of Development. Some tend to

measure the development in terms of economic development, ecosystem development, health development, education and gender equality or any other gradient. The assessment of the status of Tribal Development or human development by any government or agency tends to look for scientific approaches and indices to evaluate the status of tribal development. Therefore, ethnographers or Anthropologists have to adopt the internationally accepted scientific method of assessment of the Human Development Index and Sustainable Development Goals for understanding the status of tribal development of any landscape or any given tribe. The Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite indicator of a country's level of progress along three broad indicators of well-being: life expectancy, education level, and income. The HDI is calculated as a geometric mean of the three normalised indices. Hence, everyone interested in comparing the results of development must adhere to some index that allows for comparisons to be made in terms of objective deliverables rather than just the subjective perception of whether or not development was completed.

For an understanding of the cultural resilience of the community, it is important to assess which aspect of the cultural practices and social institutions help in all three parameters of HDI knowledge, access to resources and health. This means that the ethnographer has to focus on the functioning of the social system, functionalism following Durkheim and culture to determine what are the knowledge, belief, and social, moral, laws of the community that enable Climate-resilient activities. Following as per Tylor and those which will improve the quality and quantity of resources for meeting physiological needs according to Malinowski. Then what kind of nutritious food, herbs, seeds, and water quality are there that can improve the health status to finally improve the HDI?

Social organisation and economic theories by Ramond Firth and political system by Edmund Leach, all such theories have practical applications, which must be used by development practitioners. Additionally there are many other methods and theories. It requires a holistic approach to attain tribal development The theory of Structural-functionalism, eco-chain for raising awareness, cognitive knowledge, development of cohesive groups and building capacity for climate resilient appropriate technology have demonstrated outcomes in terms of biodiversity conservation based sustainable livelihoods and improved health. The government has recommended the IBRAD Model for training government functionaries. It is not the application of one single theory but a bundle of theories and approaches while are being applied.

Anthropologists are unusually involved in tribal studies and are not many in facilitating tribal development. Approaches to Tribal Development require knowledge and skills for the application of development theories, and monitoring of time-bound outcomes, of any tribal development project. Participatory Action Research and Sustainable Tribal Development

management should be introduced in the curriculum for those who wish to have Tribal Development as a career.

Understanding the policies and Acts Such as Constitution Art 342, PESA, FRA 2006, Forest Conservation Acts 1980, Wildlife Act Biological Diversity Act 2002, and CAMPA 2016, are some of the essential requirements to understand the ground realities for a recommendation of any issue of tribal policy or development.

The analysis of such patterns can involve the community moving step by step in a social sequence pattern right from identifying the problem, finding the causal effects, inviting the proactive social change agents whom we call Self Initiated Community Organizers (SICO), formation of a cohesive group and appreciation of social institutions, adoption of appropriate technologies social sequence methods have become increasingly prevalent

While digital ethnography has seemingly compromised the classical method the basic tenets have by no means taken a back seat. It has added several creative, user-friendly, cost-effective and time-saving approaches to meet the primary purpose of conducting a study with a focus on the specific problem of the community under research and the possible options being presented as solutions.

It ultimately requires changing the community's cognitive thinking, transferring and adapting the appropriate technologies and institutionalising the processes through targeted interventions, hand-holding and monitoring.

With the advancement of knowledge, every discipline has been known to grow with innovative skills, tools and approaches to refine the methods and develop theoretical frameworks for serving the development needs of human communities.

The main goal of any ethnographic study is to collect as much information as possible on a certain social or cultural group. The goal of an ethnographer is to obtain insight into a community through living through similar experiences to those of its members. The ethnographer's participation in the group, interviews with members of the group, and analysis of group records and artefacts all contribute to the ethnographer's narrative of the group. An introduction to ethnography and the steps involved in doing ethnographic research are provided here.

According to the structural-functionalist theory, political activity entails not only the creation and maintenance of social bonds but also the cultural production of social meanings that serve to strengthen or weaken those bonds.

The significance of religious rituals in maintaining social order, and how they serve as a kind of "collective conscience" that strengthens a feeling of community and shared identity.

Challenges for digital ethnographic research and more importantly, how the outcomes are being used for tribal development in the habitats of the natural forest ecosystem is of greatest concern. The assumptions based on my experience are that tribes and forests have a symbiotic relationship and no policy or research can help in tribal development unless the community itself participates in the process (Roy and Mukhopadhyay 2015a). Another important assumption is that the institutional support of the government functionaries is an essential element of community development (Roy 1992). The success of digital ethnography for tribal development requires skills to establish rapport and build personal relationships with the community and government functionaries, wherein the numbers of the community and the government functionary, both benefit from the research project outcomes and deliverables. The researchers cannot continue with longitudinal studies unless the subjects enjoy being frequently connected and foresee benefits from the online interview and research. There are few instances of research outcomes being applied to formulate a community development model true to Hammersly & Atkison (2019), who talk about "Developing theory through systematic empirical investigation rather than by relying on 'armchair theorizing'.". The challenge, however, is that digital ethnography should not remain restricted to digital devices alone (Pink and Horst et al. 2016).

This chapter will illustrate the field-tested methods of IBRAD1 in applying digital ethnography, for studying the options available for livelihoods among the tribals who have been known to suffer from poverty and malnutrition. It is an unprecedented case of participatory action research where the researchers connected with the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) of Odisha and Chhattisgarh who participated through video conferencing on a smartphone across the zoom platform for a year-long study and engaged the government functionaries to extend support for livelihoods consolidation of the tribals.

Setting Priorities: The Scope and Application of Digital Ethnography

Let me begin with the first point-setting priorities. Why do I choose to study the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)? Why did I consider studying the forest ecosystem as an essential component of ethnographic study? As of the 2011 Census, 8.6 percent of the country's population was made up of members of the Scheduled Tribes. Despite the passage of the Forest Rights Act in 2006, these people continue to suffer from social and economic exclusion, preventing them from sharing in the advantages of development. There are four main components to digital ethnographic research: the problem, the topic, the routes and places (the where), the importance of documentation (the how), and the crucial role of research subjects (the who) (Cocq 2019).

Following Malinowski's lead as an anthropology student, I will begin our discussion by describing the community's access to resources for addressing

its physiological demands and the makeup of the dominant social institutions for maintaining social harmony. Between 1910 and 1930, two distinct forms of functionalism emerged: Malinowski's biocultural (or psychological) functionalism and Radcliffe Brown's structural-functionalism (Goldschmidt 1996:510).

This chapter illustrates the prioritized problems, methodological approaches, ethical and challenging issues in applying digital ethnography for understanding the sum total of meeting the physiological needs as ordained and sustained social institutions appreciating the situation of the tribal community suffering from the crunch of livelihood resources lost due to deforestation. The tribals and the forests have a symbiotic relationship. Depletion of the rich biodiversity, drying of water bodies in their forest habitat, and feeble opportunities for agriculture result in malnutrition especially among the PVTGs. It must be highlighted that the Lodha, Birhor, Mankedia, and Hill Kharia tribals are the worst hit because their traditional subsistence practices are non-agrarian. Rampant malnutrition, lack of opportunities for sustainable livelihoods, degradation of natural resources and the consequent impact of climate change necessitated the launch of this project on Digital Ethnography for tribal development. The project involves PVTG partners in assessing their social institutions and cultural practices for developing improved biodiversity conservation, while adopting organic farming systems as a climate-resilient livelihood.

Understanding Policy: Provision of an Enabling Environment For Ethnographic Study

The cultural life, traditional knowledge, and lifestyles of PVTGs are dependent entirely on their forest habitat. Ethnography is devoted to 'the recording and analysis of a culture or society, along with the natural habitat based on participant-observation of a people, place or institution' (Simpson and Coleman 2017). After a brief study as 'situation analysis', the ethnographer discussed the available provisions to support the PVTGs across the Zoom platform with the forest functionaries. We connected with the community through the video conferencing mode and could observe the natural habitat as well as other artifacts of the community. According to Hammersley and Atkinson (2019) the 'Positivist' is- the product of the ethnographic study and is the amalgamation of the competency of observation, its interpretation, and what is logically inferred from what is observed.

The government forest field functionaries and other officials are more responsive, following the policy guidelines to meet the needs of the tribals while respecting their traditional culture. It is imperative to review the relevant policy and Act that has direct relevance for tribal development. There are many enabling policies and Acts like the Biological Diversity Act 2002, Forest Rights Act 2006, and others which favour the tribal community to enjoy several benefits. These Acts, however, have not been implemented in letter and spirit.

An enabling environment can be created by listening to the community, appreciating their problems, and seeking their suggestions for the way forward. The community as a primary stakeholder, is involved in the program as a major contribution to the decision-making process. This requires the participation of the tribal community along with the government functionaries in the form of a 'Bilateral Matching Institution' (Roy 1992). The community and the government functionaries develop the mechanism of Participatory Biodiversity Management for successful monitoring of forest resources (Roy and Mukhopadhyay 2015b).

Digital ethnography serves to study and document the nature of the problem and involve the community as partners for enabling sustainable livelihoods, particularly for the landless, the food gatherers, and the small landholders. Critical agendas directing the research were to demonstrate improvements in the status of water conservation, production of organic vegetables, and preservation of biodiversity as compared to the baseline initiation.

The use of digital ethnography to study tribal culture, the natural environment and the processes of effective conservation of the natural resources with the support of the government functionaries has been discussed. The methodology and theories applied by an ethnographer in connecting informants through computer-mediated devices, particularly smartphones, to attain the intended outcomes of tribal livelihoods have been highlighted. To begin with, as an essential part of the development scanario, I highlighted the preparedness required for core issues concerning the use and practice of digital ethnographic participatory action research and how the incorporation of such methods is an essential field of tribal development with new methodological innovations where the capacity building of the community and facilitating the social processes for adoption of appropriate technology towards achieving sustainable development take the prime seat in digital ethnography.

Identifying the Tribes, the Habitat and Essential Components Under the Study

IBRAD designed the digital ethnographic studies process through a series of video recordings of the in-situ observation and interactions on the Zoom platform. The identification of tribes like the Lodha, Mankedia, Hilla Kharia, and Baiga as PVTGs was based on the secondary data and information received from the government functionaries who helped identify the most deprived tribal community that was suffering due to acute deforestation. The PVTGs, as non-agrarian food gatherers and forest dwellers, suffered severe losses due to the depletion of forest resources and absence of skills and resources for agriculture, that could have supported the option of alternative livelihoods.

Thus, the ethnographer's presence digitally within the field scenario benefits the overall ability to deliver a knowledgeable, detailed, informed and authentic representation of the community under study. An ethnographic study conducted by a devoted researcher can effectively uncover through deep-seated analysis most of the information based on the relevant emotional setup and reflective attitudes. In the case of PVTGs, the ethnographer has to make a concise note of the belief system's 'Sacred' and 'Profane' entities, which are associated with a strong belief in supernatural forces (Malinowski 1954) that can become an important part of the decision-making processes on the use of any natural objects existent around the community. Secondary data and development agency consultations are the deciding factors in identifying the tribe and its habitat for development assistance on priority.

Application of Digital Ethnography in the Situation Analysis

The application of digital technology for a situation analysis of the natural habitat of the project location is one of the most critical parameters of ethnographic study. The action research initiated by IBRAD involves using satellite images to have first-hand information about the nature of vegetation, forest density, waterbody, the pattern of homestead land and connectivity of the village with the market. The conduct of such a situation analysis and discussion with the forest officials over the Zoom platform provided adequate understanding of the tribal landscape and the option of livelihoods for the community.

After the webinar with government officials, specific concerns affecting tribal livelihoods and food security were assessed through a series of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) facilitated by cellphones. To investigate the interconnected activities, institutions, and policies at the landscape level, the ethnographer must establish connections with various agricultural, forest, and water sectors (Reed et al., 2015). When conducting digital ethnography, it is important to keep in mind that the researcher's interaction with the participants is mediated rather than direct (Pink et al., 2016). The tribal community's eagerness to learn relevant technologies that increased the value of their NTFP and allowed them to transition to organic farming was really heartening to discover. The research conducted by IBRAD members has shown that traditional knowledge is useful in all facets of natural resource management (Mukhopdhyay et al., 2015).

I must add here that an open discussion on the Zoom platform helped identify some of the smaller groups as stakeholders because they were also designated the victims of forest degradation. This is why they were the preferred target groups to be trained first for organic farming. After identifying the tribes and the natural habitat, the digital interviews helped pinpoint the issues on the larger landscape through PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal) mapping. The researcher's trust-building capacity and the ability for getting the

community prepared for repeated interactions on the video conferencing platform for a village-level micro plan was brought into play. I must also add here that informants from the community are not merely data providers, they are also the stakeholders and partners in the decision-making. Participatory Action Researchers (PAR) focussed on community problems, questions, concerns, and the mission to understand the causal model for solving the inherent problems. The community's involvement is an essential part of PAR for developing a new body of knowledge. Data is collected in the field using multiple ways, including FGD using a smartphone to provide information, authentic representation, numerous ideas as also the community's worldview.

An essential part is to plan how the knowledge gained by the ethnographer may be used effectively for accruing benefits to the community. The author calls upon joint development mechanisms to bring about developmental gains for the community besides professional growth for the ethnographer.

Creating Environment of Social Learning: Virtual Class Rooms *For Capacity Building*

Digital anthropology's goal is to help indigenous communities advance by means of online discussion and instruction. Sharing information and gaining insight from one's peers is facilitated by these online, interactive seminars. Paths to climate resilience can be developed with a better understanding of the cultural characteristics and social institutions that help a community endure and recover from disaster and other external shocks. As culture is in constant flux, it's useful to get an understanding of how rural communities evolve over time, whether as a result of outside forces or from inside, in order to co-adapt with their neighbours.

To help PVTG participants work together and solve ongoing challenges, IBRAD has established a forum in which they can discuss these concerns and offer solutions. The IBRAD team found these development oriented movies to be extremely useful as a social learning tool, as they helped the community adjust more quickly to the emergence of novel behavioural patterns, which are typically learned by witnessing and copying members of the same cultural group. According to Messick and Watkins (1990), gaining a whole picture of learning requires an appreciation of informal and accidental learning, which is typically achieved through social learning strategies. The major emphasis must remain on the key targeted learning strategies typical of the culture or location (Hite 1999). IBRAD has produced a variety of movies, chart paper plans, maps, posters, and games that have served as effective tools in making the learning and planning process an engaging one.

The tribal participants learn and take pride in sharing their learning tools, group activities, documents and showcasing the outcome in the field. These are some of the ways to incorporate social learning to bring new and

appropriate social order. The human urge to compete and win the award takes social learning to a wider and higher plane.

Approach to Participatory Action Researchers (PAR) and Ethics

People living on the forest fringe play significant roles in biodiversity conservation. The study by IBRAD reveals that no 'Scientific Theory; or 'Policy' could be effective without accountable public governance. Community participation in 'Participatory Biodiversity Monitoring and Management' helps make the program more effective. (Roy and Mukhopadhyay 2015) Video conferences with the community through a smartphone to assess the degree of germination of the vegetable crop have been a major help in deciding the nature of further action. This was possible by building and nurturing the community institutions to harvest forest produce for meeting their survival needs but is non-destructive (Mukhopadhyay et al.. 2012). Populations dwelling on the forest fringe posses rich traditional knowledge and follow conservation practices for helping biodiversity spread across associated ecosystems. Women are especially well versed in these practices. Identifying such institutional knowledge and practices can prove fruitful in designing adaptive measures to ensure livelihood security and have the propensity to heighten the resilience of the stakeholders under climatic stress (Mukhpadhyay and Roy 2015). IBRAD utilized the concepts and methods developed for "Bilateral Matching Institution, Participatory Biodiversity Management, skill development for non-destructive harvest, application of traditional knowledge and women empowerment" through the blended digital technology approaches based on academic strengths of ethnography as a part of the broader anthropological perspective. It is significant to note that digital ethnography has impacted the ethnographic techniques and processes since the last few decades (Hjorth et al., 2017).

The Conceptual Framework of Study and Intervention

The development of a conceptual framework for the study is necessary to develop the ability of the community by analysing the situation and intervening to solve its problems. According to Mitashree et al. (2006), tribes like the Birhor and the Kamars in Chhattisgarh are suffering from hunger and the degradation of forest-based resources (Pandey et al.. 2000). The majority of these tribes lack access to land and rely on NTFP collection and local wage labour as their only sources of sustainable existence.

5. Outcome of the application of Digital Ethnography

Involvement of the Government Functionaries as Significant Contributors

The IBRAD team facilitated the government officials and community leader's digital interface. It was done in a phased manner. The first step

comprised an online discussion with the Principal Chief Conservator (PCCF) to inform and explain the merits of helping the tribals and the forest field staff through digital technology to facilitate forest biodiversity conservation.

When locals and government officials work together in a Bilateral Matching Institution, there is a greater possibility that natural resource management will provide sustainable results (Roy 1992). This approach's strategic planning includes developing a roadmap, designating checkpoints, deliverables, and a projected deadline. Digital ethnography, in contrast to traditional ethnography, examines social constructs of cultural life using online virtual worlds (Boellstor 2012). Due to the consequent destruction of their habitat, indigenous populations that have historically relied on forests for their livelihood now face uncertainty over their ability to survive and earn a living. The gradual deterioration of the rich traditional knowledge of managing natural ecosystems that has been institutionalised within the populations relying upon these sources for millennia has already been exacerbated by climatic changes.

As a result, the strategic plan to raise awareness among the tribes, improve their skills, and work with them as partners to create social action and suitable social institutions has placed a strong emphasis on fostering effective climate resilient organic farming. This program's success has been tested in three States, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Odisha, as the "Replicable Model", using the seven social sequential phases of SAPTAPADI created by IBRAD for creating community institutions for sustainable livelihood (Roy and Mukhopadhyay 2021).

The Social Sequential Seven Steps: SAPTAPADI

Sociological theories provide the framework for the study of social sequence patterns. Societies, according to structural theorists are systems that exhibit predictable patterns. Even the most insignificant of social occurrences follow a very predictable pattern (Parsons, 1951).

In this approach of eco chain and SAPTAPADI, the essentials to sensitize the community to develop appropriate social institutions, following the social sequential steps for enhancing conservation and sustainable harvesting of natural resources for livelihood creation and perpetuation.

Turn-taking and the preponderance of reciprocal utterances are two sequential ideas that are increasingly at the centre of the research of interaction patterns. In order to comprehend how social connections and activities are carried out in real-time, social network researchers have started to use sequence approaches and concepts (Butts, 2008 and Cornwell, Benjamin, 2013).

Let me share here how the seven social sequential steps were followed. I must mention here that these seven steps have to be followed in sequence to have a synergetic impact. Missing any step will not lead to the intended outcome.

Step 1. Focus on the specific problem: Raise awareness to reorient the worldview through cognitive stimulation by asking the community about the consequences of deforestation and the options available for livelihood. We have experimented by asking a question through a focus group as given in the Eco Chain Method, to motivate people to come forward and participate. It is the SICO (Self-Initiated Community Organisers) who work as change agents for social development. People love to adhere to social contracts, build social relations, take the challenging task under certain conditions and serve the social cause. Ramu Ram, one of the SICOs Baiga community, of Kabirdham of Chhattisgarh learnt how to grow organic vegetables inhis vacant land. He encouraged Chotelal* and Hiralal*, his fellow villagers, to initiate organic farming on their vacant homestead land. Inspired by Ramu, both Chotelal and Hiralal have started producing organic vegetables in their nutrition kitchen garden. This is an example of how cultural traits spread from one culture to another, one person to another, any idea, value, social practice, or attitude through and between populations as propagated by Franz Boas in his Theory of Diffusionism.

Ramu Ram2 is an example of how new climate-resilient livelihood practices can be promoted, replicated and expanded fast by local change agents

Step 2. Formation of Cohesive Group: Society needs change agents for the adoption of any technology and idea. The organization consists of groups of individuals bound together for a common purpose. The second step was the formation of cohesive groups after holding online meetings with the line departments to share concepts, methods, and approaches for preparing a road map. The government functionaries were most helpful in charting the landscape.

After the identification of SICO a group was formed on the pattern of Self Helf Group (SHGs) Upendra Bhukta* from the Lodha community of Nedam village in Odisha has set an example to show how they formed the group and learned to develop nutritious vegetables for his family. It is more surprising to see that Upendra Bhukta has learnt organic farming. This also enhances the scope of his earning by selling the surplus vegetables in the nearby market, especially during the COVID 19 pandemic period.

As Upendra did not have a proper way of earning, he was suffering from poverty and malnourishment; hence for meeting his immediate need he learnt the skills of organic farming after he received training through digital technology from IBRAD. The land which otherwise remained fallow for most of the year is now being used for cultivating different types of vegetables like brinjal, corn, bitter gourd, angled gourd and various leafy vegetables around the year.

As a result of this, he has now started earning some income from his garden. He not only sold 16 kg bitter gourd, 12 kg corn, 12 kg brinjal, 20 kg

angled gourd, 15 kg luffa but also had enough left over for his own consumption of these healthy and non-toxic vegetables. He is now associating himself with mustard cultivation3.

Step 3. Development of Social institutional rules and regulatory mechanisms that guide all types of organizations. Effective self-regulating mechanisms for the enforcement of social contracts facilitate economic development and the morale of the community. The community framed their own norms for Micro Plans through PRA. The microplan was made using digital technology to follow standard PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal) methods. The PRA mapping and essential plan preparation based on land available for setting up nutrition gardens, community nurseries, harnessing water sources for irrigation, digging and maintaining vermicompost pits, identifying water bodies to promote fishing, rainwater harvesting, and pond placements following the flow of water collected in or around the village.

Step 4. Capacity building of the communities to be more Cultural Resilient for climate-resilient livelihood development through an effective communication strategy for science communication is one of the essential requisites. We have discussed these under the heading of cultural resilience. IBRAD established the 'Prashikshan Shivir' or Training Camp as a Continuous Learning Forum for support and management. It was a semi-permanent hexagonal structure built on the lines of the traditional 'Ghotul' or youth dormitory for incorporating into the tribes' cultures. Such a youth dormitory used to be popular in Bastar. It was made in a central, prominent part of the village. As forum of continuous learning through 'Prashikshan Shivir', an informal classroom setting is established where the community members can meet and interact, discuss their problems and the training needs are constantly assessed through video conference mode with the ethnographer. Some video clippings, as training aids, are sent to the group coordinator who enjoys sharing the training materials. The development of community resource persons has been observed to be an excellent social learning strategy to build the capacity of the community with a focused assignment of skill development for all levels of the community members. Such an approach of social learning through the group's participatory learning, observation, and imitation helps in the fostering and retention of the learnt skills.

Step 5 Facilitate the Trade-off Analysis. It's a way for the community to learn by doing, so they can get a better idea of what they'll get out of their sacrifices and time spent on the plantation, water conservation, and organic farming in the future. It's also a way to measure the effects of SDGs, especially in the context of how to reach all of the SDG targets by using diversified farming practices to lessen the trade-offs.

Digital ethnography was used for interventions and evidence-based outcomes related to the herbal garden, orchard, and several organic kitchen gardens and seed banks as some of the activities of climate action at the local level. This helped train the community to be self-organized and self-reliant. The patterns of this type of organisation were important for setting up the relationships that make up each system (Capra, 1996). The conversations over the smartphone helped the community take part in Ecosystem Restoration, especially through the building of structures to collect rainwater, the preservation of rare medicinal plants, and the identification of biodiversity niches for food, medicine, fodder, and fuel needed to improve and restore village and forest fringe mosaic lands. The process gave priority to the production of species that are good for the environment, have economic value, and are grown under technical supervision. The improvement of water quality and quantity will improve soil health and food production as climate-resilient action

Step 6. Plan to converge different resources such as a fund for agriculture and plantation or fishery and involving the community for the development of village level plans and not planning in an isolated sector. Here the IBRAD Model of Integrated Forest Mosaic Landscape Management of the tribal habitats (Roy and Mukhopadhyay, 2021) has been implemented to assess the interconnected ecosystems and their impact on tribal life and livelihoods. The method has followed the priorities of community urgency and attendant conservation problems which required quick assessment of inherent resource use based on ecological knowledge while rapidly imparting basic techniques to the locals (Martin, 1995).

Step 7. Introduce Rituals and Cultural Program. Ethnographers often document the ritualized action as well as link it up to the larger context, and down to the meanings it holds for participants. But I say here again, that such a rich experience of the ethnographers remained in documentation only and I do not find use the concepts, philosophy and knowledge of rituals to help the community for social development.

I analyzed the rituals that connect the experience of the community and emotions to the larger context of nature and conservation. Such approaches to tailor-made rituals have been a matter of controversy as how the ethnographer approaches the field, data collection, options for analysis, and presentation of findings can have any applied value for the community development.

To stabilise the new conservation behaviour patterns and newer traditions within the organizations themselves we introduced several IEC (Information, Education and Communication) materials, slogans and posters besides organising quiz contests, cultural programs and ritual and design frameworks for the community working for forest or water conservation.

Conclusion

The approaches to digital medium-enhanced field site of enquiry, focus group discussion, and application of the ethnographic theory of functionalism to understand the inter-connected social, family, economic, and political institutions and to understand the emic perspective of the community for facilitating capacity building of the cultural resilience to climate action has been a unique experiment where the community has improved the status of natural resource-based livelihoods such as conservation of water, nutritional organic vegetables, herbal garden, planting fruits trees, and demonstrated climate action at the local level. The approaches to building cultural resilience essentially require maintaining and developing the cultural identity of the community on one side and applying the critical cultural knowledge for climate resilient development has been a unique attempt to demonstrate the improvement of climate resilient livelihoods in two PVTGs, Lodha of Odisha and Baiga in Chhattisgarh.

Building the cultural resilience of the community for collective action and navigating their way to climate action for sustainable development has been a great experience and feelings of well-being and self-esteem.

A letter by the Ministry Of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Government of India on the 9th of August, 2021 to all the states to try the IBRAD model of Application of Digital Ethnography for Sustainable Tribal Development is a mark of recognition of such methods

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Notes

1. Indian Institute of Bio Social Research And Development. (IBRAD) is a professional institute, established in the year 1985, at Kolkata. It has been working in action research and training for government officials and the developing communities within India and even abroad through the International network of SEPARN.

2** Pseudo names have been used here so that their identity is not disclosed.

3** Here pseudo names are used so that their identity is not disclosed

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