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Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Editorial Perspective | 7 |
| Non-misplaced Concerns | |
| 1. North-East Scan | 11 |
| An Election Verdict That Created Waves | |
| <i>Patricia Mukhim</i> | |
| Will Assam Results Impact Other Congress | |
| Ruled NE States? | 15 |
| <i>Pradip Phanjoubam</i> | |
| 2. Between Tradition and Modernity: Some Reflections on | |
| Professor A.K. Saran's Intellectual Sojourn | 18 |
| <i>R.K. Misra</i> | |
| 3. Agyeya : The Ideal Poet-philosopher of Freedom | 27 |
| <i>Ramesh Chandra Shah</i> | |
| 4. Agyeya – Exploration into Freedom | 36 |
| <i>Nandkishore Acharya</i> | |
| 5. Romesh Chunder Dutt and Economic Analysis of | |
| India Under the British Rule | 43 |
| <i>Naresh Kumar Sharma</i> | |
| 6. Naoroji: The Patron of Economic and | |
| Political Nationalism in India | 66 |
| <i>Vijay Kumar</i> | |
| 7. Philosophical Contributions of Professor J.L. Mehta: | |
| Some Reflections | 72 |
| <i>Sanjay Kumar Shukla</i> | |
| 8. The Ideas of Acharya Rajneesh | 86 |
| <i>Vijay Kumar</i> | |

| | |
|--|-----|
| 9. Political Thought of Muhhamad Iqbal <i>Naresh Kumar Ambastha</i> | 100 |
| 10. M.N. Roy, New Humanism and Post-Modernism <i>R.C. Sinha</i> | 108 |
| 11. Census 2011: The Religious Imbalance Continues to Worsen but Hindus show Great Resilience <i>J.K. Bajaj</i> | 118 |
| 12. Political Philosophy and thought behind Bangladeshi Minority Eviction and Majority Infiltration into India <i>Bimal Pramanik</i> | 134 |
| 13. Value, Education and Social Reconstruction <i>Xavier P. Mao</i> | 145 |
| 14. The Significance of Naga in Thai Architectural and Sculptural Ornaments <i>Phan Anh Tu</i> | 154 |
| 15. Muslim Women's Educational Backwardness: Contemporary Contexts and Concerns <i>Dr. Anita Nuna</i> | 176 |
| Astha Bharati Annual Lecture : A Report | 190 |

Editorial Perspective

Non-misplaced Concerns

Charles Darwin wrote: "Wherever the European has trod death seems to pursue the aboriginal. We may look to the wide extent of the Americans, Polynesia, the Cape of Good Hope and Australia and we find the same result." India encountered the foreign sword even earlier, and its adverse impact was that it lost men, as well as, the immense treasure of knowledge. Al-Beruni writes us how "Mahmud ruined the prosperity of the country (India)," how they (Hindus) were turned into "atoms of dust scattered in all directions," and "this is the reason, too, why Hindu sciences have retired far away from those parts of the country conquered by us, and have fled to places which our hand cannot yet reach, to Kashmir, Benares, and other places." When Muslim inroads became deeper, our centres of learning—Nalanda, Vikramshila, etc.—were thoroughly ruined. We lost our knowledge wealth. Our books were so thoroughly destroyed that out of the 4000 books of Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit literature translated into Tibetan, hardly 200 were extant in this country.

The Europeans, after the discovery of Sanskrit, found their own new identity, and new roots. Amaury de Riencourt, in his *The Soul of India* says that philosophers like Schelling, Fichte, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Schleiermacher, poets such as Goethe, Schiller, Novalis, Tieck and Brentano, historians like Herder and Schlegel, all acclaimed the discovery of Indian culture with cries of ecstasy: "India, the home of Universal religion, the cradle of the noblest human race, of all literature, of all philosophies and metaphysics." He further adds that "this enthusiasm was not confined to Germany. The entire Romantic movement in the West put Indian culture on a high pedestal which the preceding Classical Movement had reserved for Greece and Rome." This, however, came in the way of the interests of the (a) Christian Missionaries, and (b) the British Empire. Many Orientalists, who expected the harvest of souls for Christianity as the result of such studies, were not happy. H.H.

Wilson, Boden Professor of Sanskrit, and translator of Rigveda and the Vishnu Purana, and a celebrated Indologist, speaking at the University of Oxford in 1840, made the point clear. He said that the objects of Indian studies were “to contribute to the religious enlightenment of a benighted but intelligent and interesting and amiable people,” another object was “to confute the falsities of Hinduism.” Obviously, Oriental Renaissance began inviting strong opposition; Missionaries and Imperialism combined to do the needful.

With the objective of damage control, the Sanskritists, such as Max Mueller, were summoned to misinterpret the Sacred Hindu texts, and for myth-making. Whereas, greatest thinkers of Europe, such as Voltaire, Schelling and Schopenhauer, understood and appreciated India, the powerful vested interests and forces of narrowness and obscurantism, the Euro-Colonial-Missionary forces, represented by soldier-scholars like J.S. Mill, Hegel, Macaulay, Marx and others succeeded. Indology, with fullest intellectual irresponsibility, developed as a colonial discipline. The main role of the discipline is to subvert India, especially the Hindu society. Many Indologists had inadequate knowledge of Sanskrit, which even European Sanskrit scholars acknowledged. Inadequacy of the Sanskrit knowledge of Wendy Doniger was pointed out even by an American scholar.

The Indic scholars of pre-Independence days had the given agenda to fulfil. Unfortunately, nothing has changed in the workings of the Euro-American Indic scholars after the departure of colonial power. The deconstructionist study of India by American universities mostly focus on the study of minorities, women and Dalits, which aim at social divide; invading the Hindu sacred by Wendy Doniger and her children ultimately aim at robbing the Hindus’ of their reverence for the sacred, with ultimate aim of conversion. Sheldon Pollock has re-packaged the ‘Aryan Aggression Theory.’ It is just like the old wine in the new bottle. Sheldon Pollock, Professor of South Asian Studies in Columbia University, a Padmashri awardee of Government of India, and an established American scholar, is also a political creature with his client scholars in India. When a section of JNU students were celebrating the martyrdom of a Jihadi, and announcing the disintegration of India, Pollock came out openly in support of the those students, and for defending the freedom of expression and the their right of dissent. Pollock openly took anti-Hindu stand during post-Godhra Gujarat developments.

Recently, Professor Pollock has been vested with the task of (i) setting up ‘SVBF Adi Shankara Chair in Hindu Religion and Philosophy

in Colombia University (SVBF stands for Sringeri Vidya Bharati Foundation in the US), and (ii) General Editorship of the Murty Classical Library of India. Whereas wealthy NRIs have collected \$4 million for the first project, N.R. Narayana Murty of Infosys, has made an endowment of \$5.2 million for the same. As the task of academic planning shall remain entirely with Professor Pollock, and the funding agencies have no role in that task, there is every reason to worry that the end product shall have subverting role, rather than helping Hinduism and the country. It needs to be pointed out that the academic orientation of Professor Pollock does not assure us that he will positively deliver.

Today, India has 15 Sanskrit Universities, apart from 100 university Sanskrit departments, Gurukulas and the academies. The tragedy is that we never try to develop them into centre of excellence. We do not try to promote our scholars and the institutions. The patron-client relationship between the university teachers of the West and India, for the short-term petty interests of the latter is doing immense harm to us. The cases have come to light when certain research guides force their research scholars to insert the names of Western scholars, such as Max Mueller. All I can say that we need to have attitudinal change towards our own scholars and institutions.

—B.B. Kumar

An Election Verdict That Created Waves

Patricia Mukhim*

At no time was an election anywhere in the country awaited with so much interest as it was for Assam, West Bengal, Tamilnadu and Kerala this time around. It appeared as if the country was waiting with bated breath, not so much for how the results would pan out in the above states, but rather how the BJP as a party would fare in them. Hence, Assam was of great interest to political observers as it was the one state where the BJP had the greatest chance of forming a government. And indeed the BJP has got itself a strong foothold to make its presence in the so-called Christian dominated states of the North-East.

There are several factors that came together for the BJP in Assam. Firstly, the Party chose its alliance partners very strategically. The AGP and BPF are regional parties that have some standing in Assam's politics. The latter, particularly has a stronghold over the Bodo vote bank, despite disaffection from a section of political rivals who have a long-standing rivalry with Hagramay Mohilary, the rebel turned politician who has been holding the reins of the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), (which is like a state within the state of Assam) since 2005. This time the BPF won all the 12 seats in the BTC while the AGP managed to win 14 seats although it had set up candidates in only 25 constituencies.

But Assam is also a classic case of a vote against the dynastic politics of Tarun Gogoi. The eighty-one year old Gogoi wanted to foist his son Gaurav Gogoi on the people of Assam by first sending him to Parliament

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but with the long-term goal of seeing him safely ensconced as the chief minister of the state. Since the All India Congress Committee is led by the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty where elections for the top posts of Youth Congress President and AICC President are never by election but by nomination, the Party has no moral fibre to prevent other regional satraps from doing the same. This time in Assam Congress tickets were given to the children or family members of sitting MLAs etc., in 34 constituencies! People have shown their disgust for this proclivity of the Congress to take them for granted. Hence, nearly all of the 34 candidates lost their seats.

It is also true that Tarun Gogoi is a victim of anti-incumbency, having been in the driving seat for 15 years.

But the grim prospect of the Congress in Assam and its electoral fortunes dimmed the moment Himanta Biswa Sarma, once Tarun Gogoi's blue-eyed boy, revolted against his mentor's dynastic politics and left the party last year. Biswa Sarma joined the BJP because he said he was fed up with blue-blood politics. He approached Rahul Gandhi several times on this issue but was rebuffed by the Nehru-Gandhi scion. That's when Biswa Sarma decided to have his revenge on the Congress. Biswa Sarma is a vote-catcher and this was evident from the large crowds that gathered at his rallies. He untiringly addressed about 7-8 rallies a day across the length and breadth of Assam. The Congress with an aged and tired leadership just could not keep pace with Himanta.

Then there is also Sarbananda Sonowal, the young and energetic face of the BJP in Assam – a tribal who was projected as its chief ministerial candidate. The BJP had learnt key lessons from Bihar and Delhi where it foisted outsiders as chief ministerial candidates! As Union Sports Minister, Sonowal had brought the South Asian Games to the North-East. This is a credit to him and to the NDA Government. And this has added a feather to Sonowal's cap as also the BJP's in Assam. Also this time the BJP plank in Assam revolved solely around development and on addressing the protracted issue of illegal immigration – an issue that united the voters this time around.

The Congress in Assam had always projected itself as a secular party but with a slant towards the Muslim 'minority.' This minority however is threatening to become the majority, since it comprises a

large chunk of illegal immigrants. This is what has driven the Assamese Muslims and Hindus to vote the BJP. And as far as the Bodoland Peoples' Front (BPF) is concerned, it makes sense for regional forces to align with the government in power. This is common sense politics. The AGP which was a spent force also got a new lease of life after aligning with the BJP. On the whole, therefore, things worked for the BJP combine against the Congress.

We cannot also discount the fact that the voters of Assam have matured politically. They have voted the BJP despite it being projected as a Hindu communal party that would intrude into people's cultures and eating habits. This plank adopted by certain Leftist forces and the Congress, no longer works. That the people of Assam also rejected Badruddin Ajmal's communal party – the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF), which had surreptitiously built a vote bank of illegal immigrants, also reflects their distaste for communal forces. Also the call given by a section of Assam's Left leaning intellectuals not to vote the BJP only boomeranged on them. There was a clarion call by many non-partisan voters before the Assam election that this election would be akin to the last Battle of Saraighat – a do and die fight against illegal immigration from Bangladesh which the Congress had not addressed in its 15- year rule. All these factors worked in favour of the BJP and its allies.

Now let me come to Meghalaya where a bye-election was necessitated following the demise of a sitting Lok Sabha MP from Tura, Mr Purno A Sangma. Here, Conrad Sangma the Nationalist Peoples' Party (NPP) candidate and late PA Sangma's son won an unprecedented victory of 1.92 lakh votes against the Congress candidate Dikkanchi D Shira, the MLA from Mahendraganj and also the wife of Chief Minister Mukul Sangma. While Conrad Sangma is the son of PA Sangma, he has managed to come into his own and to evolve into a politician with acumen and a political leader in his own right. He left his mark in state politics as Finance Minister in a non-Congress government that presided over Meghalaya between 2008-2010. The NPP is a constituent of the NDA and the BJP refrained from setting up a candidate of its own. It decided to campaign for the NPP instead and it launched a vigorous campaign right from the word "Go." So much so that the Congress targeted the BJP instead of the NPP!

Let's face facts. Dikkanchi Shira is no match to Conrad Sangma in terms of delving into issues and articulating them in Parliament. When people elect an MP, they also want to see him/her speaking with conviction inside the 545 member Lok Sabha. It is not enough to be a woman in politics. It is important to have the political bandwidth to fathom national politics and the varied issues that one is expected to vote on. I sometimes wonder why Dr Mukul Sangma, an otherwise intelligent politician, took this desperate step? Is there no one else in the Congress other than his immediate family members who can contest the Tura Lok Sabha elections? He has himself suffered reverses in the past; his brother too lost against PA Sangma. Then Dr Mukul Sangma foisted Daryl Momin a rank newcomer into politics and pitted him against PA Sangma in 2014. Daryl Momin's only credential was that he is the grandson of Captain Williamson Sangma, Meghalaya's first chief minister. These unilateral decisions taken by some Congress leaders is also what has destroyed the Party. If there is no democracy in the election to the topmost post in the AICC, there is also no democracy in the selection of candidates for state assembly and parliamentary elections.

The Tura Lok Sabha result is a vote against the Congress as much as it is a vote for the NPP and indirectly for the BJP. That Dikkanchi could only win from one assembly constituency (Ampati) and lost even from her own constituency (Mahendraganj) is a definite vote against both the candidate and her Party. If this is not a wake-up call for the Meghalaya Congress then you wonder what else is. For a long time now there has been no visible leadership other than that of Mukul Sangma. There is no challenge to him. There is no free and frank deliberation within the Party to reflect on the trajectory that the Government is taking. In such a situation dictators take root. And the grand old party whose claim to fame is that it led the freedom movement had long since degenerated into a family fiefdom both in Delhi and the states.

Now that the BJP has a foothold in Assam and a toehold in Meghalaya, it might not be long before the political rumblings begin and the clamour for leadership change becomes a real challenge. The BJP will certainly not sit with folded arms. Its aggressive campaign for the Tura bye-election says it all! Let's wait and watch how the BJP uses Conrad Sangma to do a Riji in Meghalaya. But first the Party would have to give due recognition to PA Sangma's legacy.

Will Assam Results Impact Other Congress Ruled NE States?

Pradip Phanjoubam*

The BJP victory in the recently concluded Assam Assembly election, the results for which were declared on May 19, was expected but not by a landslide margin the party and its allies took the Assembly, having together bagged 86 seats in the 126 member house. Of the 86, BJP alone contributed 60, a stupendous rise from five seats it managed in 2011. Equally spectacular is the manner in which the ruling Congress, with strongman Tarun Gogoi at the helm for three consecutive Assembly terms, was dispatched with only 26 seats.

So much has already been said of the Assam results, and now the question is, how will this change of guards in this most populous and important of the Northeast states, impact the rest of the Northeast?

Without question, the Assam development would have startled the Congress government in Manipur headed by Okram Ibobi, more than in the two other Northeastern states still ruled by the Congress, Meghalaya and Mizoram.

Arunachal Pradesh which returned the Congress in the last Assembly election has already slipped out of the Congress sphere, thanks to a disgraceful game of defection earlier this year, quite brazenly and in a partisan manner abetted by the state governor.

Tripura has always been a communist bastion only occasionally challenged by the Congress although in recent times, the BJP base is seen as growing, especially in grassroots elections, and Nagaland has, since the days of veteran S.C. Jamir a decade and a half ago, distanced itself from the Congress in favour of a regional party, Naga People's Front, NPF. Nagaland today has four BJP legislators, one returned as BJP in the last election and three more joined by defection. The NCP which returned four MLAs, broke-up with three deciding to join the BJP, and the sole remaining MLA ultimately heading to the ruling NPF camp.

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There is no doubt that the Congress governments in Meghalaya and Mizoram too would be vulnerable, but this, if at all, would be in anticipation of what happened in Arunachal Pradesh, whereby the BJP engineers a split and topples the governments using its clout as the ruling party at the Centre.

The general perception in these small and weak Northeastern states, dependent on Central government largesse for sustenance, is that their most secure position is to be on the side of the ruling formation at the Centre, and this mindset would also catalyse any such pressures for a shift of alliance towards the party in power at the Centre.

The equation in Manipur would be a little different and there are reasons why the state is likely to become the next target of the BJP to conquer. The scenario here is in some ways similar to the conditions in Assam that made the victory of the BJP and the Asom Gana Parishad which came out of the “Assam Agitation” of the 1970s and 1980s against immigrants, imminent.

For one thing, Manipur’s Assembly elections are due nine months hence in February 2017, therefore political strategists would see moves to topple the government just as yet would only earn disrepute, as well as strengthen local resistance at what may be portrayed as the ruling party’s unwarranted hegemony.

For another, as in Assam, the state is currently in the grip of an acute insecurity of a radical upset of its demography on account of unchecked immigration, a concern which has become complex because of the ethnic divide between the tribal population in the hills and the largely non-tribal population of the central valley, both of whom see the problem quite differently.

Three bills passed by the state Assembly late last year which together were purportedly meant to achieve what a British era legislation, popularly known as the Inner Line Permit System (ILPS), which restricts immigration and prohibits transfers of land ownership to non-domiciles, has been the cause of a sharp split between the state’s hills and valley, the hills fearing these bills, if they become Acts, would adversely affect them.

In Assam the BJP and its ally, the AGP, used the general Assamese insecurity on the immigrant issue as a campaign plank and reaped richly in terms of votes. The party may try to replicate the feat in Manipur too

after negotiating the hill-valley divide on the issue. It is another matter if reaping electoral benefits by playing on such insecurities will prove prudent in the long run, but elections are about immediate results, and insecure populations will always be ready to fall for tall promises.

There are other similarities between the Manipur situation and Assam. Unlike Mizoram and Meghalaya which are overwhelmingly Christian majority, Manipur, like Assam, is Hindu majority, and therefore the BJP may presume it as easier ground to spread its ideology. Unlike in the other two states, Manipur also has an RSS base in the valley districts, which should be encouraging for the BJP. The fact that the BJP has never managed to set roots in Manipur, may not be altogether discouraging for the party considering its recent sterling performance in Assam, which is also traditionally not BJP territory.

In the 2012 Assembly election in Manipur, the BJP drew a blank. However, following disqualification of two Trinamool Congress MLAs in a defection drama in 2015, the BJP wooed the disqualified MLAs and fielded them on its tickets in the by-elections that followed. The two won their respective seats, giving the BJP a presence of two MLAs in the House of 60, after almost two decades, when at another peak of BJP power under the Vajpayee government, Manipur saw four BJP MLA, two of them by defection.

Again as in Assam, the BJP may also champion the demand amongst a section of the majority Meitei community for Scheduled Tribe status. Although, there is also another section of the Meiteis who think this is retrogressive and do not want the ST status, the main opposition to such a move is likely to be again from the hill tribes who are already in the ST category, who see the possible inclusion of the Meiteis in the category may end up depleting their shares of the benefits of reservation accorded to them.

As in Assam again, the Congress under chief minister Okram Ibobi would have also complete three consecutive terms by the next election, therefore similar anti-incumbency factors, besides those of charges of corruption and incompetence, would also work in the BJP’s favour.

Indeed, the success of the BJP in keeping its electoral promises in Assam, may become the fulcrum on which the fate of Congress government in Manipur rests.

Between Tradition and Modernity: Some Reflections on Professor A.K. Saran's Intellectual Sojourn

R.K. Misra*

Professor A.K. Saran (1922-2003) is known as one of the most radical spokesmen of tradition in the contemporary world. Following A.K. Coomaraswamy, René Guénon, Marco Pallis, Frithjof Schuon and other exponents of *Philosophia Perennis*, he has especially taken on the negative side of the task as his vocation, i.e., purging the sanctuary of the life of the intellect from varieties of falsities and deceptions. That is the first requirement if we hope for a genuine renewal of a normal world. From the very beginning of his intellectual career, he has been consistently and uncompromisingly working out thorough internal critiques of modernity: critiques which are totally distinct from any other kind: fashionable talks like that of 'alternative outlook,' 'new age,' 'post-modernity' etc. For Professor Saran, they are simply new devices for masking the truth. What characterizes his thinking, in a word, is its dialectic - one which makes it both highly abstract and existential, enabling to go to the very root of the matter while at the same time remaining truthful to the absolute incomprehensibility of the *Mysterium Magnum*.

Professor Awadh Kishore Saran was born in Faizabad, U.P., India on October 15, 1922. After completing higher education (B.A. and M.A.) at Lucknow University, he soon got a Lectureship there in 1946. He taught sociology and anthropology for 20 years (with a view to refuting

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them entirely!). He then served as a Fellow, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, during 1969-72; Professor and the Head of the Department of Sociology, Jodhpur University, during 1973-78; Senior Fellow, Indian Council of Social Science Research, during 1978-81, etc.; and has lectured at various other universities and institutes. In 1987, he was awarded D.Litt. (*Honoris Causa*) by Agra University.

While acquiring a reputation as the leading theorist on social sciences representing 'Lucknow School' after Radhakamal Mukerjee and D.P. Mukerji and having held several important positions in the academic world in India, from the early stage, his arguments have attracted attention of foreign eminent scholars such as T.B. Bottomore, Louis Dumont, W.C. Smith, R.N. Bellah, etc. Association with those scholars led to invitations to foreign universities (as Lecturer or Visiting Professors) and to international conferences. In U.S.A. addressed in World Religions conference at Harvard University during 1966-67; Gamaliel Chair in Peace and Justice at Wisconsin and Marquette Universities in 1986). He also visited Mexico, Canada, England, France, Germany, Sweden, Japan, etc. In the Fifth World Congress of Sociology held at Washington, D.C. in 1962, he was one of the four nominated round-table speakers in the Plenary Session on Sociological Theory along with Pitrim Sorokin, Henri Lefebvre and Ernest Gellner.

His international renown notwithstanding, and in spite of the life-and-death importance of his work today - or rather, because of it, bearing devastating, subversive potency against modern pseudo-metaphysics - Professor Saran has always remained *marginalized*, in the intellectual world both at home and abroad.

Saran died on December 8, 2003 at Mumbai, India. His life which was a series of 'active waiting' in the darkness of the time, to use the word of Simone Weil, and the life in which he remained to his inceptive wisdom that "all thinking is a form of prayer, and there is one and only one prayer: for right understanding of reality and for relating to it with courage and dignity."

Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies (now Central University of Tibetan Studies - CUTS), Sarnath, Varanasi has initiated the publication of The Collected Works of A.K. Saran under *Samyag-vāk Special Series*. After the publication of the first book of this series in 1996, nine more books have been brought out by the CUTS (while more than twenty in the pipeline); In 2002, a Festschrift containing essays presented to Professor A.K. Saran on his eightieth birthday titled '*Towards Metanoia*' has also been published. Saran's books published

under *Samyag-vāk Special Series* by CUTS, Sarnath include *Traditional Thought: Towards an Axiomatic Approach* (1996), *Illuminations: A School for the Regeneration of Man's Experience, Imagination and Intellectual Integrity* (1996), *On the Intellectual Vocation* (1997), *Traditional Vision of Man* (1998), *Sociology of Knowledge and Traditional Thought* (1998), *Takamori Lecture: The Crisis of Mankind* (1999), *The Marxian Theory of Social Change: A Logico-philosophical Critique* (2000), *Meaning and Truth: Lectures on the Theory of Language - A Prolegomena to the General Theory of Society and Culture* (2003), *On the Theories of Secularism and Modernization* (2007), and *Hinduism in Contemporary India* (2007).

He is among the foremost and formidable intellectuals of our times; foremost because he was endowed with 'much knowing of the senses' and 'deep knowing of the mind', and formidable because he could challenge the foundations of modernity with rare consistency and relentless insistence. His modest exterior concealed a massive mind, his geniality hid his firmness of convictions. His conversations and lectures were full of insightful arguments that would puzzle, irritate and disarm a modernist, and enlighten and enliven a seeker. As the Dalai Lama remarked in his foreword to his *magnum opus* '*Traditional Thought: Towards an Axiomatic Approach*': "Those who know him readily testify that to communicate with him is to undergo a memorable experience." His writings, numerous and profound, are gems of wisdom and bear testimony to his lifelong commitment to Tradition. His quest and commitment would inspire some and annoy many, and those many would, often times, turn bitter and exasperated, labelling him orthodox and obstinate. Orthodox (etymologically, a man of right opinion) he was, but never obstinate. He would patiently listen to objections and criticism, seek clarifications, examine those explanations, expose their inconsistencies and contradictions and then offer his exposition. In most of the cases, it would turn out that the critic or objector had never carefully thought out the proposition he was advancing. His keen, dialectical mind often led me to find in him a mirror image of Socrates.

The writings of Ananda K. Coomaraswamy cast a spell on the young Saran. The profound wisdom contained therein was to remain the mainstay of his intellectual sojourn. René Guénon, Frithjof Schuon, Marco Pallis were other traditional thinkers who had an abiding impact on his life and thinking. Professor Saran was a radical critic of modernity and disdained the idea of synthesis of tradition and modernity. He was

emphatic that any attempt to modernize tradition would only distort and destroy it as the two proceeded from radically different axioms. In fact, the rise of modernity in Europe took place on the reversal and rejection of traditional principles and its advance has steadily and surely struck at the roots of tradition. He steadfastly held to tradition in its unalloyed form and did not lend himself to the comedy of modern intellectual who was 'out of place everywhere and at home nowhere'.

In these 'post-modern' times, elaborate critiques of modernity and its Enlightenment Project are the order of the day. In fact, modernity was never without its critics and one can say that critique of modernity has gone hand in hand with its dissemination. Edmund Burke, Joseph de Maistre, J.G. Herder, Dostoevsky, Solzhenitsyn, Eric Voegelin and many other thinkers have delved deeply into the utter futility of Enlightenment Project of creating a 'second reality'. We have heard Horkheimer and Adorno declaring 'Enlightenment is totalitarian', Isaiah Berlin characterizing it 'monist', Michael Oakeshott lamenting the rationalist wiping the slate clean and building society anew from scratch or Leo Strauss decrying Enlightenment for battling against revealed religions. In recent years, Alasdair Mac Intyre¹ has charged the project of modernity with foundationalism and nihilism – it leads to nihilism because it has pursued wrong kind of moral foundations. Mahatma Gandhi's powerful critique of this 'satanic civilization' in '*Hind Swarāj*' is only too well-known.

Professor Saran's critique has a distinctiveness. It proceeds dialectically from within the very structure of modernity. It is exhaustive and penetrating in as much as it exposes its scientific rationalistic sub-structure and its moral, political, cultural superstructure. He could see through the falsities, deceptions and futilities of the modern enlightenment and called for an unlearning of the fundamental postulates of modern natural and social sciences. His whole intellectual endeavour was aimed at breaking loose from this administered consciousness. The hubristic nature of modernity is explicated in his writings with rare clarity and depth. Modernity inaugurates a homocentric world-view shaped and supported by rational-scientific-technological discourse. Modern man is confident of his power to demystify the universe and thereby to usher in an age in which each and all will have the fullest and best opportunities, amenities and facilities to realize potentialities to the optimum. Professor Saran called this claim 'postulate of non-mediated universal knowability' and argued that this postulate is at the

root of modern science and all ‘the secular religions’ of modern times—liberalism, Marxism, Fascism, etc. This indeed is the postulate that governs all modern theories of history and society. What does this postulate assert? It asserts that the universe can be fully known by man, that man has the capacity for achieving this universal knowledge, that there must come a day – in principle, if not in history, when nothing remains unknown to man. This knowledge is the ‘unmediated’ in the sense that universal knowledge is achievable solely by the powers of human mind, uninspired or unassisted by any superhuman source or power. The only aid or mediation will be the cumulative history of human reason, emancipated by all irrational or non-rational forces. According to Professor Saran, this claim of unmediated universal knowability is what makes modern man and modernity unique and unprecedented in the history of mankind. Never before was such a claim made by man in any civilization. Modern man as the source of universal knowledge is confident that continuous, cumulative and progressive march of human reason will end in complete illumination.

This paradigm of ‘disenchanted’ world is clearly and radically opposed to the paradigm of non-modern or traditional man’s intellectual and historical life. Professor Saran explicates: “For traditional man, there is, and there can be no continuous linear progress from unknown to the less known to the known and the better known until nothing remains unknown. For the traditional man, it is the arduous ascent from the unknown to the unknowable, from the knowledge of the relative (the contingent and the temporal) to the transcendental knowledge (beyond knowing and unknowing) of the Absolute (the Necessary and the Eternal), from mentation to de-mentation.... Traditional man realizes just as Socrates did that the lighted area between the abysses of birth and death however vast and bright stands constantly undermined by man’s ignorance of his origin and end.... Being aware of precariousness of all humanly acquired knowledge and gifted with faith, traditional man depends on Revelation for the knowledge of his origin and destiny, and divine grace for transcending the tremendous gap between his finite human faculties and his eternal divine destiny.”² The modern man’s determined attempt to trace the history of his origin and recreate a brave new world are logical fall-out of this ‘scientific’ teleology and eschatology. This claim to possess the universal knowledge sooner than later makes him long for creatorship. This will to control and possess nature, to create life and mind and society has been the guiding

spirit of modern natural and social sciences. The behaviourally engineered utopia sketched by B.F. Skinner in ‘Walden II’ provides a peep into the workings of scientific mind of the modern man. The dominance of pragmatism, instrumentalism, operationalism, etc. in the contemporary philosophy and the great prestige that is attached to technology and bio-technology only attest to the autotelic nature of the modern knowledge. No longer is knowledge for the virtue, rather power to create, control and predict is its telos. Logically enough, this knowledge would also not recognize any trans-human and trans-historical ethical standards to live by. Autotelic knowledge will only foster instrumental and utilitarian ethics. Man’s leap from creature to creator makes all eternal, divine and natural laws redundant and irrelevant. When God is banished or dead, all transcendental principles cease to exist. Man becomes the author of ethics as well. All modern ideologies—Liberalism, Socialism, Fascism, etc. are only the reverse side of this coin of ‘unmediated universal knowability’. The following axioms of ‘*Traditional Thought*’, sum up the whole thing brilliantly:

“... by virtue of the transcendent trans-noetic sovereignty of the one, theodicy (=cosmodicy=*Rta*) rules the three worlds: the non-conscious, the conscious and the self-conscious (the natural-vegetable, the animal, the human-social)....

No concept, no theory of anthropodicy is ever possible.

Man is creature.

Man is not and can never be the creator of Law for himself.

Nor can man be the Law-giver for a world which is already always pre-given for him....

Being a creature, man has no power over the past.

Except that of distorting and falsifying it....

He has only an extremely limited power over the future,

And that too punctuated, even punctured by ifs and buts.”³

Professor Saran is critical of modern thought in as much as it is cosmocidal. Cut off from God and Tradition, it is homo-centric, ego-centric, eccentric and centrifugal. Brushing aside and disdaining metaphysical experience, it proceeds on sensory experience as mediated by the mind’s synthesizing faculty. Confined to the mundane and transitory, its empiricism cannot but be superficial, distorted and fragmentary. To experience and know the things of lower order and to deride and dismiss the things of higher order is to live by a ‘pseudo-

science'. This is to know, as Plato says, the beautiful things and just acts but not Beauty and Justice. This incomplete and confused perception of the things is the bane of modern science and badge of modern age. Professor Saran asserts that the yearning for the Whole (and therefore, Holy) is in-eliminable from human experience unless his self-reflexive consciousness and self-reflective intelligence are rendered inactive by ego-obsession.

The loss of holistic vision – the intimate relation between time and Eternity, between Noumenon and phenomenon, between Revelation and reason, between God and man, has had fatal and far-reaching consequences for world and humanity. Man stands alienated from all fulfilling bonds. Man is reduced to a mere aggregate of instincts, needs and desires; society is reduced to an aggregate of atomistic individuals; and universe is reduced to a mere play of natural forces. It is not surprising that modern scientific thought looks upon the world, the society and the man as machines of varying complexities, whose disorders can be remedied by adopting appropriate technologies.

The moral crisis of our times can be traced to this 'positivization' of life and mind. For all clamour for justice, it remains elusive. Justice which has to do with right and righteous relationship of the part to the whole, can not be the hallmark of modern state. As Professor Saran says, "Justice is the prevalence of hieronomy." A just social order is founded on the love of God and works for the glory of God. Justice is grounded in the Cosmic Reason and is the obedience and observance of just laws. An order founded on the love of man and working for the glory of man can not but be unjust and exploitative. Here relationships are instrumental, acquisitive and power-driven. Not the might and majesty of the Right, but 'might is right' is the basis of such societies. It is no wonder if modern theories of justice are centrally concerned with appropriation and distribution of political and economic power. Justice is viewed as empowerment, and not as self-sustaining power of the *Hieros* (the Sacred). Professor Saran thinks that custom and positive law ought to derive their power and authority from cosmicity, and it is this that makes their observance spontaneous and widespread.

Politics, if not yoked to Law and Justice, is no more than an exercise in acquisition, maintenance, use and expansion of power for its own sake. Autotelic politics (politics for power) is a necessary adjunct of autotelic knowledge. The modern political thinkers' – Machiavelli, Hobbes, Marx, David Easton, Harold Laswell etc. obsession with power

is only too well-known. In Tradition, every political society is ultimately based on a specific cosmology, and the fundamental symbols of political society order the individual and collective experiences of its members, thus providing them with a vision of natural and supernatural good. As Eric Voegelin puts it: "Every political society is a little world, a cosmion; illuminated from within by the human beings who continuously create and bear it as the mode and condition of their self-realization. It is illuminated through an elaborate symbolism.... and this symbolism illuminates with meaning insofar as the symbols make the internal structure of such a cosmion, the relations between its members and groups of members as well as its existence as a whole, transparent for the mystery of human existence." Professor Saran too regards political order as an aspect of eternity and the king or ruler will rule truly and justly insofar as he is able to discern Cosmic Reason in all its manifestations and workings. Power, political or economic, divorced from goals higher than itself becomes purposeless and subhuman, oppressive or subservient to the interests of one or other dominant group.

The 'de-spiritualization' of the substance of society is all-round and all-embracing. Be it language or literature, arts or ethics, politics or economics, everything is shaken to roots. Our capacity to think, except in the service of our supposed self-interest, is pitifully limited. According to Professor Saran, the deadening of people's 'noetic sensitivity' is the source of all the ills and evils of our times. The fight against the enemy inside us is far more difficult than to fight outside enemies. But there is no escape if we want a 'normal' civilization. Professor Saran is a radical critique of modernity, but he criticizes to recover and retrieve the Tradition. In *'Illuminations: A School for the Regeneration of Man's Experience, Imagination and Intellectual Integrity'*, he puts forward a practical proposal to quicken and rekindle man's 'originary noetic innocence'. It is a call for 'unlearning' of modern 'enlightenment' and turning back to the truths eternally inscribed in the nature of things. His plan for this 'Illumination School' envisioned a small group of post-graduate students and young teachers from different universities and a few scholars (both from and outside academia) with varying degrees of familiarity and intellectual affinity with the aims of the School, who would be invited to live together for a period of two or three weeks or so. They should study and discuss among themselves some wisdom books or their passages to deepen their understanding. "The idea", as

Professor Saran says: “is not to inform, but to form the mind anew; to de-sediment, renew and redeem the experience, feeling-life and imagination-realm of the participants.”⁴ He was convinced that modern education is anti-metaphysical or pseudo-metaphysical, and awakening our slumbering consciousness is the first necessary step for the regeneration of man and society. He was keenly aware of the difficulty and risk of this enterprise, but he was sure that this feeble medium for this grand purpose would grow to be effective.

It speaks volumes for Professor Saran’s intellectual and moral courage that he lived by the living truths of *Sophia Perennis* in the midst of gathering darkness of modernity. He suffered marginalization. He was overlooked and ignored in the mainstream academic circles. But his insightful arguments born out of keenly logical and philosophical mind could never be ignored and refuted. His clarity and subtlety was unsurpassed. His writings are ‘an ice-axe to break the sea frozen inside us’. His intellectual journey was aimed at saving man and society from the pseudo-answers to the primordial question ‘Who am I?’

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Agyeya : The Ideal Poet-philosopher of Freedom

Ramesh Chandra Shah*

Introduction

Sachchidananda Hirananda Vatsyayan “Agyeya” was born in Kushinagar (UP) which his archaeologist father was excavating. He came to be known as ‘Agyeya,’ because his early writings, smuggled out of prison, were published under conditions in which the author’s name could not be revealed. During his postgraduate studies in Lahore, he was arrested for revolutionary activities and spent several years in prison.

He has published 14 volumes of verse, four novels and several volumes of short stories and essays. As pioneer of the Modernist Movement of Hindi Poetry (Nayi Kavita), he made the greatest impact on the course of post-independence Hindi literature as a whole. Both his poetry and fiction received literary awards including the National Academy Award, 1964 and the prestigious Jnanpith Award, 1978. His poems have been translated from Hindi into German, Italian, Russian, Danish, and Swedish as also into the major Indian languages.

Agyeya edited a number of literary and critical journals in Hindi and English and travelled extensively and lectured as visiting professor at the University of California Berkeley and the University of Heidelberg, Germany.

Apart from an intense concern with ethical and social issues, his science education developed in him a highly critical modern sensibility. That’s what makes his lifelong concern with and rediscovery of his

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ancestral Indian Wisdom uniquely important and inspiring. As pioneer in poetry, he was involved in constant experimentation with language, form, structure and content: in prose he established his reputation as a master stylist who literally transformed Hindi into a highly sensitive instrument of modern expression. Probably, no other Indian contemporary has displayed such a thoroughgoing equal command on the elevated and the earthy, the classical and the colloquial, the incisive and gentle, the individual and the universal; no other could be simultaneously so reticent and so eloquent. Agyeya passed away on April 4, 1987.

It's with some hesitation that I choose this rather limited and limiting caption for what I have to say about a man, who to me was not only a poet of exceptional subtlety and depth, but also – a model of what Heidegger chose to call 'meditative thinking' – as distinguished from 'calculative thinking', which defines and dominates the modern man's way of walking upon this earth.

Both heredity and environment shaped the sensibility and determined the graph of Agyeya's evolution as a poet as well as thinker. Son of an eminent archaeologist, he had an in-built sense of the past as well as of an Indian identity. He loved to be with his father during those frequent excavations and, was thus more attuned to a nomadic life rather than to the fixed routine of the usual home –life. A science education developed in him a critical modern sensibility. An intense involvement with revolutionary freedom-fighters and long imprisonment under the British rule deepened his already intense concern with socio-political and moral issues. Such apparently contrary forces were bound to produce tensions, which sought to resolve themselves through a life-long multifaceted creativity as well as intellectual quest. One of his most poignant poems called "Tightrope Dancer," (translated by himself into English) is a living testimony to this tension; of course it has to be read in its entirety. Here I can just quote a few lines:

There is a taut rope on which I dance...

... ..

In truth I do not dance.

I only move from pole to pole,

To loosen the rope, to ease the pull

So I might make my escape.

But the tension does not ease.

And I move from pole to pole

Tension continues

... ..

And that is the dance which people see

Agyeya would not have realised this tension as well as its uniquely rich resolution, if he had not chosen to come to terms with it through the medium of Hindi. Like everything else, his relationship with this self-chosen medium also was shaped by that peculiar outsider-insider stance. It was his firm belief that of all the Indian languages, Hindi alone, has been always modern and always in a process of evolving –developing. It is an inherent and in-built virtue of this language; and it is this in-built progressive vitality, that has enabled it throughout its historical progression, to initiate and lead various changes and transformations, which were necessary for the self-regeneration of this country called India. It's not at all a sentimental gesture on his part that he depicts Hindi as the master key to the heart of India' and 'the voice of Indian identity as a whole.' It's his emotional as well as intellectual conviction. Amongst all his contemporaries, it's Agyeya alone, who lays the utmost emphasis on recognition of this inherent and historically authenticated characteristic of Hindi as the unique national language of India. And his creative as well as critical achievement constitutes the reinforcement and embodiment of this idea and reality of India.

Even as the pioneer of the modernist movement, he begins his adventure in terms that equate his initiative with the self-fulfilling destiny of Hindi itself. It is his conviction that "Hindi has always been the language of confluences and creative – transformative rebellions." To quote his own words – "It is Hindi which maintained the flow of Indian culture throughout length and breadth of the country and thus kept alive the living sense of Indianness. Hindi has never-been the sectarian vehicle of a particular region: it has always been the vehicle of ever evolving insights and liberating rebellions. It is therefore, the traditional, in-built responsibility of Hindi to continue to remain modern as ever." In other words, we can say that the greatest creative contribution of Agyeya as a writer has been precisely this: building bridges between 'Samskar' and 'Samvedana' – between the past and the present as well as the future. Agyeya was aware of all the impediments in the way of fulfilling his role as the conscience of his race, moment and milieu: he had no illusions about his people or even about the self-righteously ideology-driven colleagues. As a young

man, he had been close to M.N. Roy and his Radical Humanism – although he went on evolving and transcending beyond this early influence. But the Marxist lobby, in their incurably hostile and intolerant attitude towards this poet-philosopher of ‘freedom’ did everything in their power to belittle and damage his reputation. It was a tireless campaign of wilful distortions and malicious propaganda against all he stood for and actually achieved through his life-long work. The best of his unifying projects like ‘Jai Janaki Yatra’ and ‘Bhagvat Bhumi Yatra’ were invariably ridiculed and vilified by them. Agyeya too is unsparing in his critical assessment of their ideology: according to him: “as a philosophy, communism is partial and lame; in politics it has proved itself to be an aggressor (Ātatayi) and here in this country especially, its parasitical character has been fully exposed.”

On the other hand, the so-called traditionalists too have seldom responded to his work comprehensively, which is a unique and original blend of a progressive view of human destiny on the one hand and spiritual commonsense rooted in the ancestral wisdom of India on the other. What is it that constitutes his life-long quest for meaning and fulfilment as a human being? What was the driving force behind his rebellion and his faith in human self-reliance? It is most certainly the aspiration and the quest of freedom – the value of all values for Agyeya. But this ‘freedom’ is not something already given and easily assumed. It has to be earned through a life-long adventure of struggle, research and self-discovery. To quote his own words: “this is what constitutes the very essence of freedom (*swadhinta*) – this constant search and struggle in the spirit of discovery.” He defines it elsewhere as “the basic commandment of the Whole Being. Only a life directed by such immediate and ultimate apprehension of being can be called “a life lived in freedom, because, it’s the complete fusion and unification of consciousness, conscience, and self-reliant freedom. You live as a free being only when you are able to live according to the light of your conscious power of discrimination. Only such a freedom can establish you in a state of fearlessness.”

Agyeya has mentioned one of the experiences which nourished his understanding of ‘freedom.’ The episode is titled as *meri swadhinata: sabki swadhinata*. While roaming in an orchard in England, he witnessed a tall free standing in all its majesty in the midst of an open space of greenery. The tree at once captured all his attention and proved to be a *bodhi-vriksha* – tree of wisdom for him. To quote his own response to the experience:

“...A tree, only a tree...! But it had been allowed to grow to its full stature, to realise the all-perfect form, which Nature had conceived and ordained for it – a tree which had achieved the ultimate fulfillment of all the possibilities of its latent ‘treeness.’ At that moment I realized a definition of this value called Freedom, which has, ever since then stayed alive and vibrant within me: ‘To be a free being means to be able to develop and evolve upto the summit of the possibilities of ultimate perfection inherent within you.’

Was it a mere coincidence that Agyeya encountered this symbol of his life-long quest for freedom not in his own country but in England? Even otherwise, don’t we find him observing in the same context that ...” In India, we profess to revere every living and growing thing, and worship plants and trees; but, it’s very rare to find here a tree, which has been allowed to grow in full freedom.” Is it not ironical that often we come to know about our ancestral wisdom not through its living exemplars around us, but, open through the others – the foreigners? How is it that a living seer like Nisargadutt tells his foreign disciples that they are far more ardent and sincere pursuers of truth than his own countrymen? Aren’t we stunned when we hear him saying – “It was Paul Brunton, who discovered Ramana Maharshi. I myself am the discovery of Maurice Frydman? ...” But, why are we stunned? Isn’t it the tragic truth of the other side of the story?

Agyeya further elaborates his experience of the tree. He says – “to bring home that vision, that tree with you, meant for me to bring back with me a very big burden – a very big responsibility. “One meaning of the experience was to confront the numberless dwarfed and warped trees of the jungle, which torments you. “How can I consider myself ‘free’ in front of such a glaring contradiction?” – Agyeya asks: “Can one become ‘Free’ in isolation from all, who are denied that freedom?” He then goes on to articulate his anguish thus: “Right here, such understanding of ‘freedom’ becomes the travail of ‘tapasya’, because it becomes the necessity to aspire and struggle for the equal freedom of all human beings as such.”

In the meditative thinking of Agyeya, the concept of freedom is inalienably related and joined to the power of language. “Man is the first creature” – he says: “who can replace a thing by a symbol; and it’s this power, which enables man to transcend the limitations imposed on him by Nature. Man is the first free living being, because he has language, because he has this capacity to create symbols and the power to create concepts well.” It is from this realization, that Agyeya draws the conclusion that the first and foremost value of culture is

‘freedom.’ To quote his own words: “the first and foremost value earned by man is freedom and the second – this idea that man can sacrifice even his life for this value. That, there can be a value greater than his life itself. So, this is the unique creation of man. This is the real source of his culture and civilisation.”

But the greatest challenge faced by human civilization today is that the triumphant march of rationality itself has cast a shadow on this value-consciousness itself. In an incisive essay called ‘The Crisis of Civilization,’ Agyeya after discussing the crisis of faith in the west, arrives at a very disturbing conclusion vis-à-vis the situation in India. This is what he has to say about the state of the mirror called literature in India:

“The most glaring defect of our literature is that, it fails to give us an authentic portrayal of our society, and our life itself. The West – in spite of its powerful ego and strong self-image, no longer has the confidence to assert, that their thought, their philosophy etc. is superior to that of the east. Infact, the more far-sighted intellectuals in the west have come to perceive that they are approaching the end of the path they had chosen to traverse: they feel that they face a wall in front of them and this perception has compelled them to search for an alternative way. We, on the other hand are guilty not only of self-complacence, but also of strange insensitiveness. Our literature fails to show us our own face: it reflects neither our weakness nor our strength: neither our faith, nor our loss of faith. Nor does it reflect any real self-doubt or real anxiety about our condition. It is sadly lacking in any real perception even of what our real concern must be.”

But, elsewhere, Agyeya seeks to correct what now seems to him an error of judgment. “How can India suffer a crisis in faith” – he asks now ... “how can literature reflect that crisis, when we had never insisted on a dogmatic faith?” ... The emphasis here was always placed on ‘conduct’, and on those fundamental values, which determined our conduct. Our problem thus, has assumed a different form: it would be a patent lie to assert that we still retain faith in those values. No; we don’t. So, our problem – which is no problem for us – is that, we can go on behaving, conducting ourselves safely even without a real belief in those values. This generates hypocrisy – making our society hypocritical, and that is exactly what has happened. That’s what came to be reflected in our literature also.

Is this enough to understand and resolve the predicament, that our present Indian civilization is facing today? How would Agyeya respond

to the diagnosis proposed by Aurobindo? Would he agree that ‘materialist refusal’ explains the decline of the West, and, ‘ascetic denial,’ that of the Indian culture? Maybe, such a diagnosis and such a line of treatment would have little appeal for him. His terms of dialogue are different, although he appreciates the insights and procedures of Gandhiji. This acquires special relevance because earlier, during his revolutionary days, he had been very critical of Gandhian politics. As he himself describes it,

“During the lifetime of Mahatma Gandhi, I was a bitter critic of many facets of his political movement. But, now I understand that no one was more truly aware of the evil effects of total politicization of human life. That is why, right from the beginning, he insisted on joining politics with wider religious and spiritual contexts. For today’s intellectuals, there cannot be a greater ideal to follow and a deeper lesson to learn than the example and precept of Gandhiji. In fact, the claim of intellectual freedom is not only by no means a purely political claim, we should never allow it to become a political claim. The claim of freedom is much bigger than any political context, precisely for the reason that freedom as a value and concept is much larger and deeper than mere political freedom. The intellectual – especially the creative artist, has to lay claim first of all on the autonomy of the creative art – world. It is this claim, and the struggle for it, which is greater than any politics.”

We can now understand how ‘Freedom’ for Agyeya is not just one of the values, but the very basis, the very ground of all the values conceived by man. According to Agyeya, it is the first and foremost proof of man’s humanity. Infact his constant creativity even against the heaviest odds is itself the process, the way of producing this proof. But the most tragic irony of the modern age is that such a universal and eternal value has been devalued by reducing it into a mere political context. The question is – what’s the way out of this vicious circle? Agyeya, in his anguished meditations on this problem comes to the conclusion that the evolutionist explanation or solution is quite inadequate. In the development of Agyeya’s philosophy of freedom, this fact is very important that he goes on recognizing the spiritual basis and dimension of human freedom with ever more conspicuous clarity and conviction. That enables him to assert unlike any of his communist-socialist-secularist contemporaries that:–

“India is the only country, and Indian culture too, the only culture, in which all the controversies arising from the definition of culture – political vs. spiritual have been resolved right from

its starting point. From the Indian viewpoint, the opposition between the sacred and the secular does not even arise; what to speak of its relevance or meaningfulness! It becomes irrelevant, meaningless. On the contrary, so far as western thought is concerned, there has been in it right from the beginning, an irreconcilable conflict between the religious and the secular, or the sacred and the profane.”

What does this mean? It means that the deepest and the surest basis of this philosophy of freedom lies in the very – foundation and the fountainhead of Indian culture: it is the spiritual foundation, which is intrinsically, free from the conflict of religious vs. secular, and is, in fact quite beyond it. Of course, as the poet in Agyeya had perceived through that ‘great-rooted tree’, this philosophy of freedom presupposes the full awareness and recognition of the other’s freedom too. It is here that we confront the issue of the relationship between the individual and the society and the social order, we have chosen to control and organise it. The politicisation of everything does not seem to be our concern; and it does not engage the attention of the so-called intellectuals in our literary milieu. But, as we have pointed out already, it is the prime concern for Agyeya. Let us read what he says further on this issue:

“During the latter half of the nineteenth century, our country – in its response to the onslaught of the west, had witnessed the first glimmering of a cultural renaissance. Then in the Gandhian era, we had began to form a more positive conception of our cultural rebirth beyond that first gesture of reaction. We were now on the threshold of real self-affirmation. But, ironically, as soon as we lifted our legs to proceed beyond that threshold, we were paralyzed then and there. During the last fifty years, we can boast of economic and industrial progress, we can boast of our worldwide recognition as an important power. But in the wider human context, we will have to admit that, today we Indians have neither a really effective world-view, nor any strong self-image that would impress and convince ourselves or the others.”

It’s a matter of regret that neither on the larger scale of pan-Indian sensibility, nor in the immediate milieu of Hindi literature, the relevance as well as the coherence of Agyeya’s philosophy of freedom received the attention and response that it deserved. Our faction-ridden literary circles went on persisting in their vicious propaganda against everything he said or did. Not only the die-hard pseudo-secularists and communists, but even the spineless academia continued to ignore, misunderstand and misinterpret the consistently significant and solid contributions of

this towering intellect and sensibility. Part of this hostility and wilful perversity can be traced to Agyeya’s unshakeable conviction that.” the power of literature to resist the evil of injustice cannot and does not emanate from political commitment. In fact, on the contrary it comes from the refusal of any kind of commitment.” It seems that of all the lessons available, the lessons of self-reliance and self-realization are the hardest ones to learn. Agyeya saw and showed the relationship between a free individual and a free society in a dimension much wider and deeper than mere politics. He not only perceived but demonstrated the truth of his hard-earned insight that “freedom is the blossoming not only of the human mind, but also of the human spirit itself.”

But there’s more to it. ‘The writer as writer has to accept an additional private responsibility as well as an additional social responsibility’ – says Agyeya; and, further more

“While I give prime importance to the creative solitude of an artist, I have always emphasized the necessity of speaking one’s mind on urgent social issues. Simultaneously, he has to safeguard himself against the trap that lies in allowing such a social use of his literary self: he must keep free from party-politics and factionalism. He would be failing in his unique responsibilities if he fails to protect his own freedom.”

Lastly, we have to notice briefly the journalistic work of Agyeya. I can’t think of a more fitting finale to this aspect as well as to the overall contribution of Agyeya to Indian sensibility than to cite the assessment made by Nirmal Verma – himself a famous writer. He says:

“If ever a writer distinguished himself by making Hindi language the most powerful and precise vehicle of thoughts, Agyeya was the pioneer in that endeavour. Whether it was the search for an adequate and suitable language for Radio, or the use of precise political terminology in Hindi journalism, Agyeya did his utmost to utilize the expressive potential of Hindi. On the one hand he wanted to free the language from pedantic heaviness, and on the other hand, from the imperialistic dominance of English. It was by no means an easy task. To achieve such freedom, it was necessary to struggle on all fronts where the dominant powers pollute the very means of communicating truth and pursue their agenda of corrupting the language and thereby, culture itself.”

That is exactly what Agyeya did. Achieving such a freedom himself, and showing the way to the younger generation of writers. As he once said to me – “I have been more exacting, more demanding than the average Hindi writer, because of a greater and more persistent sense of responsibility that I have always felt in my vocation as a writer.”

Agyeya - Exploration into Freedom

Nandkishore Acharya*

“Sociality is to be realized as not an antonym but an extension of the realization of freedom. It is only sociality of mankind which serves as the foundation of the building of freedom. Man is free not only in himself but in the other. He is free only to the extent he contributes in making society free” (*Shashvati*; p.38).

It is really regrettable that a prejudiced interpretation of Agyeya’s this emphasis takes it as an individualistic demand and deliberately ignores the fact that freedom to Agyeya is not a personal convenience but basically a value and being a value it is a right as well as a responsibility. That is why the touchstone of one’s freedom to Agyeya is the contribution one makes in making society free.

It is not less ironical that, in spite of almost two hundred years of colonial subjugation, an intellectual group still exists which takes freedom as an antonym of sociality. This group – in leftist and rightist both the forms – is afraid of the idea of the freedom and favours its suppression in the name of either historical necessity or cultural tradition. We may include here another group also who, although does not disregard freedom as an idea, puts undue emphasis only on its spiritual dimension but ignores practical struggle to realize it. That is why Agyeya feels it imperative to comment that this group never exhibited any moral courage whenever a situation needed it. He says that not only the cultural consciousness of these people but the concept of nation as well was narrow and hollow and therefore, could not realize culture beyond politics (*Kendra Aur Paridhi*; pp. 174-75).

But we are required to analyze Agyeya’s concept of freedom as it contains the seed of his concept of sociality also. Agyeya, although

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himself a freedom fighter, does not limit the idea of freedom only to the political dimension. Political freedom can only be a first step towards the realization of real freedom which Mahatma Gandhi terms as ‘*Swaraj*.’ Agyeya, no doubt, puts great emphasis on individual freedom, but then we shall have to understand his concept of individual man. Man, to Agyeya, is essentially a creative, and therefore, an unpredictable being, because unpredictability is an essential characteristic of creativity. But, he also takes self-consciousness as an equally significant characteristic of man and this self-consciousness, to him, is not limited to individual life as it transforms itself into social consciousness as well. It is consciousness of being ‘I’, my being a part of society is also included because it is only in society that my individuality as a human being is realized (*Shashvati*, p.38).

Agyeya here proposes an original resolution of the conflict of individual versus society. Most of the thinkers, who talk of individual freedom, consider society as an obstacle in the realization of freedom; but, to Agyeya, society is the ground on which freedom is realized. Freedom, to Agyeya, is not freedom from but freedom in society. That is why he admits that his freedom is not only his freedom; it is freedom of the other also. It is only in the mirror of other that one realizes himself and his own freedom as well. This, to him, is the climax of the reach of individual man (*Kendra Aur Paridhi*; pp. 179-80). Agyeya’s argument here raises a biological instinct to the status of an ethical value. He argues that the claim of ‘I-ness’ is a biological instinct, but to realize the claim of other’s freedom is an essential feature of one’s human-ness. This recognition of other’s right, its acceptance is possible only for a self-conscious man and this self-conscious realization is the thing which evolves him beyond animal level, gives him human-beingness and makes him free (*Kendra Aur Paridhi*; p. 163).

It is to be reminded here that Agyeya defines mankind as a creator of values – values that he takes as greater than himself and for which he is prepared to sacrifice even his life. This is what evolves him from biological to ethical status. Freedom, according to M. N. Roy, is an extension of the desire to live. Agyeya extends this concept of freedom to the dimension of sociality and, thus, discovers there an expression of the same biological instinct. Freedom and sociality, hence, become two sides of the same coin, authenticity of which is established on ethical as well as on biological level. When Agyeya, therefore, talks of freedom as a fundamental value, it is not only individual but a social

value as well. It is freedom of society as a whole, the touchstone of which is every individual. Was that not Karl Marx who said that free development of every individual is the essential pre-condition for development of all?

This is a pleasant surprise that Agyeya's concept of individual freedom is almost akin to that of Mahatma Gandhi as the latter also comments that with the loss of individual freedom, all is lost because if there is no significance of individual, nothing remains of society. No society could be evolved depriving the individual from his freedom. This is totally against the human nature (*Harijan*, 1 July 1942 p.249). To be totally against human nature is to be totally unscientific. I do not think that even the hardest critic of Gandhi would dare call him anti-social or even asocial. This also must be noted that Mahatma Gandhi includes even freedom to sin in his concept of individual freedom.

Owing to this forceful insistence on freedom, many critics of Agyeya bracket him with existentialist thinkers like Sartre and Camus. Although existentialism, no doubt, puts highest emphasis on individual freedom, it considers other as an essential obstacle in its realization. Sartre, therefore, talks of 'Other is hell,' while to Agyeya, 'Other is freedom,' because, according to him, claim of one's own freedom as an individual being is meaningless as the claim of freedom is authentic only when it is a claim for other's freedom (*Srota Aur Setu*; pp.119-20).

Everyone desires one's own freedom, it is validated as a value only when the claim is made for freedom of the other; when we strive for some other one's freedom. Agyeya, therefore, condemns any kind of suppression of freedom in the name of sect, party-loyalty, ideology, even nationalism and considers individual freedom as the touchstone for sociality in the same way as he takes sociality as the touchstone for individual freedom. That is why he does not accept the view that a free nation is essentially a free society also. Society can be called free only when individual freedom, in no way, is curbed in the name of tradition, custom, religion, sect etc. He, naturally, does not tolerate any sort of totalitarianism or fascism – whatever face it may adopt. Freedom of any society or nation has no real meaning because it, then, becomes a prey to philosophical or logical contradiction (*Antara*; p.35).

This is applicable to the capitalist democracies in the same way as to the totalitarian societies or state. He, therefore, commenting upon the Jung's criticism of dictatorships, does not forget to say that some other kind of totalitarian discipline is present in American society as

well and that should not be less hated. That is why he does not support Jung's advocacy of west (*Bhavanti*; p.103). Many of his critics, perhaps, could be surprised to know that Agyeya considers the general Russian mind healthier than that of America. He finds less violence in Russian psyche than that of Americans and, therefore, to him the Russian society is more cultured (*Bhavanti*; p.104).

True freedom and true societies are not possible, according to Agyeya, in the absence of equality. Equality is not to be understood only as political or legal equality. To Agyeya, it is basically ethical equality which is manifested in socio-economic domains. Positioning equality as an ethical value, Agyeya gives an original argument which establishes not only independent identity of individual man but equality of everyone's individuality also. He argues that one's claim of not being inferior to any other does not make one equal or free; the foundation of all values is the question: in what ways the other is inferior? Agyeya thinks that equality as a value is an outcome of this questioning. As the freedom of the other is touchstone of my freedom, similarly the touchstone of my equality is equality of the other; the validity of justice for me is realized only in justice which I give to others (*Kendra Aur Paridhi*; pp.177-78). It is to be noted that Agyeya puts this argument when he discusses the question of untouchability and Dalit discourse in Indian society. Admitting the politico-economic aspects of this question, he does not forget to target our cultural hypocrisy. He comments that a society which leaves any social problem only to be tackled by law or state, is really a hypocritical society and the person who, while declaring one's faith in our cultural ideas, does not transcend the attitude of untouchability in his personal life is also a hypocrite (*Kendra Aur Paridhi*; p.177).

The questions of women's freedom and gender equality are also discussed by Agyeya in the same perspective. Although, admitting the value of "yatranaryastu poojyante," he makes it clear that only the verbal acceptance of this worship expresses itself is the violent attitude towards women (Ibid, p.253). He, therefore, does not like to see women always in some relationship but makes claims for her independent status as a woman. He comments that to see woman always as mother, wife, daughter, sister, etc. is actually negating her individuality and free identity as a woman. If we always see women in some relation to some man is actually an extension of male-centered view. A society which does not recognize independent personality of a woman could not really

worship her. A truly respectable woman is one whose independent personality and freedom are respected by the society, whose personality has an independent status in the society (Ibid p. 239-40).

This is not needed to be reminded here that the whole concern of feminist discourse today is essentially to establish the independent personality and freedom of womanhood. All the questions regarding her political, economic, socio-cultural and sex rights are varied dimensions of the questions of independent womanhood. Agyeya, thus, extends his concept of freedom and establishes the same as the foundational value for all sociological discourses.

No real freedom or equality is possible to be realized without economic equality. Generally, economic freedom and economic equality are taken as antonyms. Economic equality is highly emphasized by socialist or Marxist mode of thought. Agyeya, generally but mistakenly, is considered as anti-Marxist and therefore, a supporter of private property and capitalism – though he expressly declares that the psyche of a socialist citizen is healthier than that of an American one. Agyeya's opposition to communist regimes is mainly due to its totalitarian and suppressing forms and attitudes. He never disfavours the concept of economic equality. He does not accept Marxism as a philosophy of life, but with no hesitation accepts it as a useful way of studying history and economics because it has contributed in understanding the economics of society and has also suggested useful ways to remedy the ills and change it (*Atmaparak*; p.188).

This also is required to be noted here that an essential constituent of Agyeya's concept of culture is its attitude and relationship with the concept of labour. A culture which accepts labour only as a burden or compulsion is, according to Agyeya, actually following a suicidal path. He mentions thinkers like Gandhi and Schumacher for whom labour is not only an economic but cultural or spiritual activity as well. Respect for labour really connects a negation of that technology which is at the base of capitalistic exploitation and totalitarian politics which means that it stands against both freedom and equality. Marxist ideology also accepts technology – means and tools of production – as the real base of production system upon which the social superstructure is built. It means that we shall have to invent and adopt a technology which is owned and controlled by labourer himself so that his labour cannot be exploited. Agyeya, expressing his agreement with Schumacher, talks of the scale of technology and labour as a source of pleasure and self-

satisfaction and would like to see a technology that is conducive to economic decentralization and non-exploitation. That would be the economic foundation of both freedom and equality.

Agyeya's concepts of culture and spirituality are generally misunderstood. Culture is essentially a process of realization of values and the base of all values, to Agyeya, is freedom. Culture, therefore, needs to be interpreted as a process of realization of freedom in its multiple dimensions. Agyeya agrees to the idea of biological evolution which means that he accepts matter as the basis of the evolution of life and consciousness. Freedom, to him, is a value created in the case with sociality. Darwin also accepts this in his 'Descent of Man' that questions of ethics and sociality emerge only when life is transformed as human species. In the process of evolution, of consciousness man enters, according to Agyeya, into a metaphysical dimension which means that, although made of physical factors, man also exists in a metaphysical, spiritual world also (*Kendra Aur Paridhi*; p.159). This concept of spirituality is expressly different from its prevalent concept. Here, spirituality means realization of the values which have been created by man himself. This spirituality is the basis of freedom and culture. When Agyeya mentions the terms like *Dharma* or *Dharmadanda*, he does not forget that these concepts or values are created by mankind and being manmade, these are not static but dynamic or rather source of dynamics because its base is human consciousness which is always dynamically evolving by assimilating them in itself. That is *Sanatana* – always evolving – and anything which is static, cannot be *Sanatana*. Agyeya, therefore, makes proposal for a 'human-centred spirituality', which by some people can be termed as a kind of atheistic spirituality.

Agyeya, in his discourse of culture, gives central importance to the concept of Cyclic Time, because the linear concept of Time makes man a prisoner of history. The cyclic concept of Time liberates man from the chains of history. Agreeing with M. N. Roy, when Agyeya accepts freedom as essence of history, he also supports his thesis on the basis of latest scientific research. It is remarkable that while the theory of evolution has been utilized in making man a prisoner of linear Time and historicism, Roy utilizes the same to establish the validity of human freedom and creativity as essence of history and Agyeya discovers the possibility of spirituality or metaphysical in the same process. Roy accepts that the smallest unit of life has a tendency to choose in itself; Agyeya discovers that the purpose of choice is

continuity and evolution – to transcend the frontiers of one domain to enter a greater domain. This may be conceived as an evolutionist interpretation of spirituality. A similar evolutionist concept of spirituality may be present in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, but he first thinks of the descent of consciousness in matter, while Agyeya takes matter as an evolving consciousness.

The experience and realization of freedom, self and its relation to other, mutuality of both and a creative relationship with nature and multiple dimensions of all these can very well be tracked in the creative writings of Agyeya. It, but requires a different approach and study. But this can, on the whole, be said that freedom is the sociality and sociality is freedom and this is the spirituality of Agyeya which is not a mysticism but a human and social spirituality – like that of Mahatma Gandhi.

Romesh Chunder Dutt and Economic Analysis of India Under the British Rule

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Abstract: One of the first Indians to become an ICS officer, Dutt was a prolific writer on a wide range of subjects. Economic History of India (EHI) presents a detailed and meticulous analysis of the characteristic features of the British administration (rule) in India, through its various phases and the consequent economic outcomes for India. Backing his analysis with extensive support from official Parliamentary records and the British authorities themselves, he shows that the Indian economic condition was an inevitable outcome of operation of economic laws subjected to the British policy and its actual implementation. In particular, he rejects any explanations of India's poverty, famines and economic stagnation, based on high population growth, low productivity, or lack of abilities of the Indian producers.

1. Introduction

Romesh Chunder Dutt (1848-1909) is most certainly the pioneer of economic history writing in India. He was one of the very earliest *Indian* civil servants of the British administration in India and had observed the economic condition of India very keenly. In addition, he was also a prolific writer on a variety of subjects – in Bengali as well as in English – which ranged from writing literature to translations of ancient classical works, to writing historical accounts. However, he has been most widely remembered for his two volume work 'Economic History of India,' (EHI) a painstaking and stupendous work spanning a period from 1757 to 1900. In this paper we focus only on his thought and analysis contained in this important work.

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Dutt took early retirement from civil service at the age of 49 and he spent many years in London working on this study, besides his political and advocacy activities. The first volume was published in 1902 and the second volume in 1904.¹ To explore and understand the causes of poverty of the Indian people with the help of economic principles was the driving force that motivated him to undertake this difficult task. No work prior to EHI had embarked upon such an ambitious enterprise. He was also well situated to accomplish this task – complementing his intellectual abilities was his knowledge of and access to the enormous records.

In this introductory part we attempt to present a synoptic view of the main aspects of EHI.

His method was to let the British records and authorities speak for themselves in helping him to establish his hypotheses, summarized later in this section. He reproduced from mostly British Parliamentary papers copiously, so much so that these perhaps occupy more than half of the printed volume of these two volumes of EHI. This was facilitated by the fact that there were extensive records of hearings by Parliamentary (Select) Committees every time the Charter of the East India Company (henceforth, EIC or the Company) was to be renewed.² It must have been a gigantic task to locate, gain access to and sift through such mountain of records, select and reproduce the relevant parts of it in the days when no facilities for reproduction such as photocopying were available.

The two prefaces to these two volumes succinctly summarize his analysis, present the causes of Indian poverty with supporting arguments and summary of evidence and put forth his suggestions for remedying such a state of affairs. Indeed, almost the essence of the whole work can be glimpsed in these two prefaces; so that the main body of the work can be viewed as an elaboration of these claims and presentation of the evidence to establish them. It may be recalled that this method of letting the British authority speak on Indian affairs was later perfected in the works of Gandhian historian Dharampal on Indian science and technology; Indian education system; civil disobedience in eighteenth century India etc.

Dutt puts forth the view that economic principles are equally applicable to all economies and Indian situation is no exception to it. Hence, while we see enunciation of some of these principles, we do not see new economic theorizing or principles being put forward taking the

benefit of this study of Indian society and economy (her peasants, artisans, traders, administration – the characteristic features of their economic life, their desires, and their mutual relationships). This was a possible enterprise (or part thereof), however, he had set before himself a humongous task by itself – unravelling the reasons for and understanding of the prevailing economic conditions of the people as a scientific enquiry based on the *known* economic principles. Based on an application of these principles – citing the English authorities themselves – he convincingly demonstrates that poverty and economic decay was an inevitable outcome of the British policy as in practice over the nearly 150 years under the study.

Among the main beneficial consequences flowing from the British rule, he counts the establishment of peace and benefits of western education, science and technology. Though important, these were not sufficient for ushering in prosperity for Indians.

The causes for the economic condition mainly include the following: The main cause of decline of industry is seen in the commercial policy under the Company rule, continued under direct British rule, which included highly unfair trade policies: unfavourable tariff regimes and quantitatively restrictive trade policies favouring the British goods (imports) and discriminating against Indian goods (exports), exemption from local taxes claimed by the servants of the Company for their private domestic trade, as well as abuse of political power by these Company servants for forced trade (forcing the locals to ‘sell’ below prevailing price and then also forcing others to ‘buy’ such merchandise at exorbitant and much above prevailing prices), as well as outright plunder. This not only put the local producers under grossly unfavourable terms but also drained the treasury of local rulers (Nawabs), the latter resulting in a contraction of the domestic market. These created not only unfavourable trading conditions but also generated uncertainty. These together were destructive of industrial productive capacity of India. He records narrowing of industrial activities as a consequence.

With destruction of Indian industry, what remained as the main source of economic wealth was agriculture on which four-fifths of the population came to depend. But this also became sort of milch cow for the rulers. Land revenue rates increased enormously, accompanied by periodic revisions and uncertainty of future land revenue rates. He found the Ryotwari tenure systems and associated land revenue to be

much harsher compared with the land revenue systems under Permanent Settlement. He points to relative prosperity of farmers under the latter when rates were moderate and their better ability to face adverse crop conditions without these resulting in famines. However, even in Permanent Settlement areas, rates were not always moderate and additional dues were added from time to time. Such high revenue rates regime was combined with economic drain of a very significant part of total revenue (to the extent of nearly a third part) repatriated to Britain. This disrupted circulation back into economy of such large revenue thus adversely affecting the local market.

There was a part of trade (called 'Investment') which was no trade at all. It was essentially a tribute – goods flowed out of India to Britain but nothing flowed back to India in return. Thus, India's public debt was artificially created. This condition was further exacerbated by charging India for the expenses on many wars (Afghan wars, China wars and other wars etc.) which had nothing to do with India as such, and also through ingenious exchange rate mechanisms.

Without using the concepts such as short-term and long-term, Dutt quite clearly points that the British policy and actions have been myopic in terms of their own interests. By strangling the Indian economy, they are also hitting upon their own prosperity, which trade can engender only when the other party in trade remains prosperous. So also is the case for generation of revenue. High revenue rates squeeze the very economic activities that are ultimately source of revenue.

In this context, he talks at length on the issue of expenditure on irrigation works in contrast to that on development and extension of railways, devoting a chapter each in all the three books in volume II of his work. He unequivocally wants the focus to be on development of irrigation and considers spending on railways as not only wasteful, but also counterproductive.

One of the basic problems underlined by Dutt is the non-involvement of Indians in the administration. This resulted in non-representation of Indian interests in any policy debates concerning India as well as in implementation of policy, and the administration on the ground. Quite clearly, British interests dominated in formulation and implementation of the policy. For example, land revenue was not only high on the paper; actual realization was often even higher than the legislated or settled revenue.

His suggested solution of the problem, as it existed at the time of his writing of EHI, is captured by him in the two words – retrenchment

and representation: retrenchment of undue charges on the people, e.g. lowering of various kinds of taxes; and representation of Indians in councils, judiciary and administration. The theme of "peace, retrenchment and reform" recurs in this work time and again. For example, after the decimation of Indian industry in early Company rule followed by unfavourable land revenue regimes, he approvingly calls the period 1817-1837 as a period of peace, retrenchment and reform.

It may be relevant to briefly discuss the attitude that Dutt exhibits towards the British rule and the British people as such concerning the Indian question. Even though he demonstrates the devastating effect that the British rule had had on the Indian economy, he believed in the great possibility of economic prosperity, if only the corrective steps were taken. He takes upon himself the task of presenting to the British rulers these evils and convincing them of need for change.

Detailing how he places himself in the context of this task, he says, '[F]or one who has himself spent the best and happiest years of his life in the work of Indian administration, it is an ungracious and a painful task to dwell on the weak side of that administration, the financial and economic policy of the Indian Government. I have undertaken this duty because at the present moment the economic story of British India has to be told, and the deep-seated cause of the poverty of the Indian people has to be explained. Place any other country under the same condition, with crippled industries, with agriculture subject to a heavy and uncertain Land Tax, and with financial arrangements requiring one-half of its revenues to be annually remitted out of the country, and the most prosperous nation on earth will soon know the horrors of famine.' (vol. I, pp.xv-xvi). He takes up this task because, '[T]he Members of the Council are able, wise, experienced, and conscientious men; but the wisest judges will fail to decide cases rightly if they hear the evidence of one party only. And the Indian Government, with every honest desire to do its duty, is unable to secure the material welfare of the people, because it is not in touch with the people, does not accept the co-operation of the people, cannot by its constitution act in the interests of the people.' (vol.I, p.xviii). And someone must tell these wise people the causes and consequences of these problems!

He presents his case to the British suggesting that, '[I]n India, the people honestly desire a longer connection with Great Britain, not through sentimental loyalty, but, ... through a sense of self-interest. ...

they honestly desire that rule to last. But they do not desire the administration to last in its present absolute and exclusive form.’ (vol.I, pp.xix-xx); and that, ‘[T]he people of India are not fond of sudden changes and revolutions. They do not ask for new constitutions, ... They prefer to work on lines which have already been laid down. ... They desire to see some Indian members ... representing Indian agriculture and industries. ... They seek that the administration of the Empire and its great provinces should be conducted with the co-operation of the people.’ (vol.I, pp.xx-xxi).

As elucidated in the next section, he believed in many good aspects of the British rule in India, such as peace, and western education and institutions. But then he also recognized the downside of that rule as seen in the resulting appalling poverty, frequently recurring famines and contraction of productive capacities. (see Vol. I, pp.vii-viii).

Thus, he embarks upon the task of diagnosis and solution of the Indian economic problem.

2. The basic premise – questions posed

The basic motivation that moved Dutt to devote nearly five years in this enterprise is best described in his own words in the very opening of the Preface to the first volume, (pp.vii-viii). Thus, he begins, ‘EXCELLENT works on the military and political transactions of the British in India have been written by eminent historians. No history of the people of India, of their trades, industries, and agriculture, and of their economic condition under British administration, has yet been compiled. Recent famines in India have attracted attention to this very important subject, and there is a general and widespread desire to understand the condition of the Indian people – the sources of their wealth and the causes of their poverty. A brief Economic History of British India is therefore needed at the present time.

‘Englishmen ... have conferred on the people of India what is the greatest human blessing – Peace. They have introduced Western Education, bringing an ancient and civilised nation in touch with modern thought, modern sciences, modern institutions and life. They have built up an Administration which, though it *requires reform with the progress of the times*, is yet strong and efficacious. They have framed wise laws, and have established Courts of Justice, the purity of which is as absolute as in any country on the face of the earth.’ (Emphasis added).

Having recounted these benefits brought by the British rule, he continues, then, to point to the serious flaws that must also be admitted, as these resulted in great degradation in the economic condition of the Indian people. Thus, ‘The poverty of the Indian population at the present day is unparalleled in any civilised country; the famines which have desolated India within the last quarter of the nineteenth century are unexampled in their extent and intensity in the history of ancient or modern times. By a moderate calculation, the famines of 1877 and 1878, of 1889 and 1892, of 1897 and 1900, have carried off fifteen millions of people.’

He continues this connection of famines and poverty even a couple of years later in the Preface of the second volume (p.vi), ‘For the famines, though terrible in their death-toll, are only an indication of a greater evil – *the permanent poverty of the Indian population in ordinary years*. The food supply of India, as a whole, has never failed. Enough food was grown in India, even in 1897 and 1900, to feed the entire population. But the people are so resourceless, so absolutely without any savings, that when crops fail within any one area, they are unable to buy food from neighbouring provinces rich in harvests. The failure of rains destroys crops in particular areas; it is the poverty of the people which brings on severe famines.’³

Dutt provides an illustration of famine being caused not by crop failures alone but by chronic poverty to begin with from his personal experience as a civil administrator. He recalls the calamity visiting farmers of Eastern Bengal in the form of cyclone and storm wave destroying large tracts with crops and homes in 1876, when he was a young officer. However, the farmers had resilience to ride out this calamity from their own savings without any outside help, as the peasants paid light rents permitting prosperity in ordinary times. However, with higher rents in Western Bengal, it faced severe famines under similar circumstances. (vol. II, pp.vi-vii).

It is, thus, not the famines as such or the natural calamities, but the problem of the sources and causes of such poverty that needs an examination. He suggests that the explanations that had been offered were inadequate and superficial. Thus, there was a need for deeper examination of causes and consequences of poverty of Indian people. He poses the problem and rejects the explanations offered thus: (see Vol.I, pp.viii-x, emphasis added) ‘What are the causes of this intense poverty and these repeated famines in India? Superficial explanations

have been offered one after another, and have been rejected on close examination. It was said that the population increased rapidly in India and that such increase must necessarily lead to famines; it is found on inquiry that the population has never increased in India at the rate of England, and that during the last ten years it has altogether ceased to increase. It was said that the Indian cultivators were careless and improvident, and that those who did not know how to save when there was plenty, must perish when there was want; but it is known to men who have lived all their lives among these cultivators, that there is not a more abstemious, a more thrifty, a more frugal race of peasantry on earth. It was said that the Indian money-lender was the bane of India, and by his fraud and extortion kept the tillers of the soil in a chronic state of indebtedness; but the inquiries of the latest Famine Commission have revealed that *the cultivators of India are forced under the thralldom of money-lenders by the rigidity of the Government revenue demand.* It was said that in a country where the people depended almost entirely on their crops, they must starve when the crops failed in years of drought; but the crops in India, as a whole, have never failed, there has never been a single year when the food supply of the country was insufficient for the people, and there must be something wrong, when failure in a single province brings on a famine, and the people are unable to buy their supplies from neighbouring provinces rich in harvests.'

'Deep down under all these superficial explanations we must seek for the true causes of Indian poverty and Indian famines.' To seek a true understanding, it is necessary to apply economic laws, since, '[T]he economic laws which operate in India are the same as in other countries of the world; the causes which lead to wealth among other nations lead to prosperity in India; the causes which impoverish other nations impoverish the people of India.' Thus, he goes on to pose the questions which must be addressed to develop such an understanding, namely,

'Does agriculture flourish? Are industries and manufactures in a prosperous condition? Are the finances properly administered, so as to bring back to the people an adequate return for the taxes paid by them? Are the sources of national wealth widened by a Government anxious for the material welfare of the people?'

Providing a glimpse into the detailed answer to be delineated in the main body of these volumes, he goes on to summarize, '... in many

ways, the sources of national wealth in India have been narrowed under British rule. *India in the eighteenth century was a great manufacturing as well as a great agricultural country, and the products of the Indian loom supplied the markets of Asia and of Europe.* ... the East Indian Company and the British Parliament, following the selfish commercial policy of a hundred years ago, *discouraged Indian manufacturers in the early years of British rule in order to encourage the rising manufactures of England.* Their fixed policy, ... was to make *India subservient to the industries of Great Britain, and to make the Indian people grow raw produce only,* in order to supply material for the looms and manufactories of Great Britain. This policy was *pursued with unwavering resolution and with fatal success;* orders were sent out, to force Indian artisans to work in the Company's factories; commercial residents were legally vested with extensive powers over villages and communities of Indian weavers; prohibitive tariffs excluded Indian silk and cotton goods from England; English goods were admitted into India free of duty or on payment of a nominal duty.' (Emphasis added). Further, Dutt cites H. H. Wilson on the strangling of Indian competition by the British manufacturer by use of political muscle. (vol.I, p.x)

The book is thus devoted to examination of how India *became* poor. The questions to be examined to this end require studying the state of various economic activities – industry, trade, agriculture, public finance, institutions, the nature of political set-up etc. This is also a story of degradation of industry, diminution of market, agriculturization of Indian economy and at the same time squeeze of Indian agriculture itself and imposition of burden of external wars with other countries on the Indian people. These questions are examined in subsequent parts.

3. The economic principles

As mentioned above, Dutt requires that it is necessary to apply principles of economics for developing a proper understanding. He emphasizes that, '[E]conomic laws are the same in Asia as in Europe. If India is poor to-day, it is through the operation of economic causes. If India were prosperous under these circumstances [that have confronted India], *it would be an economic miracle. Science knows no miracles. Economic laws are constant and unvarying in their operation.*' (Emphasis added. Vol.II, p.xvi).

Dutt did not endeavour to propound new principles in economics, in the light of his understanding of Indian people and economy. Nor did he explicitly state all these economic laws that must be applied for the analysis of Indian historical experience under the British rule (through its various phases from the Company rule to India under British Empress). *However, from a reading of his work, the underlying economic principles can be easily inferred.* The economic principles indicating prosperity and wealth generation in society include the following: establishing peace and orderly conduct in society; stability of policy regimes – in particular certain and dependable tax (land revenue, commodity taxes etc.) rates, and moderate tax rates, and concomitantly, the state must leave sufficient surplus in the hands (pockets) of the producers allowing accumulation of capital; non-interference in wealth generation and capital accumulation activities of the producers; facilitating expansion of the market; and undertaking of public works/infrastructure for enhancing productive capacity (such as irrigation works). Interestingly, Dutt does not seem to regard creation of goods distribution channels such as railways as enhancement of productive infrastructure! In addition, he also invokes the principle of representation in decision making (policy making and implementation) of those people themselves whose economic interest is involved in those decisions.

He shows through painstaking recounting from the official records how almost each of these principles has been violated in making and application of the British policy in India. Of course there were periods when some reforms incorporated some of these principles. The authorities standing by and advocating those principles have been cited by Dutt throughout his work.⁴

4. The Company rule and economic consequences

The early part of Volume One describes the political developments briefly starting from 1757 with establishment of the first foothold of a form of British rule in Bengal. Thus, the first few chapters of this volume are devoted to the economic conditions and changes therein in the case of Bengal. It is a story not only of asymmetric tax laws and unfavourable tariffs, but also of loot, arbitrariness, corruption and disruption of economy. Some illustrations are provided hereunder.

We find it stated that, '[T]he Nawab of Bengal continued to make just but futile complaints to the English Governor.

“In every Perganah, every village, and every factory, they [the Company’s Gomastahs] buy and sell salt, betel-nut, ghee, rice, straw, bamboos, fish, gunnies, ginger, sugar, tobacco, opium, and many other things, ... *They forcibly take away the goods and commodities of the Reiat, merchants, &c., for a fourth part of their value; and by ways of violence and oppressions they oblige the Reiat, & c., to give five rupees for goods which are worth but one rupee ...*” [Fn. Nawab’s Letter, written May 1762.]’ (vol.I, p.23)⁵

Describing how the artisans were forced to work as per dictates of the Company’s persons, we find, “... Weavers, also, upon their inability to perform such agreements as have been forced upon them by the Company’s agents, ... have had their goods seized and sold on the spot to make good the deficiency; and the winders of raw silk, called Nagoads, have been treated also with such injustice, that instances have been known of their cutting off their thumbs to prevent their being forced to wind silk.” [Fn. *Considerations on India Affairs* (London, 1772), p. 191 to 194.]’ (vol.I, pp.26-27). Added to this there was widespread corruption eating into the Indian economy. Interestingly, Dutt cites Robert Clive on the problem of corruption that he describes upon his last stint in India beginning 1765. (vol.I, pp.35-36).

These few illustrations drawn from early British rule in Bengal remain true of the nature of British policy in the subsequent periods as well as throughout India. This policy did not completely stop with change in the regime from the Company rule to the rule of India under the British Crown. Talking of the entire period of about one hundred and fifty years, Dutt says, ‘During a century and a half the commercial policy of the British rulers of India has been determined, not by the interests of Indian manufacturers, but by those of British manufacturers. The vast quantities of manufactured goods which were exported from India by the Portuguese and the Dutch, by Arab and British merchants, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, have disappeared.’ (vol.II, p.ix)

5. Decline of industry

The economic consequences of the British rule very early started to reflect in decline of industry in India and concomitant greater dependence of the people on agriculture. The decline of Indian industry was not just the result of unfavourable fiscal policy. We will see that this was a result of deliberate design. Indeed, this killing of competition

seems to have been critical for ‘flowering’ of the industrial revolution in England. In spite of facing power of steam, from the foreign competition, Indian textiles out-competed the British goods. Asymmetric levies and restrictive actions were necessary to thwart the Indian competition to British industry.

In a short-term view, the results were quite favourable from *their point of view*, though ruinous for Indian industry.⁶ Dutt cites letters, and reports of Select Committee of Parliament to show that there was a deliberate and conscious policy destructive of Indian industry to serve interests of British manufacture. (vol.I, p.45).

The tributary nature of some part of trade was also already recognized, “It will hardly be asserted that any country, however opulent, could long maintain itself, much less flourish, when it received no material supplies, and when a balance against it, of above one-third of its whole yearly value, was yearly incurred. But besides this, there are other concomitant circumstances, which have contributed to diminish the riches of the country and must, if not remedied, soon exhaust them.” [Fn.: Letter, dated 5th April 1769, Governor Harry Verelst].

“A certain portion of the revenues of Bengal has been, for many years, set apart in the purchase of goods for exportation to England, and this is called the Investment. ... and this main cause of the impoverishment of India has been generally taken as a measure of its wealth and prosperity. Numerous fleets of large ships, loaded with the most valuable commodities of the East, annually arriving in England in a constant and increasing succession, [apparently indicated opulence of India]. This export from India seemed to imply also a reciprocal supply, by which the trading capital employed in those productions was continually strengthened and enlarged. But the payment of a tribute, and not a beneficial commerce, to that country, wore this specious and delusive appearance.” [Fn. Ninth Report, 1783, p. 54.]’ (vol.I, pp.47-48)

Soon the adverse effects on Indian textile industry were manifest. From being competitive on the world scale, these were in death throes, ‘In going over this list of the principal trades and professions of India, a hundred years ago, one sees how greatly these sources of income have been narrowed within this period. Weaving and spinning are practically dead, as most of the thread and cloth used by the people are supplied by Lancashire. Paper manufacture has also declined; skins are now sent to Europe for all the better kinds of leather work, the dyes of the country have been replaced by aniline dyes.’ (vol.I, pp.236-7).

Finally we go back to the perceptive voice described by Dutt as, ‘[S]till more emphatic is the impartial verdict of H. H. Wilson, historian of India. “It is also a melancholy instance of the wrong done to India by the country on which she has become dependent. It was stated in evidence [in 1813] that the cotton and silk goods of India up to the period could be sold for a profit in the British market at a price from 50 to 60 per cent lower than those fabricated in England. It consequently became necessary to protect the latter by duties of 70 and 80 per cent on their value or by positive prohibition. *Had this not been the case, had not such prohibitory duties and decrees existed, the mills of Paisley and Manchester would have been stopped in their outset, and could scarcely have been again set in motion, even by the power of steam. They were created by the sacrifice of the Indian manufacture.* Had India been independent, she would have retaliated, would have imposed prohibitive duties upon British goods, and would thus have preserved her own productive industry from annihilation. This act of self-defence was not permitted her; she was at the mercy of the stranger. British goods were forced upon her without paying any duty, and *the foreign manufacturer employed the arm of political injustice to keep down and ultimately strangle a competitor with whom he could not have contended on equal terms.*” (Fn. Mill’s History of British India, Wilson’s continuation, Book I., chapter viii., note.)’ (vol.I, pp.262-3, emphasis added).

6. The problem of agriculture

With rapid decline of industry, the agriculture became the mainstay of income generation for the people. However, it was not that agriculture was left alone. With decline of industry, agriculture – or rather land – became the main source of revenue. Hence, ‘... the Land Tax levied by the British Government is not only excessive, but, what is worse, it is fluctuating and uncertain in many provinces. In England, the Land Tax was between one shilling and four shillings in the pound, i.e., between 5 and 20 per cent of the rental, during a hundred years before 1798, when it was made perpetual and redeemable by William Pitt. In Bengal the Land Tax was fixed at over 90 per cent of the rental, and in Northern India at over 80 per cent of the rental, between 1793 and 1822.’ Dutt says that the British were not the only rulers to levy high land tax. ‘It is true that the British Government only followed the precedent of the previous Mahomedan rulers, who also claimed an enormous Land Tax.

But the difference was this, that what the Mahomedan rulers claimed they could never fully realise; what the British rulers claimed they realised with rigour... “No Native Prince demands the rent which we do,” wrote Bishop Heber in 1826, after travelling all through India, and visiting British and Native States. “A Land Tax like that which now exists in India,” wrote Colonel Briggs in 1830, “professing to absorb the whole of the landlord’s rent, was never known under any Government in Europe or Asia.” (Emphasis added, vol.I, pp.xi-xii).

The land tenure system varied from province to province, so did the extent of land revenue levied. Actual revenue realized was often so excessive as to not only eat up the entire rental value but often also profits. (see vol.I, pp.xii-xiii and also see Sir Louis Mallet’s Minute of Feb 3, 1875, vol.II, p.322). Irrespective of the kind of land tenure system ushered in different parts of India, the rates were excessive. Only the degree of excessiveness might vary from zamindari to ryotwari to mahalwari systems. Unlike secure zamindaris of the past, the British rule also introduced auctioning of zamindaris, thus making collection of revenue by the zamindars themselves less flexible and more oppressive. Another change was introduction of the system of payment of rents in cash. This would have its own far reaching consequences. (vol.I, p.234).

7. Railways and Irrigation: The attitude of the state under the British rule

With great mass (four fifths) of Indian people coming to depend on agriculture, actions for improvement of agriculture acquire critical importance. In view of this, Dutt lays great emphasis on the irrigation works. He is highly skeptical of investment in railways, which he finds excessive.

He begins the first of these three chapters on Railways and Irrigation (vol.II, p.166), as follows: ‘GREAT irrigation canals, constructed by Mahomedan rulers in Northern India, had fallen into disrepair during the wars of the eighteenth century.’ Dutt, after recounting those earlier irrigation works, favourably talks of restoration of Jumna canal works and taking up of huge Ganges Canal network, which, ‘in the words of the Lieutenant- Governor of the North-Western Provinces, “presents a system of irrigation unequalled in vastness throughout the world; ... render the work eminently one of national distinction and honour.” (vol.II, p.168).

Such efforts could be one of the reasons that Dutt continued to believe that, when presented with reason, the British rule could work for the benefit of Indian people. However, he is dismayed by emphasis on Railways as opposed to devoted work on irrigation infrastructure. Thus, ‘It might naturally be expected that, under these circumstances, the Government of an agricultural country like India would be more partial to irrigation works than to railways. But Englishmen ... more familiar with railroads than with canals ... made the mistake of judging the needs of India accordingly. British manufacturers, too, thought that railways would more quickly open up the interior of India to their commodities than canals; and the [British] administration ... was subjected to a continuous Parliamentary pressure to extend and multiply railway lines in India. *There was no counter pressure from the people of India, who had no votes and no representatives in the Executive Government; and irrigation works were thus treated with comparative neglect, while railways were multiplied beyond the urgent needs or the resources of the country.*’ (vol.II, p.174, emphasis added).

Expansion of railways was seen by Dutt to be at an expense to the Indian society. He finds that, ‘The loss to the people of India increased, as the railway lines were extended, from year to year.’ (vol.II, p.177). Even when the railway could help in taking grains from one province to another, it was seen as an inferior benefit compared to direct and greater benefit flowing from irrigation. Thus, ‘Railways helped the distribution of food supply in times of famine, but did not add to that supply. It was irrigation works which added to production and secured crops in years of drought. Hindu and Mahomedan rulers had therefore paid the greatest attention to irrigation works ... [which] still attest to the foresight and prudence of the ancient rulers.’ (vol.II, p.361).

8. Public finance, public debt of India and the economic drain

There is good analysis of the finances of the British government of India and the problem of mounting public debt of India. This is also connected to the problem of economic drain from India. More than high tax rates, it is this drain that is seen as an even more serious problem, since the wealth goes out of circulation of Indian economy. He goes poetic on this subject, in order to enunciate the principle: ‘Taxation raised by a king, says the Indian poet, is like the moisture of the earth

sucked up by the sun, to be returned to the earth as fertilising rain; but the moisture raised from the Indian soil now descends as fertilising rain largely on other lands, not on India.' (vol.I, pp.xiii-xiv). Then he goes on to contrast the earlier rulers with British thus, 'Under wise rulers as under foolish kings, the proceeds of taxation flowed back to the people and fructified their trade and industries.' (vol.I, p.xiv). By contrast, he finds that, 'One-half of the net revenues of India, which are now forty four millions sterling, flows annually out of India. *Verily the moisture of India blesses and fertilizes other lands.*' (Emphasis added, vol.I, p.xv].

A little later, Dutt explains how this happens in the case of India, 'If we turn ... to the financial arrangements of India, the same melancholy picture is presented to us ... during the last ten years of the Queen's reign – 1891-92 to 1900-1.... One-fourth ... of all the revenues derived in India, is annually remitted to England as Home Charges. ... Those who earn £42 per head ask for 10s. per head from a nation earning £2 per head. ... The contribution does not benefit British commerce and trade, while it drains the life-blood of India in a continuous, ceaseless flow.' (vol.II, pp.xiii-xiv). The economic drain from India to Britain started soon after the Company rule got established in Bengal. (vol.I, p.39).

On the problem of Indian debt, Dutt points that this has been an imposition without any basis. He says: 'A very popular error prevails in this country that the whole Indian Debt represents British capital sunk in the development of India. It is shown in the body of this volume that this is not the genesis of the Public Debt of India. When the East India Company ceased to be rulers of India in 1858, they had piled up an Indian Debt of 70 millions. *They had in the meantime drawn a tribute from India, financially an unjust tribute, exceeding 150 millions, not calculating interest.* They had also charged India with the cost of Afghan wars, Chinese wars, and other wars outside India. Equitably, therefore, India owed nothing at the close of the Company's rule; *her Public Debt was a myth*; there was a considerable balance of over 100 millions in her favour out of the money that had been drawn from her.' Dutt goes on to recount how the public debt of India kept increasing on account of cost of the mutiny wars and other wars (such as Abyssinian war, Afghan wars etc.) waged by the British. (vol.II, pp.xv-xvi).

Some interesting details of the revenue and expenditure accounts for the first period (1837-1858) and the last period (1878 to 1902) of the

Volume Two of EHI are provided in two tables (p.212 and p. 595 respectively). These also present land revenue as part of total revenue on the one hand, and home charges as part of total expenditure on the other hand. These tables are useful to find a *lower* estimate of complete economic drain from India. A few salient points that emerge from a study of these tables include:

One, there was a surplus in the beginning of the period 1837-58, which soon turned into deficit due to wrong and aggressive fiscal policies and partly due to various wars. Two, the Home Charges (expenditure in England) shows steady increase over this period. Three, at least half of the gross revenue comes from land revenue. (see vol.II, pp.212-14). Similar observation apply to the Table pertaining to the later period (1878-1902), except that the Home Charges increased to no less than one-fourth of the gross expenditure. Thus, total drain out of India would have been still higher, when the remittances by the British employees to home country are added. Further, interestingly, it is to be noted that the proportionate contribution of land revenue to the total revenue had significantly reduced – it contributed only about one-fourth of gross revenue in this latter period. Quite clearly, with stagnant economic conditions, revenue realizations are also bound to suffer in the long run.

9. Pre-British India

There are many useful insights into the state of pre-British Indian economic conditions interspersed in these two volumes. It is important to realize that some of these might refer to continuity from time immemorial, but many of these refer to the period immediately preceding the British rule. Some times this period is seen as stagnant in popular imagination. Hence, it is instructive to note that economic conditions in India were of significantly high order in this period. Mostly testimonies of British authorities are relied upon for this state of affairs. Some of these descriptions follow hereunder: 'In each Indian District again there is a District Board, and Village Unions are being formed. These Unions are the modern counterparts of those ancient Village Communities ... which were self-governing little republics all over India under Hindu and Mahomedan Governments. ... [Such] Village Unions and their members would form a link between the people and the rulers, which does not at present exist.' (vol.I, pp.xxi-xxii).

“George Smith, Esquire, attending according to order, was asked how long he resided in India, where, and in what capacity? He said he arrived in India in the year 1764; he resided in Madras from 1767 to October 1779. Being asked what was the state of trade at Madras at the time when he first knew it, he said it was in a flourishing condition, and Madras one of the first marts in India. Being asked in what condition did he leave it with respect to trade, he replied at the time of his leaving it, there was little or no trade, and but one ship belonging to the place. Being asked in what state the interior country of the Karnatic was with regard to commerce and cultivation when he first knew it, he said at that period he understood the Karnatic to be in a well-cultivated and populous condition, and as such consuming a great many articles of merchandise and trade. Being asked in what condition it was when he left Madras with respect to cultivation, population, and internal commerce, he said in respect to cultivation, greatly on the decline, and also in respect of population; and as to commerce, exceedingly circumscribed.” [Fn.: Ninth Report, 1783, Appendix p. 120.]’ (vol.I, p.100).

‘Both in the Zemindari territories and in the Haveli territories there existed from time immemorial the Village Community system, a simple form of self-government which protected the cultivators of every village from the oppression of the Zemindars and the Government. This ancient institution – ancient in the days of Manu – had survived the wreck of dynasties and the downfall of empires, had secured peace and order in villages in times of war, and struck the servants of the East India Company in the eighteenth century as a unique and excellent institution.’ Then, it goes on to describe in some detail scores of village functionaries and their duties, and then suggests that the internal economy of this village system has remained unchanged over a long time. (see vol.I, pp.117-20). On the nature of Indian society, its people and civilization, Dutt goes on to cite the following interesting extract from testimony of Thomas Munro, which speaks for itself:

‘Munro said ... that there was no probability of extending the sale of British woollen goods, because the people used coarse woollen of their own manufacture; and that they were excellent manufacturers, and were likely to imitate English goods. Asked if Hindu women were not slaves to their husbands, Munro replied, “They have as much influence in their families as, I imagine, the women have in this country” [England]. And asked if the civilisation of the Hindus could not be improved by

the establishment of an open trade, he gave that memorable answer which has often been quoted and will bear repetition: “I do not understand what is meant by the civilisation of the Hindus; in the higher branches of science, in the knowledge of the theory and practice of good government, and in education which, by banishing prejudice and superstition, opens the mind to receive instruction of every kind from every quarter, they are much inferior to Europeans. But if a good system of agriculture, unrivalled manufacturing skill, a capacity to produce whatever can contribute to convenience or luxury; schools established in every village for teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic; the general practice of hospitality and charity amongst each other; and above all, a treatment of the female sex full of confidence, respect, and delicacy, are among the signs which denote a civilised people, then the Hindus are not inferior to the nations of Europe; and if civilisation is to become an article of trade between the two countries, I am convinced that this country [England] will gain by the import cargo.” (Fn. Minutes of Evidence, &c., on the Affairs of the East India Company (1813), pp. 124, 127, 131.)’ (vol.I, pp.259-60).

On Indian agriculture, we have the following famous testimony: ‘Asked if the Indian husbandry was susceptible of any great improvement, Dr. Wallick replied: “Certainly, but not to so great an extent as is generally imagined; for instance, the rice cultivation. I should think, if we were to live for another thousand years, we should hardly see any improvement in that branch of cultivation.” [Fn.1. Evidence before the Commons’ Committee, 1832, vol. ii., Part I., p. 195. This is the opinion of all experts down to the present day. In 1889 Dr. Voelcker, Consulting Chemist to the Royal Agricultural Society of England, was deputed to India to make inquiries and suggest improvements, in respect of Indian agriculture. And he wrote: “On one point there can be no question, viz. that the ideas generally entertained in England, and often given expression to even in India, that Indian agriculture is, as a whole, primitive and backward, and that little has been done to try and remedy it, are altogether erroneous. . . . At his best the Indian Ryot, or cultivator, is quite as good as, and in some respects the superior of, the average British farmer; whilst at his worst, it can only be said that this state is brought about largely by an absence of facilities for improvement which is probably unequalled in any other country, and that the Ryot will struggle on patiently and uncomplainingly in the face of difficulties in a way that no one else would.

“Nor need our British farmers be surprised at what I say, for it must be remembered that the natives of India were cultivators of wheat centuries before we in England were. It is not likely, therefore, that their practice should be capable of much improvement. What does, however, prevent them from growing larger crops is the limited facilities to which they have access, such as the supply of water and manure. But, to take the ordinary acts of husbandry, nowhere would one find better instances of keeping land scrupulously clean from weeds, of ingenuity in device of water-raising appliances, of knowledge of soils and their capabilities, as well as the exact time to sow and to reap, as one would in Indian agriculture, and this not at its best alone, but at its ordinary level. It is wonderful, too, how much is known of rotation, the system of mixed crops and of fallowing. Certain it is that I, at least, have never seen a more perfect picture of careful cultivation, combined with hard labour, perseverance, and fertility of resource, than I have seen in many of the halting-places in my tour.” – *Report on the Improvement of Indian Agriculture.* (vol.I, pp.277-278).

10. The remedy

After analysis of the economic condition of India and its causes, Dutt goes on to offer his suggestions based on application of economic principles that he talked about earlier. These are reiteration of those principles themselves for the large part. These include moderate taxation, certainty of taxation, removal or drastic reduction of civil and military charges not connected with India etc. and importantly, representation of Indians on councils and in administration.

“The evils suggest their own remedies. The Excise tax on Indian mill industry should be withdrawn; the Indian Government should boldly help Indian industries, for the good of the Indian people, as every civilized Government on earth helps the industries of its own country. All taxes on the soil in addition to the Land Revenue should be repealed; and the Land Revenue should be moderated and regulated in its operation. The Public Debt, unjustly created in the first instance, is now an accomplished fact: but an Imperial Guarantee would reduce the rate of interest; and a Sinking Fund would gradually reduce its volume. Civil and Military Charges, incurred in England, should be borne, or at least shared, by Great Britain, as she shares them in the case of her Colonies. Civil charges in India should be reduced by a larger employment of Indians; military charges in India should be

repressed with a strong hand; and India should pay for an army needed for her own requirements. All further extension of railways from State-Loans, or under guarantee of interest from the taxes, should be prohibited. Irrigation works should be extended, as far as possible, from the ordinary revenues. The annual Economic Drain from India should be steadily reduced; and in carrying out these fiscal reforms, representatives of the people of India, -of the taxpayers who are alone interested in Retrenchment in all countries, – should be called upon to take their share, and offer their assistance.’ Citing Mill (see footnote 5) he goes on, ‘This statement [about representative government] contains a deep truth. Large masses of men are not ordinarily impelled by a consideration of other peoples’ interests. The British voter is as fair-minded as the voter in any other country on earth, but he would not be a British voter, and he would not be human, if he did not ordinarily mind his own interests and secure his own profits. Parliament carries out the mandates of voters; ...’(vol.II, pp.xvi-viii).

These suggestions are elaborated towards the end of the Second Volume. He summarizes his suggestion in just two words, namely, retrenchment and representation. Saying that, ‘[i]t is the form and method of an absolute government – not in touch with the people, and not able to secure their well-being – which is responsible for the failure of the administration in its highest wish and object,’ he goes on to elaborate on what retrenchment and representation entail. (vol.II, pp.61-14). Retrenchment entails a reduction in the imposts on land; repeal of excise duty on Indian mill industry; only moderate duties to be retained. Further, ‘[t]he Government of India should cease to act under mandates from Manchester.’

‘Above all, the national expenditure of India should be retrenched. The military expenditure should be limited to India’s requirements; ... The Indian debt should be steadily reduced, The higher services of India should be opened more freely to qualified Indians, and should not be kept as a preserve for English boys seeking a career in the East. And the Home Charges should be steadily reduced.’ He goes on to implore the British that, ‘[f]inancial justice to India would help British manufacture, firstly and directly by creating a vastly larger market for British goods among a prosperous Indian population, and secondly and indirectly, by arresting that influx of gold without a commercial return which enervates and corrupts her industrial capacity.’

The second remedy, namely representation, it should be at every level. He goes on to suggest that, ‘[s]ome representation of the people,

i.e. of the taxpayers, in the Council would strengthen the administration, and make it better informed and better able to promote the welfare of the people. And the Secretary of State in London would benefit by the advice and information which qualified Indians, admitted to his Council, could give him on grave matters of administration. For forty-five years Secretaries of State have ruled India without hearing the voice or the opinion of an Indian member in his Council Chamber at Whitehall. Such exclusive and distrustful administration is unpopular as it is unsuccessful. ... For the present constitution of the Indian Government is not in touch with the lives of the people, does not protect the interests of the people, and has not secured the material well-being of the people.’ (vol.II, pp.614-15).

11. Concluding comments

We make no attempt to summarize this important work of a remarkable thinker. The analysis was supported by arguments and evidence of the British authority as well as based on official records. He had hopes for improvements, in spite of the overwhelming evidence of British policy having been not conducive to Indian economic prosperity. He somewhere retained faith in the power of argument. He critiques the British policy as short-sighted and even seems to indicate that India could prosper under the British if they could grasp the diagnosis and the solution presented by him.

And yet, his major contribution in this work was to show the predatory character of the British rule. Hence, in lieu of concluding comments, we leave the reader with the following excerpt as a lasting impression of the nature of the British rule (whether under the Company or under the Empress) in India:

‘Comments on these arrangements are superfluous. The British nation had spent millions of their own money in acquiring dominions in other parts of the world; but in India an empire had been acquired, wars had been waged, and the administration had been carried on, at the cost of the Indian people; the British nation had not contributed a shilling. The trading Company which had acquired this empire had also drawn their dividends and made their profits out of the revenues of the empire for two generations. When they ceased to be traders in 1834, it was provided that the dividends on their stock should continue to be paid out of the taxes imposed on the Indian people. And when, finally, the Company ceased to exist in 1858, their stock was paid off

by loans which were made into an Indian Debt. The empire was thus transferred from the Company to the Crown, but the Indian people paid the purchase-money. *And the Indian people are thus virtually paying dividends to this day, on the stock of an extinct Company, in the shape of interest on Debt!*’ (Emphasis added, vol.I, pp.399-400).

Notes

- ¹ a. The Economic History of India – Under Early British Rule: From the rise of the British power in 1757 to the accession of Queen Victoria in 1837, by ROMESH DUTT, C.I.E., VOLUME I, first published in Great Britain by Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1902; and b. The Economic History of India – In the Victorian Age: From the accession of Queen Victoria in 1837 to the commencement of the twentieth century, ROMESH DUTT, C.I.E., VOLUME II, first published in Great Britain by Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1904. All page references to EHI are from these first editions of the publication.
- ² Indeed, Prof. D. R. Gadgil, in his Introduction to EHI edition published by the Publications Division, Government of India, 1960, suggests that one possible reason for direct assumption British rule by the Queen was to put an end to accumulation of documentary evidence of the various facets of such rule through periodic Parliamentary enquiries. (vol.I, p.xi).
- ³ Emphasis added. Note we see in these observations of Dutt an early indication of what came to be known later as the entitlement approach to understand famines.
- ⁴ See Vol.I, pp.xii-xiii on reasonable taxes and role of state in expansion of economic activities; vol.II, p.142 on need for moderation of land revenue rates and certainty of tenure. On need for representative government, he cites Mill, “The government of a people by itself has a meaning and a reality; but such a thing as government of one people by another does not, and cannot exist. One people may keep another for its own use, a place to make money in, a human cattle-farm to be worked for the profits of its own inhabitants.” (see vol.I, p.xviii).
- ⁵ Here and elsewhere “Fn.” indicates a footnote accompanying the text in the EHI.
- ⁶ In the long-term, of course, it will narrow down the Indian market even for the British goods.

Naoroji: The Patron of Economic and Political Nationalism in India

Vijay Kumar*

Whilst he was alive, we called him, as he was, the Grand Old Man of India. He was the father of Indian nationalism. He was the first to introduce the word 'Swaraj' in Congress parlance and was as ardent advocate of it as Lokmanya himself.

- Mahatma Gandhi

By universal consent, he has been acclaimed as the Father of Indian Politics and Economics.

- Dinshaw Wacha

The grand old man of India, Dadabhai Naoroji (1825-1917) stood as one of the tallest nationalist leaders who aroused the feeling of economic and political nationalism during the early freedom struggle. The chain of personalities which carried India through its modern socio-economic and political crises can be simply outlined as the main line of succession begins with Dadabhai Naoroji and passes to Ranade, Gokhale and Gandhi before India's independence. However, the first figure in this chain, rightly called by Professor Orlebar of Elphinston College, his teacher, as "the Promise of India," Dadabhai Naoroji was neither a Hindu nor a Muslim but a Parsee, a highly progressive group of Indians. Regardless of his cultural background, his appeal to all communities in India was immense.

Naoroji was one of the original founders of the Indian National Congress and for 61 years was continuously active in the political and

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social life of India. When he died at the age of 92 in 1917, his persistent, persevering and patient groundwork for India's self-rule had borne fruit in the creation of no less than 30 social and political institutions in India and in England, seeking welfare and advancement of India. He inspired a series of leaders of such consummate skill and patriotism as has seldom been equaled in the world history. No wonder, speaking at a meeting at Cowasji Jehangir Hall in Bombay, the greatest revolutionary of the world, Mahatma Gandhi said: 'he was a real worshipper of Dadabhai Naoroji, the Dada of India.'

At the same time when the British liberal, Gladstone, was starting his Irish campaign in Parliament, Naoroji began his campaign for India, "educating the British on their responsibilities in India and demonstrating to them by relentless statistics and remorseless logic how India was being bled under the prevailing system of administration." Dadabhai Naoroji stood as one of the tallest nationalist leaders, who aroused the feeling of economic and political nationalism during the early freedom struggle.

It is viewed that in every form of governance, there are few individuals or groups who are likely to benefit more than others. From British period to the present, there are those who derive more profits due to the benevolent nature of the rulers and the leaders. Such sectarian appeasement has although diminished little in the democratic form of governance having more transparency.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak viewed that "A country cannot be said to have economically speaking improved so long as the conditions of the toiling majority in that country have not improved."

Dadabhai Naoroji was among the foremost nationalist leaders who aroused the feeling of economic nationalism. In the introductory remarks of his book *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*, he states that the then British government was destructive and despotic to the Indians and Un-British and suicidal to Britain. While stating this he said that a truly British course can and will certainly be vastly beneficent to both Britain and India.

At least four years before the founding (1885) of the Indian National Congress, Dadabhai had been preparing India politically for building a national consciousness. This book entitled *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India* made him a universally recognized leader of nationalist India. At a time when some Congress leaders propagated that the English civilization was the "noblest the world has ever seen" and were

expecting “unspeakable blessing to the people of India” from them, being “citizens of a great and free empire, under the protecting shadow of one of the noblest constitutions the world has ever seen,” Naoroji exposed the designs of the British government which was destructive and despotic to the Indians and simultaneously suicidal to them, which later history proved true.

Dadabhai Naoroji had a life long contention that a full and independent parliament inquiry should be instituted not only into the financial condition of the country but also into the general system of the government (*Masani*).

On the moral values, Dadabhai’s stand was evident in his views about the opium and related trade. Even as a businessman, he had informed his partners that he would not touch the profits derived from the firms’ dealings in the opium, wines and spirits.

The way the British restructured the indigenous economic system of India to suit their objective of maximum exploitation is seen from the correspondences between the Secretary of State and Dadabhai Naoroji.

It could be seen that India had a sound and flourishing system which ensured the prosperity of all the people particularly the large masses of the population living in the rural areas and the villages of India. An overview had also been carried out in this area by contemporary scholars such as Romesh Chandra Dutt. A closer examination of the strategies used by the British colonialists in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries can help us in drawing parallels between those strategies and the ones employed by the present transnational and multinational corporations operating in India under the aegis of liberalization, privatization and globalization. Adam Smith, while referring to China, Egypt and India, acknowledged then that they were the wealthiest in the world, chiefly renowned for their superiority in agriculture and manufactures. Smith also mentioned that they were much richer than Europe. The process by which these civilizations were reduced to penury and later to dependency upon Western wealth is well known by now.

Truth and non-violence are the basic tenets of Gandhian economics. According to Gandhiji, work is not only an economic activity. It is necessary for spiritual growth. Bapu wanted that India should have its own economic policy. His economic thought revolves around the concept of Swadeshi, Trusteeship, Villages, Decentralization, Sustainable development and Nature.

Dadabhai’s initial view on looking upon British as an advanced humanitarian civilization having humane influence to abolish customs such as *Sati* and infanticide, slowly altered as the freedom struggle progressed and a time came when his views were radically different. The theory of drain is not the invention of Dadabhai Naoroji. In 1776 Adam Smith in his seminal work *The Wealth of Nations* described the British rulers of India as ‘plunderers of India.’

In the nineteenth century, the drain of wealth from India to England took the form of unrequited surplus of export over import. It was in 1867 that for the first time Dadabhai Naoroji in his paper *England’s Debt to India* put forward the idea that Britain was extracting wealth from India as a price of her rule in India, that out of the revenues raised in India, nearly one-fourth went out of the country and was added to the resources of England, and that India was consequently ‘being bled’. Dadabhai Naoroji dedicated his life to propagation of the drain theory and to launching a sustained campaign against the drain which was considered by him to be the fundamental evil of British rule in India. The Indian nationalist leaders, especially during the last quarter of nineteenth century, made their focus of attention the condition of masses, and not that of classes.

Initially, like many stalwarts, Dadabhai Naoroji was an admirer of British character and system. He acknowledged wholeheartedly the British contribution to India regarding education, centralized administration, discipline, political unification of the country, railways, telegraphs, hospitals, security, etc.

To Naoroji, the British rule in India was ‘Un-British’ in character. He expressed his earnest desire to see in India the true British government. While addressing a meeting in England in aid of the Indian Famine Relief Fund on July 1, 1900, he said: “If it were British rule and not un-British rule which governed us, England would be benefited ten times more than it is.” But he changed his view during the later stage of his political life.

Dadabhai Naoroji adopted a persuasive approach to cure the malpractices of British rule and get the drain checked. He frequently referred to British government’s pledges and assurances given to Indians. He used to quote many British officials about the importance of India to British empire and that India’s prosperity was a prerequisite for Britain’s prosperity. Perhaps it was his persuasive tactics that he reiterated in the second session of the Indian National Congress that

'this Congress was not a nursery for sedition and rebellion against the British government and that it was another stone in the foundation of the stability for that government.' Again in the ninth session of the Congress in Lahore in 1893 he declared, "We the Congress are only desirous of supporting government, and having this important matter of poverty grappled with and settled. We are anxious to prevent the political danger of the most serious order declared to exist by the Secretary of State himself. We desire that the British connection should endure for a long time to come for the sake of our material and political elevation among the civilized nations of the world." He also appealed to the morals of the British people and the government, and emphasized on cooperation to strengthen the British government.

Realisation of Actual British Character and Intention

But all this was in vain. There was no sign of change in British policy of exploitation and suppression. Realising this, Dadabhai Naoroji started expressing his displeasure and disapproval of British rule in India such as 'Is it just and fair, is it British that all the cost of such greatness and glory, and the prosperity of United Kingdom should be entirely, to the last farthing thrown upon the wretched Indians, as if the only relation existing between the United Kingdom and India were not of mutual benefit, but of mere masters and slaves. . . ?' He exposed the reality of protection provided by the British government. He said: "The way you secure life and property is by protecting it from open violence by anybody else, taking care that you yourselves should take away that property." In 1895, he clearly understood the aims and objectives of the government in colonization of India and declared that British India was indeed the British India and not India's India. But he was slow in putting forward the radical demands.

Shift in his Stand

Dadabhai Naoroji exposed the danger of drain forcefully and pointed out its impact on the Indian economy. According to him, it was drain that caused and intensified the famines in India. It was the fundamental cause of mass poverty. The drain was not limited to that of wealth but there was political and intellectual drain too. The drain was a slow poisoning to the India's national economy. According to Dadabhai Naoroji the injury inflicted to India by earlier foreign invaders was limited; it was once and over. But the British rule in India was an

unending chain of drain and exploitation. Dadabhai Naoroji opposed the opium trade of Britain with China from the Indian land. According to him, this being an act of immorality covered the intensity of drain. Had it been stopped, the British government would be fully exposed. The British government was behaving with India like a step mother. The other British colonies, e.g. Australia, are advancing and flourishing, but India's condition was worsening day by day.

Call for Political Nationalism and Self-Rule

Dadabhai spent his full energy to propagate the theory of drain. After years of reconciling effort and persuasion of British authorities, he was disappointed from lack of any reform on the part of British rulers and accordingly the sentiment of disillusionment crept into him whose full demonstration was found in his speeches of 1904 and 1905 in which he declared that the self-government is the only solution for India's misery. In his message to the Benares Session of the Indian National Congress he asserted, "Without self-government the Indians can never get rid of their present drain, and the consequent impoverishment, misery, and destruction." Thus, he was guided from economic nationalism to political nationalism, and that the former could not be achieved without the latter. As early as in 1876, in his essay on 'Poverty of India,' he laid stress on the fact that Britain was able to keep back a large part of India's exports chiefly because of the political position it held over India. In 1896, he wrote a letter to Welby in which in an unambiguous term he stressed that drain was all simply the result of the unnatural administration and management of Indian resources by an alien country. He reiterated that Indians must have their full share of public employment and a voice in their own expenditure. In Calcutta Session of the Indian National Congress, Dadabhai was overemphatic when he declared in his Presidential address that all the political demands of the Indian people could be summed up in one word, 'self-government or *swaraj*,' like that of the United Kingdom.

Philosophical Contributions of Professor J.L. Mehta: Some Reflections

Sanjay Kumar Shukla*

Professor J.L. Mehta was an outstanding scholar of Indian and Western philosophical traditions. He was well trained in Indian philosophical systems and in early student days he developed keen interest in the works of Freud, Wittgenstein and Heidegger. He displayed an unusual facility to move between Eastern and Western thought. He was born in 1912 and passed away in 1988 while delivering his lecture on *Sri Krishna: The Lord as Friend*. This is quite enough to substantiate the claim that till his last breath he was attuned to God and deeply engaged in philosophical contemplation. His personality bears testimony to the confluence of *Jñāna*, *Karma* and *Bhakti Mārga*. He had obtained postgraduate degree from Banaras Hindu University and after that he served different educational institutions like Kishori Raman College, Mathura (1937-44), Maharajas College, Jaipur (1944-48) and then appointed lecturer and later on became Professor and Head of the Department of Philosophy in Banaras Hindu University (1948-72). He was awarded Ph.D. degree in the year 1965 under the supervision of Professor T.R.V. Murti over Heideggerian philosophy. Apart from Professor Murti, other examiners of his thesis were great scholars like Professor Kalidas Bhattacharya (Shantiniketan), Professor Ludwig Landgrebe (Cologne) and Professor Walter Biemel (Aachen). Later on his thesis in revised and enriched form was published as *The Philosophy of Martin Heidegger* by the Center of Advanced Study in Philosophy, Banaras Hindu University (1967). The same was published by Harper & Row, United States of America (1971). Hannah Arendt, the author of world acclaimed book *On Violence*, during conversation with

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Professor J.N. Mohanty asked: “Do you know that the best book on Heidegger, in any language, is written by an Indian? That is your fellow countrymen being J.L. Mehta.” He was fellow of Alexander Von Humbolt Foundation Germany (1956-58), W. Fullbright Visiting Lecturer (1964-65) in America, and apart from that he was Professor in Hawaii University for two years and remained visiting Professor for one decade in Harvard University (1962-72) in America. These factual informations are sufficient to establish the view that his profound scholarship is not confined to India only but seriously recognized and widely appreciated in international academic world. Indian Council of Philosophical Research, New Delhi had made him Senior Fellow and by this truly speaking council itself is honoured. His personality was multi-lingual, as he had mastery over Hindi, English, Sanskrit and German languages. It is always a matter of immense joy and academic satisfaction to go through his philosophical writings as they are thought provoking and heavily loaded with penetrating philosophical insights. We are highly indebted to him for a wide range of serious and significant philosophical writings that he had contributed. I am here presenting some seminal works of him as *The Philosophy of Martin Heidegger*, published by The Center of Advanced Study in Philosophy, Banaras Hindu University (1967) and this work was published for the first time in America by Harper & Row (1971). He has made English translation of *Martin Heidegger* written by Walter Biemel. *Sri Aurobindo: Life, Language and Thought, India and the West: The Problem of Understanding*, edited by M. David Eckel, Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University, Scholar Press (1985), *Kavi Karma Aur Cintana: Sarjanā kei Do Āyāma, Philosophy and Religion: Essays in Interpretation*, Indian Council of Philosophical Research, New Delhi (2004) etc. are some monumental works of him.

I

It is after furnishing a brief academic biodata of Professor Mehta, an attempt will be made in this section and subsequent sections to understand the conceptual scheme of him. It is truism to state that we must understand in order to appreciate, and this necessitates us to have a proper understanding of his philosophical ideas as delineated in different works. *The Philosophy of Martin Heidegger* is the magnum opus of Professor J.L. Mehta, in which it is explicitly stated that the finitude of human thought lies in the fact that it is prompted by a

profound need to raise and answer questions about ultimate truth and is at the same time incapable of arriving at any definitive, eternally valid formulation. In the sphere of thought concerned with ultimate, the individual and the historical, the method and the language are all integral parts of the “way” of thought. Another mark of the finitude of human thought is that it is time-bound and conditioned by the cultural and historical situation in which and from which it springs forth, even while seeking to transcend it towards a higher generality. This is what makes Heidegger a critic of the present time as the era of technology, of the modern period as the age of subjectivism and of the entire metaphysical tradition of the West since the time of Plato as determining our present homelessness and oblivion of our true foundations. It is the explicit awareness of this finitude that makes him keenly sensitive to the origins of this tradition, to its uniqueness and to its difference from other traditions grounded in other modes of illumination. It is for this reason that Heidegger is able to achieve a finitude of transcendence that goes beyond the limits of the present and of the tradition that has brought it to pass, into a realm which is not that of merely empty and timeless universality but which is concretely and directly relevant to our thinking here and now. The main themes of Heidegger’s thinking are the traditional themes of *philosophia perennis*: Man, World, Being and truth, and language which encompasses them in the medium of thought. But he seeks to think of these concepts in a novel way and in a new language. His approach is “phenomenological” in the broadest sense of the term, not ratiocinative or argumentative. The phenomenological discourse aims at disclosure of what is hidden and implicit in experience. In this way Heidegger was very fond of bringing, some “state of affairs” into views, letting what is come to light.

Heidegger differs from Husserl in his philosophical enterprise on these grounds: 1. Husserl talks about the possibility of radical start in philosophy, that is, a beginning with a clean state, whereas for Heidegger philosophical enquiry is always historical as beginning with traditional concepts presupposed. 2. Husserl, in his phenomenological programme, makes arrangement for Transcendental Ego. Heidegger has not only rejected the notion of Transcendental Ego but attempts to replace it by *Dasein*. *Dasein* means ‘being in the world,’ and it includes an analysis of man’s *existential* constitution having account of attunement or mood, understanding, interpretation, judgment and language; that everyday modes of man’s openness to world and his abandonment to

it. The meaningfulness of *Dasein* lies in its temporality, and the provisional analysis of the structure of it will have to be reinterpreted later in terms of temporal modalities. This temporality refers to the condition of the possibility of the historicity inherent in man’s mode of existence. The being of *Dasein* is constituted by care (*Sorge*), with its element of facticity (thrownness), *existenz* (project) and forfeiture. This brings feeling of dread (*Angst*) and guilt (*schuldig*) in man’s life. But the *existenzial* interpretation of conscience aims at a discovery of the testimony existing within man himself of his inmost potentiality of authentic *existenz*. Resoluteness manifests itself only in comprehending, self-projecting resolution in face of factual possibilities. It is with the concept of resoluteness that a definite ontological sense can be attached to *Dasein*’s potentiality of being authentically whole. Hence, the stress on authentic mode of existence puts the traditional concept of responsibility in a new light which refers to a kind of honesty or a kind of courage. Heidegger seeks to approach the problem of Being through the comprehension of Being inherent in *Dasein*, through an analysis of man’s capacity to go beyond himself and beyond essence (*essents*) as such. *Dasein* goes out beyond all *essents* including itself, reaching up to world, which is part of the structure of transcendence, of *Dasein*’s being-in-the-world itself. In Heideggerian conceptual framework asking question about Being means nothing less than to recapitulate (*wiederholen*) the beginning of our historical-spiritual existence that is to transform it into a new beginning. It is in fact the authentic pattern of historicity. Heidegger is against equating Being with either God or ground of the world. Being is broader than all beings and yet nearest to man. It is nearest to man, because it makes man what he is. It allows him to enter into comportment with other beings. The hiddenness of Being in beings is, for Heidegger an essential part of his experience as Being itself. The foundational thinking tries to mediate Being as the process of truth and that is coming to pass of the lightening process in beings. Hence, it is the process by which human *ek-sistence* responds to Being not only in its positivity but also its negativity. In this way *The Philosophy of Martin Heidegger* is undoubtedly faithful and critical exposition of Heideggerian philosophy.

II

This section is devoted to another outstanding work of Professor J.L. Mehta entitled *India and the West: The Problem of Understanding*. It

is a collection of 11 seminal research papers with a wide range of thought. I will be just furnishing the basic philosophical insights of them in a very precise manner. The first research paper is *The Concept of the Subjective*, which maintains that the entire history of modern philosophy since Descartes is explication and development of the theory of subjectivity. The main thrust of this paper is critical appraisal of the notion of subjectivity in the philosophical writings of Husserl, Sartre, Ponty and Heidegger. The subjectivity is analysed in terms of intentionality, transcendence, facticity finitude and forfeiture in existentialist tradition. *The Philosophical Necessity of Existentialism* is the second article in which he brings forth the genesis of existentialism in religion, atheism and phenomenology. It is an expression of a peculiar historical situation in the spiritual condition of today. It must be regarded as a completion, a corrective and necessary supplement to traditional metaphysics. The term "existence" refers to a mode of being peculiar to man, and therefore man has a potential existence. He fulfills this potentiality of existence in relation to transcendence and in communication with others. *The Existentialism of Jean Paul Sartre* is the third research paper which contemplates consciousness, not in a general sense, but refers to particular consciousness, a spontaneity which is impersonal and individuated in the midst of the world. Consciousness is pure transparency, spontaneity and intentionality; but it is also pure negativity, not only itself a nothing but an essentially nihilating presence. Sartre's ontology accepts here the distinction between "being for itself" and "being in itself." Hence, consciousness is self-nihilating, perpetually escaping the causality of the past and spontaneously going out towards and intending a world. *The Concept of Progress* is the next article of this edited book. The ideas of self-fulfilment and freedom have provided the dominant terms in which Western man has sought to understand himself and situate his destiny in the world since the Renaissance. History is meaningful only in the perspective of future possibilities. The systematized formulation of the idea of perfectibility and progress was given by Auguste Comte, with whom the religion of humanity became at the same time the religion of progress. The very process of secularization led to the cult of progress which enables us to re-think and re-formulate the truth about time that lies hidden behind the mythical conception of eschatology, the metaphysical concept of eternity and the understanding of time in the historical consciousness.

Being and Non-being is another article. As we all know that the term "being" and its correlate "non-being" is the central concept of Western philosophical thought. Professor Mehta offers critical exposition of Kantian analysis of being and non-being and concludes with Heideggerian treatment of Being. Kant conceived Being, like Aquinas, as an individual and at the same time he never allowed the possibility of Being independent of the theological problem of God. He explains being as pure position and thus locates its meaning in positing as an activity of human subjectivity. Being and Non-being belong together in the same location (*topos*), according to Heidegger, and both are consequent on the "metaphysical" quest for transcendence and ground. The next article in the series is *Problems of Inter-cultural Understanding in University Studies of Religion*. He seeks to explore the subject of inter-cultural and religious understanding from the perspective of philosophical hermeneutics in concrete situation. The primary task is of a critical and creative understanding of our own religious traditions and apart from that there is pressing urge to have better understanding of "the faith of other men." It is nicely pointed out that if the Orient has followed the path of pre-conceptual absorption and insulation, the Occident has treated the other merely as its own negation, without caring to determine it in itself or seeking to understand it from within. Hence, the *nisus* towards the goal of world-community cannot reach its end through any sort of *Herrschaftswissen*, or any sort of cultural conquest, nor merely through a peaceful co-existence of religious traditions, but solely through active understanding of each other. *Understanding and Tradition* is another thought provoking research paper included in this volume. Professor Mehta here draws our attention that philosophical thought is rooted in cultural matrix and in this way the basic problem of life and experience is always embedded in a context of tradition. This gives it a factual and historical dimension requiring what has been called understanding (*Verstehen*) and interpretation in recent thought on the foundations and philosophical significance of the human sciences. Understanding is not the detached contemplation of a meaning factually out there but is always self-understanding, and we always do this in terms of projecting ourselves on our own possibilities. Finally, there is no absolute antithesis between tradition and reason, for the former depends upon its continuity, not upon the sheer inertia of physical persistence but upon our rational affirmation and critical appropriation. *The Problem of Philosophical*

Reconception in the Thought of K.C. Bhattacharya is the next research paper. Bhattacharya sought neither to construct a system of speculative thought nor to create a comprehensive world-view encompassing all of man's religious and philosophical experience. He had penetrating insights into the truth of his own tradition and at the same time genuinely open to the call of modern Western thought – especially of Kant and Hegel. For Bhattacharya the concern of Vedānta is with the subject or subjectivity conceived as conscious freedom or felt detachment from the object. He agreed with Kant in rejecting “the so-called metaphysics of the soul,” as for him, the subject is a believed content, is problematically spoken as “I” and is not meanable (thinkable) or is not a meant something. Bhattacharya criticizes Kant for his “persisting objective attitude.” Hence, philosophical reconception springs from the need for a creative response to the encounter of two traditions, each speaking a different language, each constituting a world horizon in its own right, and of which a certain degree of fusion can be brought about only by the faith that the utterance of one's own tradition can sustain itself and even find a more satisfying articulation in an alien medium, in an alienated age.

The Will to Interpret and India's Dreaming spirit is the next article included in this volume, which points out that philosophical hermeneutics, is the recent trend of contemporary Western philosophy. This is concerned not so much with the methodology of interpreting texts but with understanding and interpreting basic moments in man's very way of being human. This trend is well exhibited in the philosophical literatures of Dilthey, Heidegger, Gadamer and Ricoeur. Mircea Eliade has felt the need of a “creative hermeneutics” as the only adequate response to the cultural and religious pluralism of the present. Hegel remarked that the light of spirit arises in Asia, but it is in the West that there arises the sun of self-consciousness, which diffuses a nobler brilliance. He further pointed out that in Indian idealism, Absolute is presented as “in the ecstatic state of a dreaming condition” and where “the spirit wanders into the dreaming-world and the highest state is annihilation,” a dreaming unity of spirit and Nature, which “involves a monstrous, bewilderment in regard to all phenomena and relations.” But Professor Mehta had always been critical to such mode of philosophizing as found in Hegel and Heidegger. *Beyond Believing and Knowing* is another research paper in which two major traditions of Indian spirituality Vedānta and Buddhism are being discussed.

Knowledge in these two traditions is immediate, an experienced reality in which the duality of knowing subject and known object lapses and truth revealed in them is not something to be believed merely, or even known. Mircea Eliade is concerned largely with the cultural appropriation by the West of elements of alien religiosity by the study of myths and symbols, Yoga and Shamanism and benefiting from the researches of cultural anthropology and structuralism. The concern with the development of a “planetary culture” seems to answer to a real spiritual need which generates a new form of religiousness beyond believing and beyond knowing in the scientific sense. The last research paper included in this volume is *Heidegger and Vedānta: Reflections on a Questionable Theme*. Heideggerian existentialism and Vedāntic idealism appear to be entirely different philosophical traditions but still they point out that what is questionable can be sometimes worthy of thought, and what is unthinkable can sometimes be glimpsed as that which thinking is about. Śamkarācārya maintained that the tree of Samsāra, the wordly existence, which sprouts from action and constitutes the field of confusion and error, must be torn from its very roots. A statement like this can be misunderstood as a classic example of life-denying philosophy. In reality, what it denies is not life but the death in life that consists in taking things as empty of a self or without ground in Being. The search of “*philosophemes*” common to Heidegger and Vedānta can be grounded in man's nature, the world, and man's relationship to it, the unity of Being, the identity between man and Being. Heidegger speaks of the experience of thinking, of thinking as itself an experience, appropriating within thinking the precious element of immediacy in all mysticism. Thinking is thus in a profound sense experiencing and transforming. He talks about the structure of inner experience of its correlate, the world of objectivity as disclosed in such experience. Similarly in Advaitic tradition we witness the way of insight through meditative thought which culminates in “seeing” the Reality.

III

We are going to discuss in this final section *Philosophy and Religion: Essays in Interpretation* of Professor Mehta. This volume brings together a seminal collection of 15 papers by a scholar whose interests ranged from Heidegger to the Vedas, and from the critique of Western civilization to the future of philosophy in India. Is it possible to bring

to bear on Indian philosophical texts, which belong to a tradition of their own, an interpretive framework derived from a different tradition? Professor Mehta addresses this crucial question through witnessing to a dialogue of cultures in which he himself was deeply involved. This leads him to reflect on Heidegger, the study of world religions, Sri Aurobindo, the Mahābhārata, the Rīgveda, and the rich area in Indian thought in which philosophy, religion and poetry interfuse. He pays his own tradition the homage of retrieval and rethinking. He is able to do this with the consummate skill and bifocal vision of an Indian philosopher deeply versed in the thought of Heidegger and the whole hermeneutic approach; one who experienced in his own being the poignancy of philosophizing in modern idiom and yet in the light of insights and concepts rooted in the distant past.

The first essay is *Heidegger and the Comparison of Indian and Western Philosophy*. Comparative philosophy is a relatively recent academic enterprise in which Daniel Ingalls, Paul Deussen, R.G. Collingwood and Martin Heidegger have made valuable contribution. Ingalls has questioned the quest of similarity between Western and Indian philosophical doctrines as initiated by Deussen. The similarity which he (Deussen) found between the philosophy of Śamkarācārya and that of Kant is artistic (superficial) similarity ignoring the differences of cultural perspectives. Heidegger has pointed out that 'Being' is the ground-word of the Western tradition reflecting reality disclosing itself, and in similar fashion one may say that 'Brahman' and 'Ātman' are the ground-words of the Indian tradition exhibiting its spiritual destiny. Like the Western philosophical tradition, the development of the Indian tradition deals with questions of ultimate reality, of the nature and criteria of knowledge, of man and world and of the basic categories through which we think about them. Hence, comparative philosophy must enlarge our philosophical understanding of two different trends – Orient and Occident. In *Memoriam: Martin Heidegger* Professor Mehta focuses upon how Heidegger can certainly help us to glimpse the 'un-thought essence' of technology and so to free ourselves from the magic web of that philosophy which, in its ending, has entered into the social sciences. The fascinating thing about Heidegger's work is the appropriation of the religious into the enterprise of 'pure' thinking. It marks the emergence of new 'thinking' taking the character of devotion (*Andacht*) as a response to a call that comes to man from beyond himself. *World Civilization: The Possibility of Dialogue* is the serious research paper

of Professor Mehta which tries to answer the basic question that given the domination of the West, can there be dialogue between civilizations? Paul Ricoeur has endorsed the ideal of 'universal civilization' exhibiting affinity with Husserlian idea of the 'Europeanization of the world.' For Heidegger 'world-civilization' means the supremacy of the natural sciences, the supremacy and pre-eminence of economics, of politics, of technology. Homelessness is the destiny of the world in the shape of world-civilization. A dialogue between civilizations is urgently needed in the sense of sharing of insights with the help of resources preserved in traditional heritage. But all dialogue, aiming at mutual understanding between peoples on a philosophical level, is open to the danger of lapsing into inauthenticity. Hence, for authentic self-understanding what we need is recollective, originative and meditative thinking.

A Stranger from Asia is the next article included in this volume. It is pointed out by Professor Mehta that from Kant to Jaspers, German philosophers have exhibited an awareness of ancient Indian philosophy which is almost completely absent in Heidegger's writings. But Heidegger has reported an important aspect of Upaniṣadic view of man, which does not take account only of his waking state (*Jāgrat*), but takes notice of the dreaming (*Svapna*) and sleeping (*Susupti*) states also as making up the totality of his mode of being, interpreting them all from the perspective of a fourth transcendent state of consciousness (*turīya*). This fourth state is truly authentic mode of being in which he is at one with his essential nature thus exhibiting the identity of Self (*Ātman*) and Absolute (*Brahman*). It is because of Heidegger's unwillingness to step out of the sphere of finitude, of thinking, that prevents him to acknowledge and appreciate the philosophical significance of *turīya*. The other reason that prevented Heidegger from taking the step from sleeping to the fourth state is wrong translation of *Cit* (*constitutive of Ātman-Brahman*) as simple consciousness. The next article is *Philosophy, Philology and Empirical Knowledge* in which Professor Mehta discusses about Hegel, Heidegger, Gadamer, Ricoeur, Halbfass and others, regarding linkages between tradition and modernity as well as the possibility of any dialogue between Eastern and Western philosophical traditions. It is pertinent to note that proper philosophical activity is not confined only to what is thought but with the still unthought and calling for thinking. He had shown appreciative tone towards the new mode of inquiry called 'philosophical hermeneutics.' Hence, it is for this reason that in contemporary thought questions of

textuality, historicity and interpretation have come to assume such importance at the expense of the ratiocinative type of philosophical thinking. *The Hindu Tradition: The Vedic Root* refers to the historical processes and events that lead to the building up of a cumulative religious tradition which is complex and often obscure and difficult to unravel and interpret. In the Indian case, the historical origin and sources can be easily traced from the Rigveda, which remains not only the *arche*-text of this religious tradition but also the animating source of the religiousness that has generated and sustained the tradition and given it its own unique form and substance. A basic facet of religiousness which is almost focal in the Rigvedic experience is the majesty, the sacredness and all pervasive reality of the world. The first volume of Max Muller's edition of the Rigveda was published in 1849 and the last, sixth volume in 1874. Other Western scholars who had worked upon Vedic literature were Oldenberg, Bloomfield, Luders, Thieme etc. But the Western Veda philologists and indologists are mostly suspicious and often ignorant about how the Veda has been historically operative in the life of the people or has been understood within a living tradition.

The next article of this volume is *Sri Aurobindo: Life, Language and Yoga*. Aurobindo was not just an author, or a thinker, whose intellectual energy went into the writings of books only. Primarily he was a *yogi* engaged in comprehending and shaping all of his life and experience. The final goal of humanity can be only spirituality which is radical and integral transformation of Nature..... the supramental transmutation.... progressive movement of the ascent of the supramental consciousness into our entire being and nature. He retained English in his own creative writing, but at the same time emptied it of its cultural content. It enabled him to communicate his thinking to the world community loaded with Indian religious experience and tradition. He has interpreted Veda as a living religious scripture that is *arche*-text of the universal, eternal human quest and aspiration, a movement towards Transcendence. *Science, Conversation and Wholeness* of Professor Mehta reflects over Western and Eastern pattern of science as modern Western science is intimately related to the matrix of Western Christian Civilization, while Eastern perspective of science refers to wisdom. Every thing in experience that can be objectified has to be brought within the orbit of science. Western science is culturally neutralized and universalized assuming an autonomous form of culture and which

Heidegger calls world-civilization. From the Eastern perspective the body of knowledge constituting exact science can and should be disengaged from its historical, philosophical and religious underpinnings. In the realm of ideas, the encounter between East and West, as partners in a possible whole, has already taken place and been for long in process. It is now perhaps more appropriate, therefore, to speak of a conversation rather than an encounter. The parts are coming together, and talking together, giving rise to a possibility of an emergence of whole, a world community of speech. But a consequential part of any Western Indian conversation is bound to be unequal and in favour of the West. The next research paper is *Bhakti in Philosophical Perspective*. It tries to settle the basic issues – 1. What is it which is experienced in *Bhakti*. 2. There is the historical question of its gradual unfoldment and liberation from its entanglement with various other forms of religious experience into a pure autonomous and over-arching form of human religiousness. 3. We must not overlook the over-riding role played in both these by the principal religious text in giving form to such experiences, and beyond that theorizing about the nature and significance of *bhakti* in the life of *homo religious*. *Bhakti* represents man's primordial relationship to Being, a *rasa* in its own right, the supreme privilege of man's mortal estate and the ultimate refuge in his search for wholeness and for being healed. It helps us to understand the purpose of life by inculcating moral virtues. *Krishna Dvaipāyana: Poet of Being and Becoming* is the next research paper in which Professor Mehta observes that Krishna Dvaipāyana Vyāsa bears strange relations with his narrative and its characters, as well as with his readers. In this particular case, he is never present to the reader, never speaks directly to him, but always as reported, by virtue of his authority, by someone else. He is present everywhere yet nowhere, who talks at such length of the world of Becoming and yet whose purpose is to convey the truth of Being, whose true home is in the realm of silence and withdrawn meditation. The primacy of *Dharma* in human living is the main subject of the Mahābhārata. A close analytical study of the poem still remains to be made from *purusārtha* perspective, examining the intricate interrelationship amongst four values – *Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Moksha*. A thorough study of the Mahābhārata will exhibit how the various elements – the mythic and the sacred, the human and the ethical, the narrative and didactic form a coherent totality. It is to examine how human temporality is brought here into relation with the eternality of the divine.

In another thought provoking research paper *Modernity and Tradition*, Professor Mehta refers to Edward Shils' famous work *The Intellectual between Tradition and Modernity: The Indian Situation*, Milton Singer's *When a Great Tradition Modernizes* and W.C. Smith's *Modernization of a Traditional Society*. Smith criticizes Westerners for value-judgments on non-Western cultures, without any attempt to understand them from within and ignoring their specific religious traditions, from a position of superiority. Modernity begins with a revolt against the authority of church, refers to rational scientific spirit, and it culminates into secularism and secularization of nature. Singer pointed out that the traditionalism of Indian civilization is not opposed to innovation and change, to modernity. The only difference in this two-sided, mutual participation is that from the Western end it is in the nature of supplementing the substance of their mainstream culture, an assimilation of the alien and subordinating it within more widely based totality whereas from the non-Western, including Indian, the participation is an appropriation of the substance itself, not peripheral as in the Western case. For Smith to modernize need not mean adopting a Western model at all. There are genuine reasons, Smith says: Why India can not just copy the West, because it is culturally, religiously and linguistically different from West. Hence, to be modern means to move in the direction of an increase in our awareness, so that possibilities open up, alternatives of choice emerge, where formerly we lived within a relatively closed horizon. The next article is *Life-worlds, Sacrality and Interpretive Thinking*. The seminal concept of 'Life-world' (*Lebenswelt*) was introduced by Edmund Husserl in the *The Crisis of European Science*. It is valid in its own right, prior to all theoretical construction, and its truth is no longer viewed as only a pre-figuration of truth as objective. The task of phenomenology is to inquire as to how the life-world was constructed by transcendental subjectivity. Wilhelm Dilthey analysed the role of history in shaping the life-world, while Martin Heidegger and Max Scheler paid due attention to the religious dimension of our everyday experience in the life-world. In our present context, the recovery of the sacred for a common life-world, through conversation and creative linguistic construction, must take the form of more active 'conversation' with our sacred text, that is hermeneutical practice of interpretation and construction. The next essay is *The Discourse of Violence in the Mahābhārata*. It is pointed out here that our problems, including those pertaining to violence within India or regarded globally, are new and their solutions too will have to

be interpreted afresh and formulated in language which is acceptable and meaningful today. The Mahābhārata is a tale of unmitigated violence and yet its central message is that of non-violence and compassion being highest duties of man, states of being without which we fail to be completely human. Violence arises when we fail to inculcate these two virtues in our personality, and this is mainly due to one sided pursuit of wealth and possession (*artha*), of power over the means to satisfy our desires. It confirms the conception of *trivarga* in endless variations, and further supplements it with the discourse of *Moksha*. 'Where there is *dharma*, there is victory' testifies to the basic moralizing impulse behind the discourse of violence in the Mahābhārata. The central insight into the meaning of war and peace is provided by Krishna in his lecture to Yudhishtira, seeking to persuade him not to shirk his duty as a king even after the annihilation caused by the war, that '*mama*' (mine) is the two lettered death, '*na mama*' (not mine) is the three lettered eternal *Brahman*, both of which are within us, impelling us to fight. *The Rigveda: Text and Interpretation* is the last research paper. The phenomenological approach to the reading of the Rigveda is imperative for anyone who is a participant in the Indian philosophical and religious tradition. We find this approach for the first time in the philosophical writings of Martin Heidegger. This made Professor Mehta turn towards the Rigveda as a text constitutive of the very horizon of the traditional Indian way of experiencing life, and worth exploring it for its own sake as an *arche*-text. Hans Gadamer laid emphasis upon philosophical hermeneutics which recognizes the importance of interpretation as integral to all philosophical thinking. The philosophical literatures of Paul Ricoeur exhibit deep concern regarding the interpretation of myths and symbols. Apart from the ritualistic interpretation of Rigvedic Samhita we find something new and important to say to us even in our altered world of thought and sensibility. Rigveda is strange text, unique and *suigeneris*. In its mode of being, it is in a sense revealed as well as revelatory and yet it is not scripture, not a book, in the ordinary sense of the term. Professor Mehta has tried to work out the limitations of Western Vedic scholarship in this fashion that in the interpretation of the Vedic text, it is not only religious and cultural anthropological prejudices that have been at play during two centuries of Western Vedic scholarship, but philosophical pre-suppositions too have wrought havoc through the unquestioning importation of Western conceptuality into another tradition.

The Ideas of Acharya Rajneesh

Vijay Kumar*

Almost twenty-five years after his death Acharya Rajneesh is remembered for his thoughtful speeches and lectures as a spiritual teacher. Dr Ram Chandra Prasad his first biographer considered, him as the greatest living orator in India (Motilal Banarsidas 1968). At his Samadhi at Pune his epitaph reads “Osho was never born never died only visited this planet earth 11.12.1931 to 19.01.1990.”

Rajneesh was born in a Jain family in Raisen Distt. (M.P.) and his name was Chandra Mohan Jain. He spent the first nine years with his maternal grandmother. He had a fascination for books. He began to attend the Gadgarwara Public Library, while in his early teens during his schooldays. Since his college days, he set up the rhythm of reading several books a day, with which he was to continue for more than twenty years. Literally he appears to have read everything there was to read on religion, philosophy and psychology, said his cousin-cum-secretary Arvind Jain in an interview. Rajneesh’s wide range of reading into many subjects, was to broaden his understanding of the human psyche. In Kamla Nehru Nagar, Jabalpur (MP) home of Rajneesh, people felt they were entering a library. The bookshelves were open and had no glass cases. In 1964 he told his brother to make a list of books and categorized them under the headings Philosophy, Psychology, Religion, Ethics, Literature, Poems, Aesthetics, Moral Sciences and Scriptures etc.

He came to Jabalpur at the age of 19 and joined Hitkari College Jabalpur and later he graduated from D.N. Jain College in 1955. He

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received his masters degree in philosophy from Sagar University (M.P.) in 1957 with first class. Rajneesh joined a teaching position as a lecturer of philosophy at Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya (Sanskrit Degree College) in Raipur in September 1957. Six months later in March 1958 got transferred to the new Jabalpur University, where he continued teaching as a lecturer in the philosophy department. One year later in 1959 he was appointed associate professor of philosophy, where he taught till 1967. At Jabalpur he detested teaching according to syllabus He left the university to devote himself entirely to the raising of human consciousness. It is noteworthy that during these nine years he could not produce a remarkable student.

Initially he was attracted towards socialism and Gandhism, but gradually his affinity transited from the political world to the sphere of meditation and spirituality. Experimenting became very much an integral part of his life. He would experiment and search at all levels, with sleep, with eating and fasting and with meditation. Breathing exercises and the occult as well as hypnosis, were within the range of his experiments, and all these practices were directed towards meditation and moments when one transcends the mind. To be alert and aware was his intrinsic method and courage his sole and indispensable prerequisite for the journey towards freedom and truth.

Acharya Rajneesh delivered lectures at religious meetings at different places. He later founded Jeevan Jagriti Kendra in 1962 and organized the first training camp (*shivir*) in 1964 at Ranakpura in Rajasthan. In 1966 *Jyoti Shikha* a magazine was published. On June 3rd 1964 Acharya Rajneesh inaugurated the Ranakpur meditation camp and in his welcome speech said: “I see man engulfed in deep darkness. He has become like a house whose lamp has been snuffed out on a dark night. Something in him has been extinguished. But a lamp that has been extinguished can be relit. I see as well that man has lost all direction. He has become like a boat that has lost its way on the high seas. He has forgotten where he wants to go and what he wants to be. But the memory of what has been forgotten can be re-awakened in him. Although there is darkness there is no cause for despair. The deeper the darkness, the closer the dawn is in offing. I see a spiritual regeneration for the whole world. A new man is about to be born and we are in the throes of his birth. But this regeneration needs the cooperation of each of us. It is to happen through us and through us alone. We cannot afford to be mere spectators. We must all prepare for this rebirth within ourselves.”

In his welcome speech Acharya Rajneesh also gave the participants three guidelines: The first maxim was to live in the present as only the present is real and lively. If the truth is to be known it can be known only through the present. The second maxim was to live naturally. Just as actors in a play remove their costumes and makeup and put them aside after the performance, just like that in these five days all must remove their false masks and live without it. The third maxim was to live alone inside, and advised not to allow things to crowd in on them and the same was true for the outside – “live by yourself as if you are all alone at the camp. You don’t have to maintain relations with anyone else.” The meditations practiced at the camp were all silent meditations, sitting calmly watching your breath in Vipassana meditation in the morning hour before the sermon, or relaxing your body in the evening into *Shawasan* (Posture of the Dead) following the evening discourse.

Ranakpur Meditation Camp became a landmark in Acharya Rajneesh work because, for the first time, his discourses and meditations were recorded and published as a book, *Path to Self-Realization*, which is widely acclaimed. He later said that this book contains his whole teaching which has never been altered. (It was reprinted as *The Perfect Way*).

He left Jabalpur for Bombay at the end of June 1970. First he stayed at a friend’s house and finally a house on Pedder Road (A1 Woodland Apartment) was purchased. It became the headquarter of the Jeevan Jagruti Kendra. In 1970, the first Westerners began to arrive to be initiated into Neo-Sannyas. Among them were leading psychotherapists from the human potential movement in Europe and America, seeking the next step in their own inner growth. With Acharya Rajneesh they experienced new, original meditation techniques for contemporary man, synthesizing the wisdom of the East with the science (psychology) of the West.

In 1965 several Jain businessmen of Mumbai had formed the Jeevan Jagruti Kendra Bombay (Life Awakening Center) to support Rajneesh and propagate his teachings. Jeevan Jagruti Kendra was founded to organize his extensive preaching tours throughout India, the meditation camps, and the publishing of his books and a monthly magazine in Hindi. Ishwarbhai was in charge of Jeevan Jagruti Kendra from 1967. Objectives of Jagruti Kendra Bombay were elaborated by Acharya Rajneesh at the meditation camp in Lonavla 1967. He said:

“The Life Awakening Center is not a religious organization. It is an organization of religious people for social transformation and revolution.

Nobody will become religious by becoming a member, but those who want this society, this life, this morality, this current system, this tradition to change can become members and strengthen the organization. This will be an organization for social, not religious, revolution. It will be for social reform; not for spiritual peace but for social revolution.” Ma Dharm Jyoti was among those recording his discourse and he has written no articles himself after 1967. His discourses have been transcribed from audiotapes and prepared for publishing on an ongoing basis.

Acharya Rajneesh wanted a magazine to publish only his lectures and not contain articles by other persons to avoid confusion. Jivan Jagruti Kendra, Mumbai, published a Hindi monthly magazine *Jyoti Shikha*, from June 1966 dedicated to Acharya Rajneesh’s work, so that all the people of India should benefit from his words and get information about his programmes. Shri Jatubhai Mehta was the editor of *Jyoti Shikha*. Arvind Kumar was very good in Hindi language, so Rajneesh asked him to publish a new magazine supplementing *Jyoti Shikha* already being published from Bombay. So *Yukrant* (Abbreviation of: Youth – Revolution) was published in Jabalpur from June 1969 to April/May 1975.

Looking at the difference between the above two statements given on almost similar occasions, it suggests a clear shift with the passage of time. As Rajneesh said: Gandhi was a spiritual man and he should not have indulged in politics. I see Rajneesh also got himself trapped in the movement for social change from spiritual goals of raising the level of consciousness. The crowd that started gathering around him led him to think that he will change the taste of ocean. But social change and spiritual awakening and raising the consciousness of individual are two different things. Rajneesh though was aware of it, could not resist the temptation to try for it. Again and again he thought, “How am I going to manage it?” he said to himself one night in Kulu Manali in the Himalayas. “Don’t be serious. You can manage anything, although you don’t know the ABC of managerial science.” Answer came. “I was never able to manage anything. So that night in Kulu Manali I laughed.” (autobiographical Glimpses of a Golden Childhood).

Later Rajneesh planned about a commune to be an alternative social formation. But as he said about Gandhi that he was a spiritual man his indulgence in politics or his ideas of society are

counterproductive, is equally true of Rajneesh himself. He could not design sustainable social formations and failed miserably wherever he tried for it. First at Pune and then at Oregon (USA).

Acharya Rajneesh in 1970 started his Nav Sannyas Movement and began to initiate seekers into Neo-Sannyas or discipleship. It was a path of commitment to self-exploration and meditation, which does not involve renouncing the world or anything else. Acharya Rajneesh's understanding of 'renunciation' is a radical departure from the traditional Indian concept. To him it's not the material world that needs to be renounced. It is our past, the conditioning and belief systems that each generation imposes on the next, and our dreams are to be observed and abandoned if need felt.

At a meditation camp organized by Jeevan Jagruti Kendra held from September 25 to October 5, 1970, at Kulu-Manali (Himachal Pradesh), a beautiful resort in a valley of the Himalayas, where Rajneesh initiated six people into sannyas. "The day I started initiating people, my only fear was, "Will I be able to some day change my followers into my friends. The night before, I could not sleep." Talking about Maitraya he said "no enlightened person ever comes back but Buddha's promise of coming as Maitraya means that Buddha reminds us in time to come, that the ancient relationship between the master and disciple would be irrelevant, then the enlightened master will be only a friend. I had always wanted not to be master (guru) to anybody but people wanted to be disciple, hence I played the role," he wrote.

Every morning he talked about scriptures, interpreted them but he did not give much importance to it. He focused his attention towards attainment of a mental stage where the mind is unconditioned by time and space, by history or society away from I/ego just it exists in harmony bliss and ecstasy. He considers all ideas, guru or scripture to be a part of old mindset and want everyone to get rid of it. Meanwhile in May 1971 Rajneesh accepted the title of 'Bhagwan' (the blessed one) proposed by his disciple Chinmaya.

Rajneesh shifted to the famous Koregaon Park Ashram Pune in 1974 and stayed there till 1990. In 1987 he changed his name to OSHO derived from word oceanic's and thereafter any reference to Rajneesh was totally eliminated. Undoubtedly Rajneesh was a learned man, and not his analyses of old scriptures are brilliant but was presented in modern Hindi language over which he had exceptional command. Language had a flow, his presentation, was adorned by poetry, lyrics,

short stories, anecdotes, and jokes, which made the philosophical discourse lively. Undoubtedly what he said was not a repetition but truth of inner life. It was his personal experience. He had mystic experience and had devoted his early life for realization. He said if one attains knowledge of truth or perfect awareness free from ideas then nothing is left and the world becomes a game show where you play according to circumstances without indulging in it.

He said "Nothing is needed to be enlightened. Enlightenment is your natural state. It is not something that has to be produced, manufactured, created.....enlightenment is already there. It is not a realization, it is only recognition. It is not that you have to make efforts to bring it. All that you need is not to make any effort. Drop all efforts and suddenly it is there. You can not see it because you are continuously making efforts to see it. Your very effort to see it is functioning as a barrier.....you are all the time enlightened – from the very beginning to the very end – you remain enlightened. You can go on deceiving yourself that you are not enlightened as long as you want, but all the same, you are enlightened."~ OSHO, The Diamond Sutra #10.

Christopher Calder, a critic, wrote "Life is complex and multi-layered, and my naive illusions about the phenomena of perfect enlightenment faded over the years. It became clear that enlightened people are as fallible as anyone. They are expanded human beings, not perfect human beings, and they live and breathe with many of the same faults and vulnerabilities we ordinary humans must endure. He (Rajneesh) was indeed a historic figure, but he was not the perfect superhuman he pretended to be. No one is! His disciples deserved honesty, but he fed them fairy tales "to give them faith." and those who pretend to be infallible and all-knowing end up looking even more the fool as history inevitably proves them wrong. We know about so many rishi, muni devtas falling prey to desire, envy at moments and paid the price for that."

Let us first see what is the message initially and we will see later how it changed remarkably. So Rajneesh's first publication for a wider audience in Hindi was *Sadhana Path* containing lectures from his camp in Ranakpur (3.6. to 8.6.1964). Arvind Kumar Jain as his secretary typed *Sadhana Path* from the handwritten paper manuscript in Hindi, and Acharya Rajneesh did the proof reading himself. The booklet (152 pages) was published by Jivan Jagriti Sangh, Bombay, in December

1964. This series of ten discourses later became his first publication in English as *The Path of Self-Realization* (1966), and finally titled *The Perfect Way* (1979).

He addressed the gatherings “my beloved people” and said that he who wants to go on Sadhna Path must first think of protecting his body, neither torture the body nor go for indulgence. As the body is attached with soul and soul cannot be without a body, The spirit cannot be without body and there are certain points which lead to spirit. A man is attached to his spirit. The first is the navel centre where the embryo is attached through umbilical cord to his mother before birth. It is the source of life even after that. He says the next important thing is the heart and the third is the mind. Development of navel centre develops fearlessness and braveness. Development of heart generates love and the mind where idea blossoms. But our approach towards body is not balanced. Either we neglect the body or we indulge too much. So he reminds us of the talks between Shron and Buddha who said for a veena to produce music its strings should neither be too tight nor too loose. We can see our emphasis is on negative things. We some times emphasize on positive things, but most of the time we are attached with negativity like *kamvashna* (desire), anger (*krodh*), ego (*ahankar*), lust (*lobh*), attachment (*moh*). Some times we are less involved and some times more. We need wisdom but it is not temporary absence of negativity.

Rajneesh says that the navel is the centre of the body. So there should be some method to be aware of it. For that we should be relaxed; the mind should be allowed to calm down, the moment one calms down he will be aware of the surroundings, then just be there in a relaxed awareness close your eyes and relax for a few minutes. If the emphasis is towards the mind the more chances are of getting mad or stressed. So there is lot of madness in the world. So under relaxed awareness when we are free from mental stress we come closer towards heart and with love that is generated we develop our centre of heart which leads to the feeling for co-travellers toward fellow being. All the centres are to be developed and the only way is relaxed awareness.

Relationship should not be intellectual rather it should be by heart. It should be existentially attached to the being, I call it, attached to navel centre. To experience all this, breath should be deep. As one is more deeper with the breath the awareness to the body centre will develop and also the navel centre will develop.

For body you need *samyak aahar* (food), *samyak vyayam* (exercises) *samyak sram* (labour) and *samyak nidra* (sleep). *Samyak ahar* means it should not be heavy nor intoxicating (*madak ya uttejak*) for lastly *samyak nidra* the sleep which is also important, so one must sleep for 6 to 8 hours.

He asked us to learn about one’s mind by silently observing it. Giving the mind a freedom to allow whatever appears there without fear, and then one will be free from useless things in their mind. While practicing one should learn to live alone. One should not think of others. He wants us to be aware of the fact that what we do not want. It appears in our mind what we want, what does not appear we do not. So first understand how a mind works, first by just being aware of everything within and outside. During meditation if one tries to just listen every outside sound, the mind will slowly stop thinking and nothing will arise. All this will in turn develop the heart and mind. He finished his lecture by saying: my beloved I bow in reverence to the god within you.

Where in 1964 he is talking of freeing oneself from all past, freeing one from fear. Later the changes he introduces appear like deceiving the old gathering. In 1971, in his first English lecture series shift can be seen though till now lot of miles have been travelled and now retreat was not possible without affecting the whole edifice.

One can find a changed person between his first decade of formative years 51-57 and later. In 1970’s he changed his style, his approach and emphasis too. In the sixty’s he started living like a Hindu or Jain monk wearing a *lungi* and a *chhadar* and spoke at religious assemblies when invited. He appeared to be a thinker who wants to get out of the old prejudices and asked people to re-think. Later on in the seventies he developed his *nav sannyas* (neo Sannyas) movement and asked his disciples to change their clothes to loose fitting lungi-kurta and the colour to saffron. He himself changed his name to “Bhagwan Sri Rajneesh,” started to wear a western robe used by Christian priests. Not only this, the glamour around him also increased, unfortunately his deteriorating health also forced him to change his lifestyle.

In 1970 at Bombay he developed closeness with the daughter of a jain family born on February 12, 1933. Lakshmi met him for the first time at a Jain Congress and later when Rajneesh was returning from Matheran on way to Jabalpur he visited her house, Lakshmi declared that she had fallen in love at first sight with the Sadhu. Later when he shifted to

Bombay he made her, his caretaker secretary. She was one of the first *sannyasins* to be initiated in 1970. She helped in opening Shree Rajneesh Ashram in Pune on the 21st March 1974. She died on January 6, 1995 in Mumbai (Bombay) uncared for.

As already mentioned that he started initiating disciples in *sannyas* and said renunciation is not leaving the world, but changing the attitude. He said “An attitude of leaving the world is something serious. To me, initiation itself is a play that is why I could initiate anyone into *sanyas*.” He also said “I will not ask for any qualifications, this *sanyas* is not the old *sanyas*. It is totally a new concept, or totally an ancient one which has been forgotten completely, you can call it.”

He advised not to struggle with one's spreading outward self. He suggested to struggle with the seed which is in you, which can grow to such heights that this outward nonsense will automatically collapse. Once one knows the inner riches, then there is nothing which is comparable – even from the outside world. Once one knows the inner bliss, then enjoyment is foolish. He said the old concept of *sannyas* will deny many things. He will not deny but that does not mean that he allows. He said: “I say I will not deny, it only means a moment can come when a person becomes absolutely transcendental to sex. That is another thing. That is not a requirement but a consequence. It is not needed before *sanyas*. It will come after *sanyas*. And I will not make it a guilt if it does not come. Sex was denied because sex seems to give a glimpse of happiness. If ten thousand are initiated and even one reaches the goal, the trouble is worth taking. And all those who come to know something of this inner world, I would ask them to go and knock at every door, and tell them to stand on the roofs, and proclaim that something blissful, that something immortal, that something divine is possible.” Rajneesh was a well educated man. He understood philosophy and he perceived things and was not only limited to bookish knowledge.

He claimed that there are three beliefs which are going to destroy the last bridge between humanity and the divine undercurrent. The three are: the Darwinian concept which has turned into the belief of the human machine; the Marxist concept which has turned consciousness into an epiphenomenon of economic forces, and the Freudian concept of irrationality: that man is not a rational being at all. Then man cannot do anything. Then man is in the hands of natural forces, instinct. He has to do whatsoever he does, and there is no consciousness really,

but only an illusory notion that we are conscious. I want that religion should become a current dialogue. It is not a current dialogue at all. No one talks about it. Everyone talks about politics. No one talks about religion. If someone talks about it, others only tolerate it out of etiquette. They preach, hear or listen only as a social duty, as a Sunday affair. No one takes any care of what is happening to his innermost soul.

He said: many things will remain unexplained for a much longer time, but the more one becomes receptive, the more he will be able to explain. The deeper one's capacity is to be sympathetic, the deeper the truth that can be revealed to him. “The more rational the discussion, the lesser the truth that can be revealed, because only less significant truths can be given any proof with reason. Deeper truth cannot be given any proof with reason. So unless I feel that you are so sympathetic that reason will not come in, I cannot tell you. I have to remain silent on so many points – not because I am withholding anything from you, but because it will not be helpful to you, and on the contrary it may prove harmful.”

It means two things, primarily. One, that life as it is known outwardly is not fulfilling and is meaningless. The moment one becomes aware of this fact, that this whole life is just a meaningless thing, and then the seeking begins. This is the negative part, but unless this negative part is there, the positive cannot follow. He said: “this is the negative way of spiritual seeking, and the whole life helps you toward this. This part – this negativity, this frustration, this anguish – is the part the world is to do. Once you become really aware of this fact of the meaninglessness of life as it exists, then your seeking ordinarily begins, because with a meaningless life you cannot be at ease. With a meaningless life an abyss is created between you and all that is life. An unbridgeable gap grows, becoming wider and wider. You feel unanchored. Then a search for something which is meaningful, blissful, begins. That is the other part – the positive part.”

He said: “Spiritual seeking means to come to terms with actual reality, not with the dream projection. Our whole life is just a projection of our dreams projection. It is not to know what is. It is to achieve what is desired. You can take the word “desire” as a symbol of our so-called life. It is a desired projection. You are not in search of what is. You are in search of what is desired. You are not in tune with reality – only in tune with all your dreams. Your dreams will have a shattering disillusionment. Once you become aware of this, then you do not desire, or your only desire is to know what is.”

“I am not to project myself but to know what is not that I should be this way or the reality should be that way, but only this: that whatever reality may be, I want to know it, naked as it is. I should not project; “I” should not come in. I want to encounter it as it is. Spiritual seeking positively means encountering existence as it is without any desire. The moment there is no desire, the projecting mechanism is not working. Then you can see what is. This “what is,” that which is, once known, gives you all that. I just say to such a man, “Go deep and know who you are.” The man becomes transformed. He goes into samadhi. He stands still in the moment. If you are in the present even for a single moment, you have known, you have encountered, and you will never be able to lose the track again.”

“We in this land (India) knew so many truths. We called this world “samsar” means the wheel.” Not only one is running, but the wheel itself is also running. It is not a steady circle. So even if one stands, the wheel will go on. So one not only has to stop, but to step out of the wheel. This stepping out is sanyas “Do not be on the wheel. Just come out of the rut. Be a witness to it. Only then will you know of what this wheel is made of, why it goes on running, even when you are not running.”

“Meditation is something greater than the mind. It is not something which happens in the mind. It is something which happens to the mind, not in the mind; otherwise the mind will be capable of defining it, the mind will be capable of knowing it, understanding it. It is not something happening in the mind, but to the mind. The happening is just like death happens to life. Death never happens in life; it happens to life. Meditation is just like death to the mind, as death is to life. So meditation is consciousness without the mind – an open sky without any walls around it.”

“There are device’s to make you alert, one is kundalini practice. It is a system to transform sex energy for meditation and awareness. But it is useful to a person whose sex energy can be easily and naturally channelized for meditation purposes. In the days of the Vedas and Upanishads, or in ancient India, the people were simple and natural, and they could easily convert their sex energy. For them sex was not a mental problem at all. It was not at all a problem. Once it is a problem, it becomes mental.”

“Today, the modern world is so sexually perverse and sexually exploited that kundalini the movement of psychic energy in a particular

psychic channel – has become difficult. But the body has so many routes. It is a great world in itself. You can work through breathing, and through breathing you can take the jump. You can work through sex, and through sex you can take the jump. You can work through awareness – that is, directly through consciousness, and you can take the jump. So there are so many routes, and each route can be used with so many methods.” “My method is not directly concerned with any route. It is just like a vehicle which can fly, swim and go on the road. Whatever is the need of your personality, the need will change the method, the route.”

Above mentioned words are what Osho usually said and are culled from “I am the Gate.” We find in the beginning that he was talking of developing human consciousness by increasing awareness first about body and then to the surroundings and ultimately towards his mind and self. He was suggesting something to adopt and some past prejudices to repudiate. The decade of sixties is well known for challenging the values of life. Rajneesh wrote that during the last five thousand years it has been proved that all commands, all religion, all moral arrangement have failed.

In fact religion sprang when men were nearer to nature. The modern industrial world has completely changed the face of the world; there is a change in the attitude also. Rajneesh was aware of it, he loved post-industrial world and capitalism, so he planned the whole discussion of spiritualism in accord with the new world view and way of life. He did not like traditional family. He refused to agree to medieval sex code. He wanted to see women in changed role too. Apparently the key position in the Ashram were given to women.

Is it that all religion, all spirituality, all moral commands are not working with the modern man. Only a convenient course of action is being followed and who ever now a day’s tries to bring change find themselves not able to get desired results is equally applicable to Rajneesh too. Human being are constantly in search of better life though better may not be clearly defined. Men want a better material life as well as a spiritual life. Their search often meet a master on the way who promises that he has all the answers for a better life, some times in this world and sometime in the next world and that will be provided by him and the journey ends now. The question is who gets convinced with whom? The question is what ultimately Rajneesh wanted to communicate to his disciples? First of all he tried to convince them

that there is a spiritual life along with the material one. Both should be taken into consideration. It is the human mind which has to play the main role though not through its active use but by just allowing it to work in a choice-less awareness. He devised several methods so that one can reach to that mental stage through meditation.

So he attracted people by first attacking the dead elements of tradition or something that has been followed by men since long. He now wanted those men should be allowed to live a life which is natural to his calling and not to his artificial one prescribed by cultures. He presumed that once the man is aware of his true nature he will move away from culture but in a better way as deer lives in the jungle. Like Freud, he too believed that there should not be any social code, rather one should be regulated with instinct of sex and other needs alone *“the desire to kill and the insatiable craving for sexual gratification are clearly harmful to the well-being of a human community. As a result, civilization creates laws that prohibit killing, rape, and adultery, and it implements severe punishments if these rules are broken. Thus our possibilities for happiness are restricted by the law. This process, argues Freud, is an inherent quality of civilization that gives rise to perpetual feelings of discontent among its citizens.”(Civilization and Its Discontents 1930)”*

Rajneesh proclaimed in the area of education that emphasis should be on wisdom and not on discipline. One should attain wisdom for which getting out of discipline is required. The education which teaches us fear, lures us, teaches envy and competition it cannot lead to knowledge. As knowledge is freedom from the past...transcendence of the self.

But all his prescriptions fell apart. We observe what actually happened when he tried to establish his Ashrams at Puna and in United States. If you look at the very management of Ashrams you will easily find the problem that his idea can produce which ultimately destroyed his impact and image of a god man too.

He changed the Jeevan Jagriti Kendra into an ashram with followers who only obeyed his orders. He did not believe in democracy. He said he believed in meritocracy and the question what merit is; the answer was the masters pleasure. Ultimately Laxmi, his long time secretary died of cancer five years after Osho's death uncared for, Vivek his soul mate died of overdose of sleeping pills and Sheela landed in jail, whom he accused of destroying his dream project and being interested in sleeping

with him. His ashram was organized with strict discipline strict dress code strict colour code. Head among organizers lived with extreme luxury and the inmates were treated as slaves on mere food and accommodation and no question were allowed. If one fell ill he may die without medical help. The ashram was ultimately, fraudulently captured and run by Jayesh and Amrito his foreign disciples. They levied heavy fees for Indian disciples to visit even the Osho Samadhi.

Rajneesh's most important contribution is his emphasis on meditation among the eight fold path of Patanajali yoga (yam, niyam, ashan, pranayam, Pratyahara, dhyana, dharna, samadhi). He emphasized on meditation to know one's mind, himself and the existence by just living in a state of choice-less awareness. He made them simple. He explained them in modern terminology. He accepted that there is nothing new that he is adding but reminding people what Indians knew since antiquity. In fact picking meditation as the central point to advocate that he wanted people to free themselves from prejudices from dreams and convinced them that such a situation will be ideal for human being. A life of bliss. As that self-realization, that blissful life is a spiritual life as well. But his ideas may be convincing, these were not to be realized. Meditation may be helpful in spiritual journey as it served as a useful tool in the our complex life; it provided some amount of relaxation and also rejuvenates the people. All through his message it is difficult to find out what Rajneesh wanted.

I remember what he wrote in his last testament “I am not leaving any sermon, any direction, any idea, any group or religion to be followed. I lived a life of own and expect my disciples to live a life of their own. There is no past no future. It becomes relevant only if something changes; present is moment between two non existential. Existence is non-temporal and non-spatial, it is just a passage. It is most arduous thing to know that events are happening and you are not the doer.”

Political Thought of Muhammad Iqbal

Naresh Kumar Ambastha*

This article reflects upon the political philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal, a towering intellectual figure in Indian history, revered by many for his poetry and his thought. It is appropriate to consider the work of a man who represents some of the noblest and most dynamic aspects of the Islamic tradition at least during the early phase of his career fully attuned to the Indian thought. Muhammad Iqbal was born on 9th November 1877 at Sialkot (now in Pakistan). His ancestors were Kashmiri Brahmans, a Sapru clan; his forefathers had a predilection for mysticism, and both father, Nur Muhammad, and his mother, Imam Bibi, had a reputation for piety. In his old age he accepted a pension from the ruler of Bhopal, which he enjoyed till his death. He died at Lahore in 1938. He had a uniformly good career and obtained his M.A. degree in philosophy, after which he became a lecturer in the Oriental College, Lahore. By that time his fame as poet had begun to spread. In 1905 he went to Cambridge from where he obtained his degree of philosophical Tripos, having carried out his studies under McTaggart. For some time he did his research in Development of Metaphysics in Persia at Munich (Germany). In 1908, he returned to Lahore and joined the bar as a barrister. He never took his profession of law seriously and kept on pursuing his poetic instincts which also bears the mark of his philosophical study and messages. In 1911 he gave up his teaching career because he felt that he had a message to deliver and could do it better if he adopted an independent profession such as law. However, he always remained interested in education and was associated with the Oriental College, the Government College, and the Islamia College in Lahore, and with the Jami'a Millia in Delhi. During the sessions of the Round Table

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Conferences in London, he worked on the various committees connected with educational reforms. In 1933 Iqbal, along with some others, was invited by the Afghan government to visit the country and advise the government and Kabul University on educational matters.

He was a famous poet, but he never neglected his serious philosophical pursuits. He lived in India in the twilight years of the British Empire and, apart from a short but significant period studying in the West, he remained in Punjab until his death in 1938. Although Iqbal's significance is universally admitted, he has become a controversial figure in Modern Indian thought because the sources of his ideas are regarded by many scholars as un-Indian, and because some of his later writings reveal trends of thought which seem to be at variance with the liberalism of his own earlier poetry.

The article studies Iqbal's critique of nationalist ideology, and his attempts to chart a path for the development of the "nation" by liberating it from the centralizing and homogenizing tendencies of the modern state structure. These were highly relevant and often controversial issues during the years leading up to Independence, and Iqbal frequently clashed with his contemporaries over his view of nationalism as "the greatest enemy of Islam." Iqbal was also worried by the wave of chauvinistic nationalism which was engulfing some European nations. Like Tagore, Iqbal saw clearly the dangers of nationalism. He had himself been an ardent nationalist and, before his journey to the West, had written some moving patriotic songs. Before he proceeded to Europe for higher studies, Iqbal was an ardent nationalist. Poems like *Himala*, *Tarane-Hind* and *Naya Shawala* voice the sentiments of a staunch nationalist. According to some writers, *Tarane-Hind* reads like a national anthem of Independent India. Iqbal thinks that India is incomparably superior to the rest of the world. After eulogizing certain aspects of the land, he inculcates communal harmony, by saying that no religion preaches hatred and that everybody living in the country is an Indian and India is his land. Greek, Egyptian and Roman civilizations have disappeared, but the civilization of India is still flourishing. (*Bang-i-Dara*; p. 82) In another poem, *Taswir-i-dard* the poet laments the miserable conditions of his countrymen and warns them about the dangers ahead. Disunity among various elements of the population tortures him a great deal, and he makes a resolution that he would string them together like beads in a rosary. He admits that it is a difficult task but he is determined to find a solution for it. Religious differences in his opinion, have ruined many nations and he wondered if his

countrymen are aware of this fact and if they really care for their country. Cantwell Smith has commented upon this phase of Iqbal in the following words:

“At the turn of the century he was attracted also to the surging nationalism of the day and he appealed strongly for Hindu-Muslim solidarity, and wrote inspiringly of the glorious land of India and of the honour, love and devotion, due to her. His *Tarane-i-Hind*, one of these poems, is today loved as a national anthem by thousands of all communities in India” However, this phase of Iqbal’s thought was ephemeral. A shift from the poet of India to the bard of Islam was swift. In 1908, he returned from Europe and his views on nationalism had totally changed. But he now sensed the approaching tragedy of the World War. Like Tagore’s poem *Is It Destroyer Who Comes?*, Iqbal’s *Wataniyat* reveals a strange premonition of the holocaust resulting from aggressive nationalism. In this poem Iqbal expressed the fear that nationalism might become less and less compatible with religion, and that the nation might turn into new God demanding absolute surrender. In rejecting post-enlightenment conceptions of religion, he constructed his own particular interpretation of Islam that would provide solutions to all political, social, and economic ills. In many ways, his vision of Islam – forged through an interaction with Muslim thinkers and Western intellectual traditions – was ahead of its time, and since his death, both modernists and Islamists have continued to champion his legacy. Iqbal also took interest in the workings of the Muslim League, but did not participate actively in politics. During the period 1910-23 he tried instead to create political consciousness and bring about an awakening of Indian Muslims. In 1924, Iqbal became a member of the National Liberal League of Lahore; in 1926 he was elected a member of the Punjab Legislative Assembly, and in 1930 was elected president of the All-India Muslim League, where he delivered a historic address. He took part in the Second and Third Round Table Conferences held in London, and was most disappointed with the outcome. Iqbal was knighted on 1 January 1923. His last years were clouded with ill health. After his death in 1938 he was buried near the gate of the Badshahi Mosque in Lahore, with many attending and millions in mourning.

Iqbal represents some of the noblest and most dynamic aspects of Islamic traditions and who was at least during the early phase of his career, fully attuned to the spirit of Indian thought. Here we have a poet philosopher whose status in modern Indian literature ranks next only to Tagore’s, and who was at the same time fully initiated in the

discipline of technical philosophy. Iqbal himself several times says that the general aim of his philosophical thinking is the reconstruction of religious thought in Islam. It shows that the basic concept categories of Iqbal’s metaphysics are derived from Islam. But there were many other influences that determined and shaped his philosophical views. Persian philosophy; particularly the various interpretations of Islamic thought led Iqbal to think about the central religious themes of Islam. Sufism also influenced his thought. Iqbal’s philosophy is often described as the philosophy of *khudi*, or the Self. For him, the fundamental fact of human life is the absolute and irrefutable consciousness of one’s own being. For Iqbal, the advent of humanity on earth is a great and glorious event, not an event signifying human sinfulness and degradation. He points out that according to the Qur’an; the earth is humanity’s ‘dwelling-place’ and ‘a source of profit’ to it. Iqbal does not think that having been created by God, human beings were placed in a super sensual paradise from which they were expelled on account of an act of disobedience to God. Pointing out that the term ‘Adam’ functions as the symbol of self-conscious humanity rather than as the name of an individual in the Qur’an. Iqbal describes the ‘Fall’ as a transition from ‘a primitive state of instinctive appetite to the conscious possession of a free self, capable of doubt and disobedience’ (Iqbal 1930: 85). For Iqbal, Adam’s story is not the story of the ‘First Man’ but the ethical experience, in symbolic form, of every human being. Following the Qur’anic teaching that though human beings come from the earth, God’s spirit has been breathed into them, Iqbal holds on the one hand that human beings are divinely created, and on the other hand that they have evolved from matter. Unlike dualists, Iqbal sees no impassable gulf between matter and spirit, nor does he see human beings as a mere episode or accident in the huge evolutionary process. On the contrary, the whole cosmos is there to serve as the basis and ground for the emergence and perfection of the Ego. Humanity’s evolution has not come to an end, for the destiny of human beings lies ‘beyond the stars.’

A precocious youth, Iqbal began to write poetry at a very early age, and soon after he came to Lahore, he became known through his participation in poetic symposia. As a young poet, he came under the influence of Mirza Dagh Dehalvi, one of the renowned exponents of Urdu poetry. An organization to which Iqbal was devoted all his life was the Anjuman-e-Himayat-e-Islam (Society for the Support of Islam). The annual sessions of the Anjuman fulfilled an acute emotional need

of Indian Muslims and became a national festival. Iqbal read his poems regularly at these sessions, and in fact his poems were the main attraction for the thousands who flocked to Lahore, almost on an errand of pilgrimage, to see and hear him. It was at an Anjuman meeting in April 1911 that Iqbal read his famous 'Shikwa' (The Complaint), a poem which commands such a unique place in Urdu literature that Iqbal's fame could rest securely on it alone.

Of all the parts of his thought, Iqbal's political philosophy is perhaps the most commonly misunderstood. This misunderstanding is largely the result of dividing his political philosophy into phases, such as the nationalistic phase, the pan-Islamic phase and the last phase in which he pioneered the Muslim independence movement. By regarding each phase as being quite different from and independent of the other phases, one almost always reaches the conclusion that either Iqbal's political views changed with astonishing rapidity or that he could not make up his mind and was inconsistent. One can indeed see Iqbal first as a young poet with rather narrow parochial sympathies, which gradually widened into love of homeland, and then gave way to love of Islam which later became transformed into love of humanity. However, he can also be seen as a visionary, whose ideal from first to last was the realization of God's Kingdom on Earth, who believed in the interrelatedness, equality and freedom of human beings, and who strove at all times to achieve these goals; and by viewing Iqbal in this one light, one attains a much better understanding of his political philosophy.

Iqbal's interest in politics was secondary not primary. In his historic address at Lahore, in 1932, he made this clear:

Politics have their roots in the spiritual life of Man. It is my belief that Islam is not a matter of private opinion. It is a society, or if you like, a civic Church. It is because present-day political ideals, as they appear to be shaping themselves in India, may affect its original structure and character that I find myself interested in politics. (Iqbal 1964 p. 288)

Iqbal's impact on the political situation of the Muslims in India was so great that he is hailed as the 'spiritual' founder of Pakistan. Undoubtedly, there was much focus on the Islamic community in his major works written between 1908 and 1938. He was accused by Lowes Dickinson of being exclusive in his thinking. Iqbal died in the beginning of 1938 but the impact of his political activities continued to mould the destiny of Muslims throughout their latter struggle for independence under the leadership of the quaid-i-Azam M.A. Jinnah. He was not a

professional politician, but in political prudence, insight and vision, his record was second to none. He was perhaps the first person who professed division of India. I want to cite the following remarks made by Mr Jinnah about Iqbal's contribution to politics.

"Iqbal was a remarkable poet of world-wide fame and his work will live forever. His services to his country and the Muslims are so numerous that his record can be compared with that of greatest Indian that ever lived..... although a great poet and philosopher, he was no less a practical politician, with his firm conviction and faith in the ideals of Islam, he was one of the few who originally thought over the feasibility of carving out of India an Islamic State in the North-West and North-East zones which are historical homelands of Muslim" (Cited In the Pirzada , Syed Sharfuddin p. 121)

He was a fervent nationalist, but no man of his thought can deny the fact that even at the height of his nationalistic fervour, he was a Muslim first and a nationalist afterwards. His primary concern was the fate of the Muslim community in India. It was their interest, he pointed out, "in so far as India is concerned, I can say with perfect confidence that the Muslim of India will not submit to any kind of Idealism which would seek to annihilate their cultural entity" (Speeches and Statements of Iqbal. p. 143)

He never framed his speeches with venom and hatred which was so common among many professional politician of time. Communal riots, which had become instruments of political gains for the leading politicians of the country, always left a streak of agony in Iqbal's mind. In a letter to Sir Kishan Prasad, dated 19th March, 1923, he made the following comments on the growing bitterness between the Hindus and the Muslims of the Punjab:

"It is very sad that differences rather hostility between the Hindus and the Muslims is multiplying every day. If this continues life will become extremely difficult for the two nations in the coming thirty years"

Between the years 1924 and 1927, communal riots in the country were at their peak. Hindus and Muslims were fighting on all kinds of pretexts such as cow slaughter, music in front of mosques, and religious festivals. Leaders of all shades of opinions were trying to curb communal passions. During this period many new organizations emerged whose main aim purpose was to create an atmosphere of Hindu-Muslim amity. In Lahore, Hindus and Muslims jointly organized a body called the "National Liberal League." Iqbal also joined this league. Later when

C.Y. Chantamani convened a national conference at Bombay, Iqbal offered to be enlisted among those who were responsible for its sponsorship. When Iqbal was questioned about his association with these bodies he issued the following statement:

“In Punjab, because of bitterness between the Hindus and the Muslims shameful conditions have emerged which no sincere and honest human being can tolerate. It is my genuine opinion that Hindus and Muslims by eliminating their differences can live in peace as brothers. It was with this view that I joined an organization in Lahore, which was sponsored by the leading members of the various communities to create a conciliatory atmosphere in communal relations. Later I resigned from this body, because here too the atmosphere was that of pugnacity. I am so far remained aloof from all political parties who should work with harmony and cordiality. The present feelings of extreme hostility are utterly ruinous for the moral and social life of the various communities. I disown contact with political parties but it is my heartiest wish that the people of the sub-continent should live in peace and mutual goodwill.”

This quotation is meant to show that in spite of his specific views on Indian politics, Iqbal was always desirous of promoting friendship among the various communities but there were accusations of religious fanaticism against him. As a matter of principle Iqbal believed that in politics, debates and discussions were better than sticks and brickbats.

The Muslim Conference, which was initially convened as an emergency measure to lodge a joint protest against those who were actively working for joint electorates, became a permanent body to fight for the cause of the Muslims. Members of the Muslim Conference were, the Agha Khan, Maulana Mohammad Ali, Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto, Nawab Chhatari, Raj Sher Mohhammad Khan, Maulavi Fazl-ul-Haq, Sir Abdul Karim Ghaznavi, Sir Jinnah, Sir Sultan Ahmad, Sir Muhhammad Safi and others. Iqbal's association with the Muslim Conference was close and prolonged. At first he was a member of the Executive Council, and after that he presided at the annual session held at Lahore on the 21st March, 1932. In his presidential address he said:

“We tried the majority community and found them unwilling to recognize the safeguards which we can forego at the risk of complete extinction as a nation determined to live its own life. The alternative to hope for justice from the British who, ever since took the country from the Muslims, have claimed, as I have said above, to function as impartial holder of balance in India. In their case, too, we find that

the old British courage and straight-forwardness are replaced by a constantly shifting policy which can inspire no confidence and seems to be calculated only to facilitate their own position in IndiaYour immediate duty is to prepare the whole community for the kind of self-sacrifice without which no self-respecting people can live an honourable life. The most critical moment in the history of the Indian Muslims has arrived. Do your duty or cease to exist.” (Vahid, S.A Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal pp 205-206). In the same address, he once again voiced his apprehension about the philosophy of the Hindus, which was patently western in origin and substance and thus, in his opinion, unsuited to the Muslims. He believes the administration of Muslim Community should be through the enforcement of the Law of Islam. In this regard he wrote a letter to Mr. Jinnah, *“Happily there is a solution in the enforcement of the Law of Islam and its future development in the light of modern ideas. After a long and careful study of Islamic Law I have come to the conclusion that if this system of law is properly understood and applied, at least the right to subsistence is secured to everybody. But the enforcement and development of the Shariat of Islam is impossible in this country without a free Muslim state or states.”*

At the Bombay session in 1936, the All India Muslim League authorized Mr. Jinnah to organize a Central Parliamentary Board to work for the forthcoming elections under the Government of India Act, 1935. Mr. Jinnah approached Mohhammad Iqbal, who readily agreed to give every possible help in the formation of Punjab Parliamentary Board. Mr. Iqbal was elected as an M.L.A. of the Punjab Assembly. Near the end of Iqbal's life, the picture of Muslim politics was encouraging. He worked ceaselessly, with supreme honesty and sincerity, to bring unity of purpose and ideals among the Muslims. In 1937, he fell seriously ill and died in March, 1938, but the later political currents in the sub-continent showed that his endeavours were not wasted. He did not live long enough to see the dream of Muslim unity being realised in his own lifetime. The Muslim league's activities between 1940 and 1947; culminating in creation of Pakistan, will remain a permanent tribute to his political wisdom and remarkable foresight. Iqbal's deep feeling for the unity of the Islamic world, and his concern for the future of Indian Muslims, clearly led him to take positions which strengthened the separatist movement in Indian politics. Describing him as the spiritual founder of Pakistan, is not an exaggeration.

M.N. Roy, New Humanism and Post-Modernism

R.C. Sinha*

Here I have tried to explain New Humanism and Post-Modernism. I have also maintained that New Humanism can redress the difficulties of Post-Modernism. In post-modern society consumerism is growing. Man is on the margin. New humanism attempts to bring marginalized man in the centre stage.

I have attempted to expound and analyze the concept of New Humanism propounded by M.N. Roy. I have streamlined its implications in technological society of post-modernism. The concept of New Humanism has been developed by M.N. Roy under the backdrop of western materialistic and rationalistic social and cultural philosophy. M.N. Roy in the beginning was a nationalist then he became a communist and at last he embraced humanism. He reformed his views on the touch stone of experiences. He lived in Asia, America and Europe.

The philosophical view of M.N. Roy is essentially humanistic. Humanism can serve as a deterrent to excessive consumerism of post-modernism. The central theme of "New Humanism" is man's concern towards 'others'. M.N. Roy believes in modern materialism. There is a subtle difference between traditional materialism and modern materialism. We make a distinction between physics and quantum physics likewise M.N. Roy has made a distinction between traditional materialism and modern materialism. I think that New Humanism can solve some problems of technology laden post-modernism. In this context, I have also tried to explain the meaning and conditions of post-modern society. The concept of post-modernism has engaged the minds of world-philosophers after the collapse of communism. Post-modernism declared

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the end of historical process. Francis Fukuyama in his celebrated book entitled *The End of History and the Last Man* has declared the end of historical process. Post-modernity upholds plurality and gives multi-narratives. It explodes the myth of scientific and rational philosophy of Marxism. It depicts the social conditions which is full of ruptures. In post-modern society, consumerism is at its peak. Man has lost his identity and has been reduced to an object amongst objects. Man has lost the sense of 'manness'. The 'ruptures', 'discontinuity' in historical process and estrangement of man from his social conditions are pathologies of post-modern society. My contention is that humanism can help us to get rid of degenerating human values of post-modern society. Humanism is the leading philosophy of the present age. But humanism is an abstract concept. M.N. Roy has conceived concrete concept of new humanism based on modern materialism.

Let us turn the focus of our attention on the ideas of New Humanism. The fulcrum of new humanism is freedom. M.N. Roy observes, "Society is a creation of man-in-quest of freedom. Co-operative social relationships were established originally with the purpose of reinforcing the struggle for existence which the privative man had undertaken as individual."¹ As a thorough-going humanist, Roy could not remain content with ready-made solutions offered by either spiritualist universalism or by Marxist totalitarianism. He continued his search till he rediscovered individualist ideas as propounded by the liberals in the West in the earlier years of the Modern era. Though M.N. Roy was influenced by Karl Marx and was close to communist party, yet he always differed from totalitarianism. He champions the cause of freedom. He also subscribes to value systems of Indian ethics. He upholds ethical values and cherishes freedom of man. To these ideas he provided a fresh scientifically oriented ontology and epistemology. He revived the radical and revolutionary character of individualism. It was needed for the reawakening of the Indian masses as rational, free and moral individuals. As a matter of fact, Francis Fukuyama in his book entitled *The End of History and the Last Man* upholds that liberal democracy has triumphed and communism has collapsed. M.N. Roy differs from communism and considers liberal democracy as creed of modern age.

In order to explain the concept of New Humanism, M.N. Roy says, "Radicalism thinks in terms of neither of nation, nor of class, its concern is man; it conceives freedom as the freedom of the individual. Therefore, it can be called New Humanism, new because it is humanism

enriched, reinforced and elaborated by scientific knowledge and social experience gained during the centuries of modern civilizations.”²

The noteworthy aspect of M.N. Roy’s approach to human individual and his relation to society and the state is that he seems to be striking the first notes of growing commitment to science, secularism and pragmatism of post-Independent Indian philosophers. He observes – “Man is essentially a rational being. His nature is not to believe, but to question, to enquire and to know. He gropes in the darkness of ignorance helpless victim of the blind faith in forces beyond his comprehension and control until knowledge illuminates his path.”³

Roy derived his concept of human individual from scientific researches. He accepted materialist view of man that could be known by mechanistic methodology. This he did in order to bring home the ideas of man’s dignity and freedom. In a post-modern society life is full of stress. Man’s existence is threatened by ruptures and disruption of values of life. Roy thought that no amount of religious and spiritualist concern could safeguard these basic truths. These, he thought, would have to be derived from such premises that would be self-evident and rationally knowable. In his ideas, resounds the earlier concept of man as understood by the Natural Law Philosophers. M.N. Roy states, “Man, with his mind, intelligence and will remain an integral part of the physical universe. The latter is cosmos; law governed system. Therefore, man’s being and becoming, his emotions, will and ideas are also determined; man is essentially rational. The reason in man is an echo of the harmony of the universe. Morality must be referred back to man’s innate rationality. Only then, man can be moral, spontaneously and voluntarily.”³ Post-modernity deconstructs structuralism. Reason builds system and structure. But post-modernism deconstructs system and does not subscribe to ontology of rationality.

Rejecting the metaphysical concept of spirit, M.N. Roy believed that man was a product of nature at large and his personality was also a result of the natural laws that operated in the universe as well as in human lives. Human freedom, reason and morality all were interlinked concepts that reflected in them the universal or cosmic natural laws. Thus to M.N. Roy, unlike the earlier spiritualists, freedom, morality and rational faculty could develop only inside the society and not in withdrawing from its obligations. But society, Roy interposed, in its turn was a mere contrivance to provide men with an opportunity to be rational, free and moral. M.N. Roy observes, “The purpose of all rational human endeavours, collective as well as individual, should be

the attainment of freedom in ever larger measure, and freedom is real only as individual freedom.”⁴ Priority given to individual made Roy resent the pretensions of the socio-political authority to be sole instrument in bringing about reform, progress and change. He disdained all such encroachments on human freedom as were common in totalitarian or communist societies. This induced him to propagate the ideal of partyless democracy.

By advocating partyless democracy, Roy wanted to minimize the state-control and maximize the role of private individuals in public decision making. He also proposed to decentralize the political power as embodied in one supreme government into numerous autonomous local groups of people. This idea of partyless democracy was also propagated by Jayaprakash Narayan. I do not subscribe to the views of partyless democracy, since democracy presumes election. Partyless democracy is an abstract concept. Every individual will be free to propagate his ideas and ideology. This will lead to anarchy.

Roy’s deep concern for the freedom and dignity of man, made him reject the political totalitarianism of Marx. This also made him oppose monopolistic and exploitative tendencies of capitalism. He did not want to entrust total power of any kind with one centralized head in any form, be it a state or an individual. In order to avoid centralization in economic sphere he pleaded for cooperative and voluntary efforts to be made for the welfare of mankind. Post-modernism also rejects centralization of power. It believes in relativism and rejects totalitarianism.

New Humanism is new because its ontology is modern materialism and epistemology is rationalism. The contemporary society is Post-modern which starts with the end of Marxism. Jacques Derrida is a celebrated post-modern philosopher who has rejected the aspect of continuity and development in the historical process. Derrida said that the relationship between the ancient and the modern is not that of the implicit and the explicit. Such thinking conceived history as an evolutionary development and excludes the crucial notions of ruptures and mutations in history. My own conviction is that we must admit two contradictory affirmations at the same time. On the one hand, we affirm the existence of ruptures in the history and on the other we affirm that these ruptures produce gaps or faults in which the most hidden and forgotten archives can emerge and constantly occur and work through history.

Derrida’s ways of explaining history in terms of ruptures and mutations falls widely apart from Shankara’s way of analyzing history in terms of continuity. M.N. Roy emphasizes on New Humanism and

its integral world process and unified world order, rationality and human freedom. It will deal with the concept of estrangement of man and ruptures in society. Derrida's conception of reconstruction and the 'End of Man' requires to be reviewed in the light of humanistic trends prevailing in Indian thought. I simply uphold that new humanism of M.N. Roy can establish harmony in fragmented post-modern society. It requires to be mentioned that new humanism derives its inspiration from modern materialistic philosophy. M.N. Roy does not believe in traditional materialism, but in modern materialism. Modern materialism believes that ultimate reality is not hard material object but energy. The philosophy of new humanism is based on reason. It does not deny the reality of any aspect of existence. It is not based on the denial of the reality of the world and the individual. Here M.N. Roy differs from Shankar. The Advaitism is abstract while New Humanism is inclusive in nature. Hence the New humanism affirms the reality of the world and of matter as well as of energy. Aurobindo while propounding Integral Advaitism reconciles between matter and spirit. It aims at having an integral view of reality. New Humanism of M.N. Roy was committed to materialistic cosmology, while Tagore's humanism is rooted in Vedantic culture of India. M.N. Roy was agnostic and had neither the time nor the attitude of training for spiritual and ontological quest, Tagore can be regarded as avowed exponent of the sanctity and superiority of spiritual humanism which is deeply rooted in Vedantic philosophy of Ramanuj, while Roy drew inspiration from Marx. Tagore derives inspiration from the traditions of theistic Vedantism. Tagore wanted to advance through the conservation of whatever was good in Vedantic culture. Tagore reconciles secular and spiritual values— Artha & Kama with that of Dharma. M.N. Roy believed in moral values instead of religious values. In Roy's philosophy of New humanism moral values override religious values.

After explaining the meaning of new humanism in contemporary Indian thought, I will proceed to analyse the concept of new humanism in contemporary post-modern society. It may be defined as a theory according to which, there can be no reality higher than man. New humanism is primarily based on equality and social justice. So humanism appears to be a predominant philosophy of our age. It is the key concept of the latter half of the twentieth century philosophy. Since humanism is universally approved, every philosophy from the materialism to theism, from empiricism to intuitionism from structuralism

to phenomenology and from dictatorship to democracy is claiming to be humanistic.

The Post-Modernism declared the 'end of man'. The end of man means the end of rationality. I do not agree with the view that man should be pushed to the margin. Indian contemporary philosophers tried to bring man and humanity in the centre. In the contemporary age, man suffered from alienation and absurdity. The post-modern world has raised so many questions of this dimension. The question is, if man has lost his sensibility and creativity, the voice of wisdom is subdued, then man has lost his identity. In post-structuralism, the concept of agency of man has been destroyed. Fredrick Jameson says that post-modernism displaces man from its central place and rejects the view that man is bearer of knowledge and action. Hence the natural man of Rousseau, the economic man of Marx, the superman of Nietzsche, the Gnostic man of Sri Aurobindo are utopian. The post-modern man is neuromancer. The man has been reduced to robot or computer man. According to M.N. Roy, humanism have found clue in the ideal of multi-dimensional man. The humanists have tried to avoid the metaphysical disputes and settle the meaning of humanism on the plane that is free from metaphysics. M.N. Roy admits metaphysics of materialism. The problem is therefore to maintain whether humanism can be metaphysics free. Those who answer this question in the affirmative are humanists, irrespective of metaphysical beliefs and those who answer it otherwise are not humanists at all. Humanism respects both the individuality of man and the existence of society. The tie of 'vyasti' and 'samasti' is the secret of human life. The second feature of humanism is humbleness or humility. Humanism implies that no one can be God and to be man is better than to be God. Deification of man is a dangerous fallacy. Hence humanism is necessarily secular. The third criterion of humanism may be called the principle of Karuna. The ancient Indian sages, especially Lord Buddha and Lord Mahavir extended it to the realm of animals and birds and advocated kindness towards all the creatures. The true human life is serviceable to other human beings. Secularism and socialism are thus now inextricably linked with humanism. The outlook of a humanist is philanthropic. He is committed to promote the welfare of humanity. Humanism is based on equality, fraternity and freedom. It is primarily based on equality and social justice.

Humanism may be theocentric or anthropocentric. The first kind of humanism recognizes that the centre of man is God. It implies the Hindu conception of man who is reeling under suffering. The second

kind of humanism considers man to be his own centre and therefore the centre of all things. It implies a naturalistic conception of man and freedom. In Vedantic fashion – man is a spiritual and integral being. Thus we see that man, according to Vedantic humanism, believes in God but he claims his own share in the primary initiative with regard to ‘Moksha’. Man himself is the sole agent to look to his own earthly life and happiness. But M.N. Roy does not subscribe to Vedantic humanism. He is out and out a modern materialist.

In the post-modern social conditions, we come across the concept of ‘technological humanism’. If we have to talk about humanity, we cannot ignore technology. Ordinarily, technology dehumanizes man. But when I speak of ‘Technological Humanism’, I mean that technological achievements serve humanity. It is linked with human welfare. The technological humanism is certainly different from spiritual humanism and materialistic humanism. The spiritual humanism of Vedanta has got ontological dimension. Likewise new humanism of M.N. Roy has also an ontological basis. It is not based on transcendental Reality. Its ontological basis is materialism. But technological humanism is free from ontological moorings. Technology holds scientific world view and when applied to human welfare gives rise to technological humanism. Technologist repudiates every term of supernaturalism and laws instead that there is only order of existence – namely the natural world and that man is wholly a neutral creature whose welfare and happiness comes solely from his own unaided efforts. New humanism of M.N. Roy is near to ‘technological humanism’ but it differs in a significant way.

It is at this stage that this paper intends to look towards ‘New Humanism’ from definite and distinct perspective. In the present context this looking towards new humanism does not mean that humanism will provide a ready solution for the problem of ‘rupture’ and ‘estrangement’. It merely means that viewing these problems in the scientific spirit would open a new way of putting up with ups and downs of life. It is a way of life without negating the demands of technology determined post-modern life. It would infuse humanism in the post-modern work culture. New humanism stipulated by M.N. Roy may work out solutions of disruptions of value system.

In post-modern society, there is the basic problem of ‘rupture’ and ‘dissolution’ of human value. It is quite clear that the philosophy of new humanism will meet the challenges and negative effects of post-modernism. The metaphysical idea of Moksha – the realization of ‘I am Brahman’ is so impressively lofty that a philosopher seems to

forget that the concern of Advaita Vedanta is humanistic. The man who lives and moves in the existential situation of the post-modern life faces determinism. The Vedantic concern is not world and life negating. It is the world and life affirming. In order to be relevant to post-modern need of society, Advaita Vedanta must open a dimension which may exalt man to cultivate a particular attitude towards post-modern life’s situation. M.N. Roy is concerned with freedom and Vedanta is concerned with ultimate freedom. M.N. Roy is not concerned with ‘moksha’.

Let us now begin our philosophical deliberations by determining the basic problem of ‘rupture’ in life and society. Post-modern society has set the process of ‘dehumanization’. The post-modern kind of life is taking away from man his uniqueness. By subjecting man to mechanical and technological way of living this kind of life is reducing man himself to the status of a machine. Technology is upsetting his life of feelings and aspirations of longing and kinship ties. The whole family can share their family feelings and emotion, photographs, greetings cards, day to-day news and updating all on the NET. The only thing lacking in computer linked post-modern life is ‘human touch’. It is so vital that it cannot be ignored. It refers to the inner man at the level of human sensibility. Rupture has penetrated into this level and that is a matter of concern. It is now noticeable not only in technologically advanced consumer post-modern society, but also in developing society like that of India. The tendency generated by the technology determined post-modern life has an enslaving effect. Man is caught in the cob-web of routine life. He is led to perform his work in a mechanical way. This mental make-up represents the phenomena of ‘estrangement’ with which the present day man seems to be completely infected. In post-modern society this is causing mental tension and psychiatric problems in developing societies like that of India. It is affecting both efficiency and output. I consider that new humanism of M.N. Roy is of great help to society.

Here I will emphasize that concern of M.N. Roy is not in any way incompatible with the demands of post-modern living New humanism insists that man must recognize the situation in which he has been placed. Man must be aware of his finiteness and temporality. Man’s suffering is not an objective entity, but an experience. It emphasizes that human concern can lessen the burden and evils of post-modern society. The rupture prevailing in social condition and estrangement of man can be redressed only when man starts philosophizing. A philosopher may feel that the problem of rupture in society is due to

the fact that man has lost his basic manness. He is constrained to lose his sense of human dignity. The solution lies on sustaining man's sense of dignity. M.N. Roy has picked up the basic humanistic stance from Indian framework. Man is in bondage only because he has surrendered the basic identity. According to M.N. Roy, philosophizing is cultivating the capacity of discrimination between the unreal and real. Rationality plays a great role. It is said that post-modern work culture leads to a loss of meaning in life. This can be restored only by keeping alive one's capacity to raise questions about meaning of life.

The uniqueness of new humanism lies in the fact that even though it is not preoccupied with the ultimate spiritual ideal, it is concerned with the humanistic trends and mundane existence. Technological man responds to life situation in a mechanical way while 'New Humanism' gives primacy to man. This is the reason I say that new humanism is close to technological humanism. New humanism contemplates that science is in service to man. The only difference is that New humanism does not recommend a mechanical surrender to the mass living, but a conscious decision to learn to act in terms of his ethical character. This enables one to extend and expand one's rationality. This conscious decision itself would prevent the sense of 'rupture' and 'estrangement', since estrangement is estrangement on account of a sort of helplessness representing the remoteness of one's action. The 'New Humanism' will make even mass order a matter of conscious and willful decision of the individual himself. The phenomenon of 'estrangement' appears to be a state of alienation and dehumanization only because the estranged individual fails to own it. But the moment we accept it as a part of our existential situation, we have risen above the situation.

The other way of meeting this phenomena of 'rupture' and 'estrangement' is to try to assess it in the way in which 'New Humanism' understands the phenomena of suffering. If suffering is an objective entity, its eradication would not have been possible. It is not metaphysical constituent of the world. In the light of such an analysis of the concept of philosophy and its humanistic concern, I can also say that rupture also is not an objective aspect of post-modern living but only an experience, since life is being viewed in a particular way then rupture emerges. There is no necessity, no technological determination involved in this to experience. We have led ourselves to a situation where we are constrained to have this experience.

Philosophers have suggested that 'rupture' and 'estrangement' arise because technologically determined post-modern life has taken

away from man his sense of humanness and has reduced man almost to a status of a machine. This is the reason for philosophers pleading restoration of that sense of man's uniqueness and dignity. It is at this juncture New humanism of M.N. Roy is relevant. In Vedantic thought, this rupture itself is a kind of bondage because in this state of affairs, man tends to forget his identity. It can be seen that the expression 'I am a human being' has ceased to convey any definite sense while the expression 'I am father of Mr. X' or 'I am an Indian' conveys some definite sense. Here definiteness pertains to some sort of identity for the speaker in a certain organization like a family or nation. But when I say 'I am a human being' is the plain indicative sentence and does not involve any emotional reference. The post-modern rupture involves a sort of a "loss of human identity." Indian philosophy in reality is a consistent attempt to refer to this identity, which, according to its perception, has an ontological dimension. The philosophy of M.N. Roy perhaps asserts that it is possible to realize oneself in integrating sense and reason. Therefore, philosophizing will keep one conscious of himself. The moment one is aware of himself or I awareness is introduced in life's scheme, the process of the conquest over dehumanization comes to life. M.N. Roy holds his own conception of philosophy by which he means restoring moral values to their proper place. Modernity was based on the separation of economic and moral values and the sole realization of economic values has created unsolvable problems. Now M.N. Roy is restoring moral values to their proper place and establishing their full control over economic values. In the fag end of his life, he parted with communism because of the question of freedom, which he loved most. New humanism does this function par excellence. I think that 'rupture' and 'dissolution' created by post-modern conditions of society can be controlled if we return to humanistic concern of New humanism.

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Census 2011: The Religious Imbalance Continues to Worsen but Hindus show Great Resilience

J.K. Bajaj*

Rise of Muslims

The most significant piece of data from the count of religious communities done during the census of 2011 is the rise of the proportion of Muslims in the population of India by 0.8 percentage points. They had a share of 13.43 per cent in the population of India in 2001; their share is 14.23 per cent now. This is the third decade in a row when their share has increased by or above 0.8 percentage points.

| Census Year | Rising Share of Muslims | |
|-------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| | Percentage Share | Decadal Increase in Share |
| 1951 | 10.45 | — |
| 1961 | 10.69 | 0.24 |
| 1971 | 11.20 | 0.51 |
| 1981 | 11.75 | 0.55 |
| 1991 | 12.61 | 0.86 |
| 2001 | 13.43 | 0.82 |
| 2011 | 14.23 | 0.80 |

Increase in percentage points.

The share of Muslims has been rising every decade since Independence and Partition. The quantum of rise, however, became rather large after 1981. That process of considerable increase in the share of Muslims has continued unabated during the decade of 2001-2011.

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Gap in the Growth of Muslims and Others

Widening Gap in the Growth of Muslims and Indian Religionists

| Census Decade | Growth of Indian R (per cent) | Growth of Muslims (per cent) | Difference in Growth (per cent) |
|---------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1951-61 | 21.16 | 24.43 | 15.45 |
| 1961-71 | 23.84 | 30.84 | 29.36 |
| 1971-81 | 24.09 | 30.74 | 27.60 |
| 1981-91 | 22.79 | 33.89 | 48.70 |
| 1991-01 | 20.34 | 29.50 | 45.03 |
| 2001-11 | 16.67 | 24.65 | 47.82 |

Difference as a proportion of Growth of Indian Religionists, including Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and ORPs.

Another way to understand this increase in the share of Muslims is to look at the difference in the decadal growth rates of Muslims and others, especially the Indian Religionists (IRs), among whom we include the Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and those in the census category of Other Religions and Persuasions (ORPs). The gap between the growth rates of Muslims and IRs widened to as much as 49 per cent during 1981-91; it became somewhat narrower in 1991-2001 and has widened again in the last decade. The commentators, who have been pointing out the decline of the Muslim growth rate from 29.69 to 24.65 per cent as an indication of the halting of the religious imbalance, are wrong; because, the gap between the growth rates of Muslims and IRs has only widened.

The Muslims in the country have grown by nearly 50 per cent more than the Indian Religionists for the third decade in a row. Such wide difference in the growth rates of one community compared to others is not sustainable in any society.

India likely to acquire the largest Muslim population in the World

Because of this sustained growth, the Muslim population in India has grown to 17.22 crore in 2011 compared to 3.77 crores in 1951, implying a multiplication factor of 4.6. The population of Indian Religionists in the same period has multiplied only 3.2 times. India may now be hosting the second largest Muslim population of the world, behind Indonesia which had 20.7 crore Muslim in 2010, but probably ahead of Pakistan,

whose total population in 2011 was 17.6 crores. Given these trends, most demographers agree that within two or three decades India shall be home to the largest Muslim population in the world.

Decline in the Share of Hindus and other Indian Religionists

As a consequence of this continuing rise in the share of Muslims, the share of Hindus and other Indian Religionists has been declining. In 2011, the share of Hindus in the population of the Indian Union has declined below 80 per cent; Hindus formed 80.46 per cent of the population in 2001, they are 79.80 per cent in 2011. The share of Sikhs has also declined from 1.87 to 1.72 per cent, of Buddhists from 0.77 to 0.70 and Jains from 0.41 to 0.37 per cent. The share of ORPs, who belong mainly to the various tribal religions, has marginally increased from 0.65 to 0.66 per cent. The share of Indian Religionists as a whole has thus declined from 84.21 to 83.48 per cent. This process of decline in the share of Indian Religionists, like the increase in the share of Muslims, has continued since Independence and Partition and has become considerably faster after 1981. Between 1951 and 2011, the share of Indian Religionists in the population of India has contracted by nearly 4 percentage points, and the Muslim share has expanded by that amount. Census of 2011 shows that this spurt in the Muslim growth and consequent decline of others, which began particularly after 1981, has not subsided yet.

Declining Share of IRs

| Census Year | Percentage Share | Decadal Increase in Share |
|--------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1951 | 87.22 | — |
| 1961 | 86.87 | -0.35 |
| 1971 | 86.20 | -0.67 |
| 1981 | 85.81 | -0.39 |
| 1991 | 85.07 | -0.74 |
| 2001 | 84.21 | -0.86 |
| 2011 | 83.48 | -0.73 |

Decrease in percentage points.

Hindus continue to hold on in much of India

The increase in the aggregate share of Muslims in the Indian population is largely because of their excessive growth in parts of India, where

they have acquired a dominating presence. Difference in the growth of Muslims in these parts, the most significant of which we shall discuss below, is much higher than the difference of 0.8 percentage points seen in India as a whole. Like the Muslims, Christians also have a domineering presence in several parts of India; in these parts their growth during the last decade has been much higher than what is suggested by the nearly stable share of 2.30 per cent that they have retained in the total population of India between 2001 and 2011.

But outside these regions and pockets of high Muslim or Christian presence and growth, Hindus have managed to more or less hold on to their share in the population. Looking at the detailed district and State-wise data of census 2011, one is left with a distinct impression of the great resilience of the Hindu society. There is indeed only one small Union Territory of Puducherry where the growth rate of Hindus has been higher than that of Muslims during 2001-11; but even in a large and contentious State like Bihar, the difference in the growth rate of Hindus and Muslims is of only about 3.3 percentage points, and it is of around or less than 5 percentage points in Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh. The differences in growth rates of Muslims and others were much higher in the previous decade; during 1991-2001, Muslim growth rate was higher than the Hindus by 8 percentage points in Bihar and by 19 percentage points in Chhattisgarh. In Bihar, Hindus have grown at a faster rate than the Muslims in several districts, including Patna, Nalanda, Jehanabad, Arwal, Aurangabad, Gaya, Nawada, Sheikhpura, Lakhisarai, Darbhanga, Saharsa and also Saran and Sheohar. The slightly higher aggregate Muslim growth in the State of Bihar is in fact only because of their excessively highly growth in the high Muslim presence region of Araria, Kishanganj, Purnia and Katihar and some of the adjoining districts like Supaul and Madhepura, which we shall discuss below. Hindu share has increased in The Dangs of Gujarat, where Christian growth seems to have reversed. There is also significant increase in the Hindu share in Narmada, where the share of both Christians and Muslims has declined. There are several other districts in Gujarat where there has been some increase in the Hindu share. Muslims share has increased by more than 1 percentage points in only Anand and Junagarh.

Such improvement in the share of Hindus and decline in that of Muslims can be seen in many districts and sub-districts across the country. There has also been a decline in the share of Christians in many parts of the country; that is why their aggregate share in the population of India has remained unchanged in spite of very large

increases in their presence in several States and districts, as we shall see in the following.

This phenomenon of a perceptible rise of Hindus and decline of Muslims or Christians in several districts and sub-districts is very significant. Some indications of this were visible in the census of 2001, especially in the districts around Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh; but now the phenomenon has become much more widespread and deeper. In regions of high Muslim and Christian presence, however, Hindus have continued to contract. Below, we shall discuss the status of some of these regions. But while we study the continued contraction of Hindus in some parts of the country, many of which are near and along the land or sea borders of India, we should certainly celebrate the resilience of Hindus in the rest of the country that the religious demographic data of 2011 has demonstrated so strongly. This is probably a consequence of the greater awareness of the religious demographic imbalance and more open public discussion of the issue over the past couple of decades.

But Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains have not fared well

There is another issue we need to mention before moving on to the regions of high Muslim or Christian growth. While the Hindus seem to have done fairly well in demographic terms in most parts of the country, it is unfortunately not true for the Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists. During 2001-11, the decadal growth of Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains has been 8.42, 6.13 and 5.37 per cent, respectively, compared to the Hindu growth of 16.76 per cent. In many States, very visible imbalance is developing between the growth of Hindus and Sikhs, Buddhists or Jains. We shall discuss this issue in a separate note; but it needs to be flagged.

Regions of high Muslim presence and Growth

As we have mentioned above, the issue of the religious demographic imbalance has the most salience in the regions of high Muslim (or Christian) presence and growth. In many of these regions, the decline in the share of Hindus has been much higher than the national average of 0.8 percentage points. Let us take the regions of high Muslim presence first.

Jammu and Kashmir

This northernmost State of India has a Muslim majority. The share of Muslims here has increased from 66.97 to 68.31 per cent; that of Hindus

has declined from 29.63 to 28.44 per cent. The shares of Sikhs and Buddhists have also declined.

Region-wise changes in the religious demography of the State are more significant. In the Kashmir region, the number of Hindus had declined to just 1.01 lakh in 2001; it has now improved significantly to 1.68 lakhs. The number of Sikhs has, however, grown only marginally from 48 to 56 thousand. The share of Hindus in the population of the valley has increased from 1.84 to 2.45 per cent; but the share of Sikhs has declined from 0.88 to 0.81 per cent. There are also changes in the share of other smaller groups. The share of Muslims, the majority group in the valley, has declined from 97.16 to 96.41 per cent.

The share of Hindus has improved significantly in the Ladakh region, from 6.22 to 12.11 per cent, while that of Muslims has declined slightly from 47.40 to 46.41 per cent. The larger decline is in the share of Buddhists, which has gone down from 45.87 to 39.65 per cent.

In the Jammu region, however, the share of Hindus has declined considerably from 65.23 to 62.56 per cent and that of Muslims has increased from 30.69 to 33.45 per cent. This rise in the presence of Muslims in the Jammu region was fairly noticeable in the 2001 census also.

Haryana

Haryana has seen unusually high growth of Muslims. Their share in the population has gone up from 5.78 to 7.03 per cent. There was also a similar rise in their share during 1991-2001, from 4.64 to 5.78 per cent; before that their share in the population was relatively stable. During 2000-11, Muslims in the State have grown by 45.66 per cent compared to the Hindu growth of only 18.84 per cent.

Muslims of Haryana are concentrated in the Mewat region; the newly created Muslim majority Mewat district of this region has 8.63 lakh out of the total 17.81 lakh Muslims in the State. The share of Muslims in this district has gone up from 74.83 to 79.20 per cent between 2001 and 2011; the share of Hindus has correspondingly declined from 24.84 to 20.37 per cent. Muslims in Mewat during this decade have grown by 46 per cent, while Hindus have grown by only 13 per cent. Muslim growth has been also high in Gurgaon, Faridabad and Palwal, the other three districts of the Mewat region; but in these districts Hindu growth has not been as low as in Mewat.

Yamunanagar is another district of Haryana where the share of Muslims has increased abnormally, from 9.99 in 2001 to 11.41 per cent

in 2011. The district borders the high Muslim growth pocket of western Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand that we discuss next.

Western UP and Uttarakhand

Rise in the share of Muslims in Uttar Pradesh as a whole has been a little less than the national average; their proportion in the population of the State has increased from 18.50 to 19.26 per cent. But in the Western Uttar Pradesh pocket of high Muslim presence, comprising the undivided (as in 1991) districts of Saharanpur, Hardwar (currently in Uttarakhand), Muzaffarnagar, Meerut, Bijnor, Moradabad, Rampur and Bareilly, has increased by nearly 2 percentage points. Muslim share in this belt has been increasing consistently since 1951, when there were less than 30 per cent Muslims here; their share now in 2011 is more than 40 per cent. As the Table here indicates, there is no let up in the trend of continuously rising presence of Muslims in this region.

| West UP Pocket | |
|----------------|---------------|
| Year | Muslim Share% |
| 1951 | 29.93 |
| 1961 | 30.61 |
| 1971 | 31.17 |
| 1981 | 32.82 |
| 1991 | 36.33 |
| 2001 | 38.52 |
| 2011 | 40.43 |

Muslim growth in Uttarakhand has been more than in Uttar Pradesh. Their share in the State has increased from 11.92 to 13.95 per cent. A large part of this increase is in the lower Uttarakhand districts of Hardwar, Dehradun and Udham Singh Nagar. The former two are part of the western UP pocket that we have mentioned above. In Udham Singh Nagar, the share of Muslims has gone up from 20.59 to 22.58 per cent. This area has been seeing a consistent increase for several decades. In the Kumaon region, comprising the undivided districts of Nainital, Almora and Pithoragarh, which include Udham Singh Nagar and for which we have long-term data, the proportion of Muslims has gone up from 4.24 per cent in 1951 to 12.12 per cent now. Increase in the last decade has been of 2.01 percentage points, which is even larger than the trend so far.

Kumaon

| Year | Muslim Share% |
|------|---------------|
| 1951 | 4.24 |
| 1961 | 5.24 |
| 1971 | 5.92 |
| 1981 | 6.42 |
| 1991 | 8.24 |
| 2001 | 10.10 |
| 2011 | 12.12 |

Bihar and Jharkhand

Share of Muslims in the population of Bihar is fairly high at 16.87 per cent in 2011; but as we have mentioned earlier, it has increased only marginally by 0.33 percentage points over 2001. In most of the districts of Bihar, the difference between the Hindu and Muslim growth rate is not high; and, in many districts Hindus have grown faster than the Muslims. The Muslim growth is considerably higher than the Hindus only in three of the four districts that formed part of the undivided Purnia district, Araria, Purnia and Katihar; the difference is not significantly high in Kishanganj, where the proportion of Muslims is the highest at 67.98 per cent. The Muslim growth has also been relatively high in the Supaul and Madhepura, in the immediate neighbourhood of this region. The share of Muslims has increased by more than one percentage point only in Araria, Purnia and Katihar.

Growth Rates, 2001-2011

| District | Hindus | Muslims |
|------------|--------|---------|
| Supaul | 26.91 | 35.46 |
| Araria | 26.09 | 35.98 |
| Kishanganj | 28.63 | 31.16 |
| Purnia | 25.53 | 34.26 |
| Katihar | 23.55 | 34.22 |
| Madhepura | 29.72 | 39.26 |

Muslim Percentage

| District | 2011 | 2001 |
|-----------|-------|-------|
| Deoghar | 20.28 | 19.02 |
| Godda | 22.02 | 20.11 |
| Sahibganj | 34.61 | 31.26 |
| Pakur | 35.87 | 32.36 |

In Jharkhand, the highest presence of Muslims is in Deogarh, Godda, Sahibganj and Pakur districts that form part of the undivided Santhal Pargana and adjoin the undivided Purnia district of Bihar that we have mentioned above. Growth of Muslims in all these districts has been considerably higher than the Hindus. In Sahibganj and Pakur, the share of Muslims has gone up by more than 3 percentage points and in Godda by nearly 2 percentage points. In these districts, there was a similar increase in the share of Muslims in the previous decade of 1991-2001 also. In the undivided Santhal Pargana, comprising these 4 districts, the share of Muslims has been increasing by about 2 or more percentage points every decade since 1971. Incidentally, the proportion of Christians in this region has also begun to rise considerably after 1991.

Per cent Share of Muslims and Christians in Santhal Pargana

| | 1951 | 1961 | 1971 | 1981 | 1991 | 2001 | 2011 |
|---|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| M | 9.44 | 13.77 | 14.62 | 16.44 | 18.25 | 20.59 | 22.73 |
| C | 0.18 | 1.14 | 1.55 | 1.64 | 1.68 | 3.24 | 4.21 |

There are other districts like Jamtara and Saraikela, etc., where Muslim growth seems unusually high. The religious demography of Jharkhand is quite complex, with the Christians growing considerably in certain districts and the proportion of ORPs rising in some districts and declining in others. The share of Hindus has also improved in several districts, particularly in the Singhbhum region. But the rise in the share of Muslims is most significant in the Santhal Pargana region.

West Bengal

In West Bengal, we reach a State where the Hindus have declined considerably and in every district of the State. During 2001-2011, the decadal growth rates of Hindus, Muslims and Christians are 10.81, 21.81 and 27.85, respectively. The share of Hindus in the State has declined by 2 percentage points; Muslim share has increased by 1.77 percentage points. The rise is more than the previous decade but somewhat less than the rise of 2.10 percentage points that occurred in 1981-91.

Per cent Share of Muslims in the Border Districts of WB

| | 1951 | 1961 | 1971 | 1981 | 1991 | 2001 | 2011 |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 39.89 | 44.01 | 43.20 | 44.95 | 47.14 | 49.31 | 51.69 |

Muslims have increased everywhere; but the highest rise is in Dakshni Dinajpur and Murshidabad, in both of which the Muslim share

has increased by about 2.6 percentage points. Their share has increased by 2.33 percentage points in South 24 Parganas and by about 2 percentage points in Birbhum. The rise is fairly high in Howrah, North 24 Parganas, Nadia and also in Koch Bihar.

Muslims form a considerable and rising presence in the northern and central districts lying along the border of Bangladesh. In the composite region comprising the undivided West Dinajpur, Maldah, Birbhum and Murshidabad, Muslims now form 51.69 per cent of the population. In this belt, Muslim share has been rapidly rising since 1951-61 and the process has continued during 2001-2011 also.

Assam

This brings us to the State that has seen the largest rise in the share of Muslims during 2001-2011. Muslims in the State have registered a decadal growth rate of 29.59 per cent, compared to 10.89 per cent of the Hindus. Of the 4.55 million people that have been added to the population of Assam in this decade, 2.44 million are Muslims and only 1.88 million are Hindus. This means that of every 100 additional persons counted between 2011 and 2001, 56 are Muslims and only 41 are Hindus. Among the remaining 5 persons, 4 are Christians, who have also registered a relatively high rate of growth of 18.17 per cent.

The share of Muslims in the population of Assam has increased from 30.92 to 34.22 per cent during this decade. This accretion of 3.30 percentage points to the share of Muslims is their second largest accretion in the whole census period starting from 1901 onwards; only in 1921-31, when Muslims from some districts of what is now Bangladesh were being settled in some parts of Assam as a matter of British policy, the Muslim share had increased by a larger quantum of 4.04 percentage points; but this accretion of 4.04 percentage was for a much smaller Muslim population.

Per cent Share of Muslims in the Goalpara, Kamrup, Darrang, Nagaon Region of Assam

| 1951 | 1961 | 1971 | 1981 | 1991 | 2001 | 2011 |
|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 32.42 | 33.13 | 31.89 | – | 37.15 | 40.34 | 44.61 |

Note: No census was conducted in 1981.

Many of the districts of Assam have been extensively reorganized during 2001-2011; therefore a district-wise comparison of the 2011 data with the earlier years is somewhat complex, which we shall do separately.

But in the region comprising the earlier undivided districts of Goalpara, Kamrup, Darrang and Nagaon, for which we have long-term data, the share of Muslims has risen by more than 4 percentage points, from 40.34 per cent in 2001 to 44.61 per cent in 2011. This is the largest rise in Muslim share since Independence in this region, which has been seeing continuous and rapid increase in Muslim presence.

Muslims in Assam are concentrated in 12 of the 27 current districts of Assam. Of these 9 are in the region that we have mentioned above. These nine include: Dhubri, Goalpara, Bongaigaon, Barpeta, Kamrup (Rural) and Nalbari of lower Assam and Darrang, Morigaon and Nagaon of Northern Assam. Of the total 10.68 million Muslims of Assam, 7.24 million are in these nine districts; they form 58.48 per cent of the population of this region.

Barak Valley, comprising the districts of Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi, is another region of high Muslim presence; these three districts accommodate another 1.75 million Muslims; they have a share of 48.14 per cent in the population of this region. In this region also the increase of 2.67 percentage points in their share during the last decade has been the largest since Independence.

Per cent Share of Muslims in the Cachar Region

| 1951 | 1961 | 1971 | 1981 | 1991 | 2001 | 2011 |
|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 38.49 | 39.14 | 39.89 | – | 43.02 | 45.47 | 48.14 |

Note: No census was conducted in 1981.

Contrary to the trend elsewhere in India, Assam and to a lesser extent West Bengal have seen a spurt in Muslim growth, which seems similar to the spurt that occurred in many parts of the country between 1981 and 1991. This growth, and the growth of Christians in the northeast that we discuss somewhat later, are the most remarkable phenomena brought out by the religion-wise data of Census 2011.

Kerala

Kerala is another State where Muslims growth during the last decade has been high. During 2001-2011, Muslims there have registered decadal growth of 12.84 per cent, compared to merely 2.23 per cent of the Hindus and 1.38 per cent of the Christians. Therefore, their share in the population of the State has increased by 1.87 percentage points, at the cost of both Hindus and Christians, whose share has contracted by 1.44 and 0.64 percentage points, respectively.

Muslim share has increased in every district of Kerala, though the increase is significantly higher in the northern districts of Kasargod, Kannur, Wayanad, Kozhikode and Malappuram, and also in the central districts of Palakkad and Thrissur.

The experience of Kerala indicates that lowering of the overall growth rates cannot by itself restrict the demographic imbalance between different communities. In this context, an even more telling example is that of Pathanamthitta, where all the three major communities have registered negative growth during 2001-2011, yet the share of Muslims has slightly increased because the decline in the numbers of others has been much more than theirs. In this district and also in Kottayam, the share of Hindus has also increased during this decade and the increase in both districts is higher than that of Muslims. This is another instance where Hindus have managed to increase their share in an otherwise difficult region in terms of religious demographic balance.

There are many other pockets and districts of the country where the Muslim presence and growth has been high. But the most significant of these are the ones we have mentioned above: Jammu and Kashmir; Mewat, and also Yamunanagar, of Haryana; the pocket of Muslim influence stretching over many districts of Western Uttar Pradesh and lower Uttarakhand; the Purnia region of Bihar and Santhal Pargana region of Jharkhand; much of West Bengal; most of Assam; and, Kerala. In many of these regions, there seems to have been a new spurt in Muslim growth during 2000-2001, just as Hindus have begun to improve their share in many districts, even in some adjoining these regions.

Regions of high Christian presence and Growth

The aggregate share of Christians in the country has marginally declined during 2001-2011. But their share has increased considerably in many of the pockets and regions where they already have significant presence. We mention the most significant of these below:

Ranchi-Raigarh-Sundargarh Pocket

There is a pocket of high Christian presence comprising the undivided Ranchi of Jharkhand, Raigarh of Chhattisgarh and Sundargarh of Odisha. Within this pocket, Christians have a high share of 25.65, 19.75 and 51.14 per cent in Khunti, Gumla and Simdega components of Ranchi, respectively. During 2001-2011, their share has increased by 1.99 and 2.21 percentage points in Khunti and Simdega and has declined by 1.09

percentage point in Gumla. Simdega, the only Christian majority district in Jharkhand, has been newly carved out of Gumla. Khunti is also a new district carved out of Ranchi.

In Chhattisgarh, the Christian presence is high only in Jashpur component of the undivided Raigarh. Here the proportion of Christians has slightly declined from 22.82 to 22.26 per cent. The share of Hindus has also declined in this State; the most significant increase has been in the proportion of ORPs.

In Sundargarh of Odisha, the share of Christians has increased from 16.85 to 18.39 per cent during the decade. The proportion of ORPs here has also increased significantly by 3 percentage points, leading to a decline of 5 percentage points in the share of Hindus.

Gajpati-Kandhmal pocket of Odisha

Christian share in this pocket is growing rather rapidly. In Gajpati, their proportion has increased from 33.47 to 37.98 per cent and in Kandhmal from 18.20 to 20.31 per cent. Their share has increased considerably in Rayagada also. This pocket of high Christian presence seems to be expanding to include Koraput, Nabarangapura and Malkangiri.

Kannyakumari of Tamilnadu

In Kannyakumari of Tamilnadu, Christians have a high share and it has been increasing rapidly from decade to decade. The increase of 2.38 percentage point in their share during 2001-2011 is somewhat more than the increase in the previous decade. Christians form 46.85 per cent of the population of the district now; their proportion in 1951 was 34.74 per cent.

| | 1951 | 1961 | 1971 | 1981 | 1991 | 2001 | 2011 |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 34.74 | 36.89 | 38.89 | 38.78 | 42.35 | 44.47 | 46.85 |

Kerala

Kerala is perhaps the only State of India where both Christians and Muslims have a significant presence. But here, because of the rapid rise of Muslims, the share of Christians, like that of the Hindus, has been declining continuously after 1961. During 2001-2011, their proportion has declined from 19.02 to 18.38 per cent. The decline has happened in all districts, except Idukki and Thiruvananthapuram.

The Northeast

We have kept this region, which has seen the sharpest growth of Christianity for the last. Of the six States in this region, besides Assam, Christianity has already reached near saturation point in Nagaland and Mizoram. The changes in the Christian share there are not significant.

Arunachal Pradesh, the largest State of the region, however, remained largely unconverted until 1981. After that the share of Christians in the State has been rising very rapidly. During 2001-2011, their share has increased by nearly 12 percentage points from 18.72 to 30.26 per cent. Tirap district is now nearly 75 per cent Christian; their share is 56 per cent in Kurung Kumey and above 40 per cent in Lower Subansiri, Papum Pare and East Kameng.

Per cent Share of Christians in Arunachal Pradesh

| | 1961 | 1971 | 1981 | 1991 | 2001 | 2011 |
|--|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 0.51 | 0.79 | 4.32 | 10.30 | 18.72 | 30.26 |

This rise in the proportion of Christians in Arunachal Pradesh is perhaps the most significant religious demographic change that has occurred during 2001-2011 in addition to the rapid increase of Muslims in Assam.

Manipur is another State of the Northeast, where the spread of Christianity has been restricted to the hill districts. But the share of Christians there has been rising by around 4 percentage points every decade. During 2001-2011 also, their share has increased from 37.31 to 41.29 per cent. This increase is similar to what has been happening there for several decades now.

Per cent Share of Christians in Manipur

| | 1951 | 1961 | 1971 | 1981 | 1991 | 2001 | 2011 |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 11.84 | 19.49 | 26.03 | 29.68 | 34.11 | 37.31 | 41.29 |

In Meghalaya also, the spread of Christianity has been less than complete and the State has been witnessing considerable increase in the share of Muslims from decade to decade. During 2001-2011, their proportion in the State has risen from 70.25 to 74.59 per cent. This is somewhat less than the change that has been occurring in the earlier decades.

Per cent Share of Christians in Meghalaya

| | 1951 | 1961 | 1971 | 1981 | 1991 | 2001 | 2011 |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 24.66 | 35.21 | 46.98 | 52.61 | 64.58 | 70.25 | 74.59 |

In Tripura, there has not been much Christian presence; during 2001-2011, their share in the population of the State has risen from 3.20 to 4.35 per cent.

In Assam, Christian presence has increased marginally from 3.70 to 3.74 per cent, though there has been a considerable rise in their proportion in several districts of Bodoland and in the Dima Hasao and Karbi Anglong region.

Sikkim is not counted as a part of the northeast, but it is in the vicinity. The Christian presence there has undergone a more significant rise from 6.68 to 9.91 per cent. Share of Christians in the neighbouring Darjeeling district has also increased from 6.17 to 7.68 per cent.

Conclusion

This sums up nearly all of the significant changes in the religious demography of different regions that have taken place during 2001-2011. The most important points that emerge from this narration of the major points of the religious demographic data of Census 2011 are:

1. The decline of 0.8 percentage points that has taken place in the proportion of Hindus is not small. This represents a continuation of the trend of rather large decadal decline that has set in after 1981.
2. Notwithstanding this aggregate decline, Hindus seem to have stopped or reversed the trend of decline in several districts and sub-districts, even in regions that have been earlier seeing rapid decline of Hindus. The increase in the share of Hindus in several districts in States like Bihar and Kerala is indeed noteworthy. In several districts of Gujarat also the Hindu share has increased; in The Dangs, the Christian growth has not only been halted but also reversed.
3. But Muslims and Christians have continued to increase their share in the areas where they have already established a high presence. In many cases, the pace of increase in favour of Muslims or Christians has indeed increased.
4. The most significant increase in the share of Muslims has occurred in Assam. Contrary to the expectations of a modulation of Muslim rise in that region, the accretion in their share during this decade has been the highest in recent history. Similarly, large changes have occurred in the border belt on the other side of Bangladesh comprising the undivided West Dinajpur, Murshidabad, Malda and Singhbhum districts of West Bengal,

undivided Santhal Pargana of Jharkhand and undivided Purnia of Bihar. Nearly all districts of West Bengal seem to have witnessed an unusual rise in Muslim share.

5. Muslim share has continued to rise rapidly in the Western Uttar Pradesh and lower Uttarakhand pocket of high Muslim presence comprising the undivided Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar, Meerut, Ghaziabad, Bareilly and Rampur districts and also undivided Nainital district of Uttarakhand.
6. There is also an unusually high increase in the Muslim share in Haryana centred on the heavily Muslim majority district of Mewat.
7. Muslims have continued to improve their share at the cost of both Christians and Hindus in Kerala.
8. Even though the Christian share in the aggregate has remained unchanged, yet their share has increased sharply in parts of Odisha and in the Northeast.
9. The rise of Christian share in Arunachal Pradesh to above 30 per cent and their becoming a majority or near majority in several districts of the State is as significant as the rapid rise of Muslims in Assam. This opens the way for complete Christianisation of the State on the pattern of Nagaland and Mizoram. Many tribal groups in the State have already become fully Christian.
10. The rise of Christian share in Gajapati and Kandhmal districts of Odisha is another significant phenomenon. A large belt of high Christian influence has now developed in the southeast of the State, which may connect with the older region of Christian influence in the northwest of the State.

While paying attention to these trends of increasing Muslim and Christian presence in several parts of the country, most of which are along the borders and coasts of India, it is important to remember the improvement that Hindus have shown in several districts. This is probably a consequence of the greater awareness about the religious demographic imbalances developing in the country and the more open public discussion on the issue. A detailed reading and appreciation of the enormous data released by the census leaves one with a distinct impression of the robust Hindu response in several parts of the country. Let us celebrate it, while we analyse and discuss the data and its consequences.

Political Philosophy and thought behind Bangladeshi Minority Eviction and Majority Infiltration into India

Bimal Pramanik*

The Hindus who were uprooted from their hearths and homes in East Pakistan due to religious persecution and measures or lack of them, taken by the successive Governments in East Pakistan (Bangladesh) after partition in 1947 were accepted as refugees by the Government of India and her people, not of course without grudge, and were given shelter, citizenship and were gradually absorbed in the mainstream of Indian people, particularly that of West Bengal, Assam and Tripura. This was quite understandable. But what happened after the birth of Bangladesh, when it was the declared policy of the Government of India not to grant citizenship to any people (even if they were Hindus and were forced to leave Bangladesh as a result of persecution) who migrated to India from Bangladesh as refugees after 1971? In what way the migratory trend post 1971 was different from the earlier trends? How were hordes of Muslims able to settle in the border districts of West Bengal and Assam without much notice and commotion? How was this silent demographic invasion possible? Was there any historical perspective behind this large scale infiltration or a well thought out design of our neighboring country? What change this invasion has brought up in the demographic pattern of border districts as well as interior districts of West Bengal and Assam? These are the queries I have tried to address in this article.

It is fair to affirm that the vast demographic changes in the eastern and north-eastern States of India are undeniable. Yet there is ample

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scope for an analysis of facts and factors behind such demographic changes. A novel outcome of demographic pressures became more and more prominent over the years among the Bangladeshi migrants settling in India's border region. Amazingly, this has gone largely unnoticed, even though it reflects significant changes in the daily lifestyle, and affects the very root of the civil society.

I have tried to analyze the negative impact of gigantic immigration from Bangladesh upon India's attempts to preserve secular harmony as well as national security. We do not intend to overrate the military potential of Bangladesh while assessing the impact of Bangladeshi immigrants upon India's national security in north eastern and eastern States, but we can hardly underrate the significance of their disturbing and distorting impact on the ethos of secular harmony that India stands for, and has been practising unabatedly since independence, despite Partition on religious grounds.

This sordid impact of Bangladeshi immigration upon India is but a logical consequence of the stark failure of Bangladesh to evolve as a secular multicultural polity. The ruling circle of present day Bangladesh is determined not only to broaden and deepen the Islamisation of Bangladesh, but also to use Islam to incite separatist or secessionist forces in eastern/north-eastern India — by extensive support to a protracted arms struggle, if necessary. It is an open secret that in Bangladesh many international terrorist outfits with aggressive fundamentalist agendas are making all efforts to envelop Bangladesh's socio-cultural fabrics with new Islamic prints and designs — though at the cost of the liberal tenets of Islam.

Following the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, the eastern and north eastern region of India faced a novel political and social challenge. At one time, critics and analysts complacently characterized it to be a migration flow. But later on, a series of political events proved that this was nothing but a kind of infiltration flow. As a corollary, it is equally imperative to understand the changing responses of the political parties and their leaders in this great drama of incessant demographic change, creating a menace to social harmony and national security.

This threat to our national security and social harmony will not be clearly understood unless we analyze the role of Bangladesh in this regard. Since the days of Partition, the Muslim psyche in both the parts of Pakistan has been suffering from a sense of injury about losing half

of Bengal and Assam. They have been ruthlessly pursuing the policy of '*lebensraum*' since the days of partition. Acting, perhaps, on the philosophy of the great Italian, Machiavelli, who observed in the 16th century that "sending immigrants is the most effective way to colonize countries because it is less offensive than to send military expeditions and much less expensive." Bangladesh with a single minded devotion has been following this policy, and, to say the least, it has been quite successful in this endeavour.

There was, however, not much concern about Muslim infiltration from erstwhile East Pakistan to India in the pre-1971 period. For, an extensive migration of Hindu population into India was regarded as a natural fallout of Partition.

The destiny of Pakistan from its historic origin was thus already blown off. Only one thing was discernible, and that was the fate of the hapless and hopeless Hindus, whose sacrifice in the 1971 freedom struggle appeared to be negated by the assassination of Mujibur Rahman, and who started moving as an endless flock of people from Bangladesh to multiple directions into the land of India.

Post Mujib complicated socio-political situation not properly followed by India:

A new politics, a new economics and a new culture, taken together, started unravelling itself in India as a result of secularism, which aggravated the confusion of the exuberant and extravagant politics of secularism of the erstwhile radical nationalist and the radical left in India. Gradually, for the first time, the Hindu refugees were being treated at par with the Muslim infiltrators. This twin flow at the same time had introduced a new opportunity to show perversely that Bangladesh was as much secular as India. Politicians, who placed immediate electoral gain above national interest, could successfully equate Muslim infiltration with the Hindu refugee flow under the grand title of infinite and indefinite migration of Bangladeshis with non-descript faces through all conceivable manholes in the border region.

A new era has started. Leading Bangladeshi strategic analysts and intelligentsia introduced the theory of *lebensraum* in the 1980s. They claim that their right to settle in India's eastern and north eastern States is to be considered as the natural course of overriding, what is to them, an unacceptable political demarcation of the border. It is important to note that, at present both sides of the India Bangladesh border are

inhabited by a population which is ethnically, linguistically and religiously identical. It has thus become easy for the insurgent outfits to wage a proxy war at a low level. The costs and risks of this war are low, and yet it destabilizes the security of eastern and north-eastern India.

Growing population pressure and crippling poverty and pauperization of the marginal rural masses in Bangladesh encouraged, if not forced, them to put this agenda of migration as a life and death question, which no lock can resist. In the meantime, the consolidation of Islamic forces was already advanced. They adopted the agenda of a greater Islamic region as a grand political strategy. Although it was an emotional issue for Sheikh Mujib, later it became a political and strategic issue with the support of Pakistan.

There is no State religion in secular India, which is obliged to protect all religions equally, but the Bangladesh Republic has to preserve religious peace and harmony under the shadow of its State religion, viz. Islam. The adoption of Islam as the State religion has utterly demoralized Hindus, and has reinforced their already powerful compulsions about migration to India. Significantly, a State religion cannot extend the minimum of socio-economic protection even to Muslims, who, instead of being satisfied with living in Islamic Bangladesh, have long been voting with their feet, and continuously leaving for secular India, especially Assam and West Bengal. Whereas this is a constant tribute to India's secularism, this is also a threat to India's socio-economic-political security. Unfortunately, authorities in India have displayed little alertness in pre-empting or coping with this threat.

Idea of liberation war was incomplete and misunderstood:

The minority community in Bangladesh participated in the War of Liberation with the expectation that in the newly liberated country they would enjoy equal status and rights along with the majority community. But in practice, the persecution of the minorities continued even after independence. The forms of oppression of the religious minorities in Bangladesh are manifold. Constitutionally, they have been downgraded; economically, they have been crippled through different discriminatory laws and practices; politically, they have been segregated and alienated from the main stream; they have been made a non-entity in different government and non-government services; culturally and socially, they are insecure. They are totally deprived of the privileges of participation

in the top positions of government, and nationally they are used as subjects tortured through communal riots organized by the government for counteracting political unrest against the ruling party. As a consequence of the discriminatory policies, combined with land grabbing, looting, arson, rape, murder and attack on religious institutions of the religious minorities with the collusion, if not instigation, of the government or semi-government agencies, there has been a continuous exodus of the minorities from Bangladesh.

Infiltration and Islamisation is a growing menace to India:

In the nineteen eighties, planned migration from Bangladesh conformed to the *lebensraum* theory, which was encouraged by the Indian Muslims in the border States under the protection and patronization of some political and social forces of India's Eastern and North Eastern region. This continuous infiltration from across the border is slowly and steadily changing the demographic pattern in the border areas, especially in the States of West Bengal and Assam. This changed demographic scenario easily lends itself to disrupting social harmony. Already it has taken a shape of demographic invasion in the region, which is threatening our secular polity and national security. This is a religio-cultural process taking place in a geographical space considered to be strategically important. Thus, the emergence of Bangladesh has created in the North-Eastern States of India certain conditions conducive to Islamisation. At least three factors, facilitating the process of Islamisation, are obvious. First, strangely enough, whatever Islamisation has occurred in these parts of North-Eastern and Eastern India has happened within a secular political environment. Secondly, the appeasement of aliens for the purpose of garnering votes and the continuous anti-Centre stance have been conducive to the expansion of a psyche of Islamisation. Thirdly, a weak, undefined and unorganized secular frame has failed to combat the process of Islamisation.

Frequent failure of living with a multi-cultural ethos has jeopardized communal harmony, and defaced the secular fabric of the Indian society. Islamisation has always been, historically, a 'power concept.' When secular forces come forward to protect social harmony on the basis of a dominant culture with a highly powerful assimilating force, forces of Islamization might claim their due and finally crave for a division of the same, assertive secular society.

From the very beginning since the liberation of 1971, Hindus who had earlier gone to India as refugees and returned to independent Bangladesh, again started migrating from the newly independent country to India, because they failed to retrieve their property and enjoy social security. Bengali nationalism was eroding fast, and anti-India sentiment was growing rapidly. After the assassination of Sheikh Mujib in 1975, the relevance of the very Bangladesh concept of 1971 was lost, and Bangladesh became a State tilting towards Islamisation. All this shows that the emergent idea of a secular Bangladesh, partially apparent in 1971, was not only missing but was probably mistaken. Mujib's case of fighting against Pakistan had finally given way to a Bangladesh which never denied its Islamic character. On the surface, while Hindus imagined a new secular-democratic prospect, Muslims suffered from a bankruptcy of leadership, which threw them eventually into the clutches of Mushtaq Ahmed, Ziaur Rahman and others after Mujib's death. It was a pity that Bangladesh came out as a country and a state with an overt Islamic identity.

Cultural transformation towards radical Islam unabated:

Leaders of the Muslim society as a whole are trying to organize and consolidate Muslim masses on the basis of religion and Madrassa teachings. The moderate views of the society are gradually being replaced by the Talibani concept. As a result, the differences with the other religious and cultural sects have become more widened. Now Bangladesh has become the epicentre of the North-Eastern region for propagating and promoting the ultra-Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism.

This political behaviour fitted fine in the general framework of the political objective of Bangladesh Republic after the initial euphoria of Mujib period was over. The liberation of Bangladesh from the yoke of Pakistan could not educate enough nor could it have any stable imprint upon the people of Bangladesh to evolve a friendly attitude towards India. The anti-Indian attitude of various political leaders, whether one is from Muslim League or from the Awami League or from the BNP, remains a common characteristic to shape and influence the complementary relation between the process of minority exodus and demographic expansion of the majority.

During the last four decades it had been possible to imbibe among the rural masses as well as among a large section of urban middle class

a belief that Bengali Muslims have to strengthen the Islamic identity in order to maintain a sovereign entity of Bangladesh. There must be an admixture of Islamic culture and social values with the existing Bengali culture. Consequently, Islamization of Bengali culture is more pronounced among the rich, middle and lower middle class people than it was during the Pakistani rule. Use of *hejab*, *skull cap* and *burkha* is evidently on the rise. Islamization on a gigantic scale is being manifested in the style of keeping beard and dresses, cultivation of Arabic language and culture and religious fanaticism. During Pakistan time, not only the AL leaders, but also a section of Muslim League leaders were never seen to use caps and keeping beard or reciting namaj on political ground. Public meeting and function were never kept in abeyance during the recitation of *namaj*. Madrasah education was totally neglected and non-acceptable compared to general education. But now political leaders are seen to accept vigorously Islamization on political ground. One-third of the total student community are passing through Madrasah education, and their role in the society cannot be ignored. As a result, the political leaders are trying to win the support of these masses in a manner acceptable to them. It is quite impossible that such a large section of Madrasah educated students can be absorbed in the mosques and Madrasahs as *imam* or teachers. Where will they go? They cannot participate in the planning activities of modern age since they are more or less unfit and as such suffer from frustration. This is primarily the cause that they are being attracted strongly to terrorist activities. The modern society cannot accommodate them and they cannot make themselves suitable for society. Consequently, they hinder the progress of society and try to reorient society according to their needs and ideas. This is being amply manifested in the cruel and destructible religious fundamentalist activities in recent times in Bangladesh.

Since the Pakistani days, Islamization of Bangladesh has been going on, which has grown very rapidly after the gruesome murder of Sheikh Mujib. Madrasah education is the main plank of nurturing this process which has been strengthened by policies adopted by the Bangladesh Government from time to time. Islam has become the State religion according to its constitution. Thus, there always existed a propensity in Bangladesh society to hate the Hindus, Buddhists and Christians, i.e. non-Muslims. The boys and girls get this propensity from their families in the first instance which get strengthened through

religious teachings and Madrasah Education supported by the State. In addition the ill effects of Islamic *fatwa* coupled with ultra Islamic militancy of Taliban, Mujahedin and Al Quaida (Ladenic) have complicated, hence increased this feeling. With this social situation the claim of the politicians and intellectuals that the Muslims of Bangladesh believe in communal harmony and are protectors of the minority communities is nothing but a wisp in the wind.

Policies of the different Bangladeshi governments in their internal politics:

All the governments of Bangladesh have been trying to strengthen Islam officially in the social milieu of Bangladesh, suppressing other religious communities. Conversion of members of other faiths to Islam is generally encouraged in the society. There is a declared budget for converted Muslims also. A clear cultural transformation towards Islamisation has been taking place in the society. In this slough of moderate Islam, even the AL led government, slowly but steadily, has been strengthening the very concept of Islamic Bangladesh, ignoring the ideals of liberation war. So, the people in general cannot come out from the clutches of Islamic fundamentalists. Sheikh Hasina campaigned hard against Jamat-e-Islam and war criminals, but not against Islamic fundamentalists/terrorists, who are killing bloggers and modern thinkers. There are many Islamic fundamentalist outfits that are active to Islamize liberal ideas and the Bengali identity. The present government itself is a party to it. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina declared that the government would build model mosques in all districts and upazilas (the number of upazila is more than 500) across Bangladesh to facilitate Islamic education. Islamic-cultural activities will be provided through these mosques.”¹ it was a commitment of AL in its election manifesto in the last general election. Apart from that, mosque-based child and mass education programmes under the religious department of the government of Bangladesh are being continued.

Shahriar Kabir, a veteran Bangladeshi Human Rights activist and journalist opined that, “in a recent judgment Bangladesh High Court repealed the 5th Amendment[#] of the Constitution and has given an order to revive the 1972 Constitution which is also corroborated by the Supreme Court. But the saddest part is, Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh, has told in a Mohajote (Grand alliance) meeting that ‘Bismillah’ will be retained in the constitution and no embargo will be

given on religion based politics and political parties by the government. Even 'Islam as State Religion' will also stay. This stand of the Prime Minister is nothing but a clear disowning/ violation of the Supreme Court verdict and mockery of wishes of 30 lakh martyrs and the spirit of Bangabandhu and liberation war. It is not reflecting the will of the citizens of Bangladesh who have elected Awami League to capture power in 2008."² In the absence of deep rooted liberal democratic practices in the society and politics, these types of developments are easily taking place since independence.

After capturing power, Ziaur Rahman started to incline Bangladesh ideologically towards Pakistan. Steps were taken to Islamize the Constitution by shrugging the ideals of liberation war, and by the rehabilitation of Islamic and pro-Pakistani elements in politics, elimination of pro-liberation officers from the military, distortion of history, Islamisation of Bengali culture, and induction of Pakistan oriented Islamic values in education and administration. He did all these to open a door to establish 'Bangladeshi nationalism.'^{##} As a result, Ziaur Rahman could establish a foothold among the intelligentsia and in the society as a whole. Under the cover of Bangladeshi nationalism, the process of introducing Pakistani/Islamic trends of thought started flourishing smoothly. In the footsteps of Zia, Gen. Ershad accelerated this process further by introducing and enacting a bill in June 1988, declaring Islam as the State Religion (8th Amendment of the Constitution). Gen. Ershad made it legal for the fundamentalist Islamic forces to flourish in the soil of Bangladesh without any hindrance. All the parties, including AL, accepted this amendment because the people of Bangladesh were eager to find a new identity. The notion of Bengali identity, which was thrust upon them, gradually had apparently disappeared, and they rushed towards their real identity. As a result, the growing religious chauvinism in the society attained such a great height that it became difficult for the politicians and the common people to go against it. Consequently, a supposed to be democratic and liberal party like AL has not shrunk from retaining 'Islam as State Religion' and 'Bismillah-ar-Rahman-ar-Rahim' in the constitution for the purpose of holding the vote bank, and also, remained determined to spread Islam smoothly.

An Islamic dream haunting Bangladesh:

Those who could not fulfil their dream of having the entire East Bengal and Assam in one province in 1905 and entire Bengal as East Pakistan

in 1947 felt all the more devastated after the defeat of 1971. So, if the 10 per cent remaining minorities could be thrown out from Bangladesh making her a 100 per cent Muslim country they might have been nourishing a dream of changing the so-called Bill Clinton's 'moderate Islam' into a new brand of Talibanic Islam, yet unthinkable and possibly incomparable with the practice of Talibanism in Pakistan. Possibly the Jamaat are enjoying a Godsent opportunity to add new militancy which their classical fundamentalism would not comprehend.

The thinking people of Bangladesh suffer from a "small state" paranoia and very often would bask under a pretentious knowledge of age-old history of India. They are happy having a constructed Islamic telescope to build up a structured history of Bangladesh as a part of the subcontinent in South Asia. Since many aspects of historical processes shall remain alien to such telescopic articulation — knowing history became highly truncated attributing fabricated meaning to such efforts. One should not fail to appreciate that any intelligible factual history of Bangladesh could be constructed on an otherwise historically rational frame, if only; one goes beyond a few hundred years before 1704 AD. This is so because the genesis and the evolution of a part of Dinesh Sen's '*Greater Bengal*' which is present day Bangladesh, coincidentally is a part of product of political arrangement of imperial understanding of the past rulers. So, the practical effort of building Bangladesh history is reduced to a somewhat erratic communal approach resulting into an ill-fated systematization of a falsified history of Bangladesh as propagated and understood in the last quarter of the outgoing century particularly after the publication of three volume of "*History of Bangladesh 1704-1971*."³

After the gruesome killing of Sheikh Mujib in 1975, there has been a rapid change in the socio-political scenario of Bangladesh during 21 years of rule by General Zia, General Ershad and Begum Khaleda Zia that followed. India-bashing and Islamization have taken a firm root in the body politic of Bangladesh during this period, and has percolated to the social fabric of the country to a considerable extent. A section of the Army, the bureaucrats, the intellectuals and well-organized political forces think that support should be lent to the secessionist forces of North-Eastern India which are waging an armed struggle according to them against the Indian Government and carrying on subversive activities disrupting the economic and social fabric of Eastern and North Eastern India. This is no longer a secret. Some

terrorist organizations including Jamat-e-Islami of Bangladesh (JIB) built upon the theory of establishing an Islamic hegemony in this region. The fundamentalist Islamic forces and the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan have been carrying on their activities to reorient the Bengali society according to their ideas and goals and are pursuing a long-term policy to achieve this by building an Islamic culture through the Madrasas. Noticeably, the number and practical influence of Madrasas in independent Bangladesh than in the days of Pakistani rule.

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Notes:

- # Introduced 'Bismillah-ar-Rahman-ar-Rahim' in the Preamble and diluted 'Fundamental Principles' by Islamic flavour of the Constitution.
- ## Bengali nationalism replaced by Bangladeshi nationalism with Islamic religious identity first.

Value, Education and Social Reconstruction

Xavier P. Mao*

I wish to argue that man is essentially a value concept; ipso facto society and state. Consequently, no discussion and no talk about man and society is complete without reference to value. Seeing in this light the dichotomy of value and fact is not sustainable. In other words, any discussion on man, society and state is bound to be value centric.

Now let us discuss the nature of value and its relation with man and society. The often quoted definition of value is the worth or the desirability or the ideal. Therefore, value and fact are diametrically opposed to each other. Language of value is language of 'ought' and the language of fact is the language of 'is.' As for example, the sun rises in the east is said to be the statement of fact that is to say the proposition states what is happening as a matter of fact. It is a natural fact or event that the sun rises in the east. On the other hand, when a teacher asks a student in the classroom that he/she ought to behave in a decent manner, it does not describe any fact; it does not state what is happening in the world. On the other hand, it prescribes or recommends a particular way of behaviour of the student. In this sense it is said that fact and value can stand for two different things. Seeing in this light, fact or event takes place in a particular way in nature that is how some philosophers argue that the world is a concatenation of facts and events. Wittgenstein, the author of *Logico-Philosophico-Tractatus* argues more or less in this manner. Thus, the language of fact is a language of 'is' whereas the language of value is the language of 'ought' or 'should.'

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In the first decade of the twentieth century the logical positivists taking cue from Schlick and others, treated value as something relating to emotion and sentiment. As a matter of fact, the fact-value dichotomy was sharpened and pronounced at the hands of the positivists so much so that value statements were treated on par with meaningless and nonsensical statements. Only fact and proposition having cognitive meaning were treated as genuinely meaningful statements. The so-called statements embodying value and morals were treated as degenerated forms of statements, devoid of any sort of cognitive meaning. They have emotive sense but as such they are of no use. I wish to suggest in this connection that the logical positivists are the 'real' culprits for throwing values and morals overboard. This type of philosophical doctrine created havoc in society. It may not be out of place to mention in this connection that all types of philosophizing and all forms of philosophical inquiries are not genuine intellectual activity. The type of political philosophy Adolf Hitler propagated had ultimately led to the slaughter of six million Jews in a gas chamber as a result of such type of philosophical doctrine. For Hitler all human beings are not equal, the Jews were less human and abominable creatures. They should be slaughtered and eliminated from the world as far as possible. This type of philosophical ideology and value system are absolutely wrong at the base. An ideology that aims at demolition or decimation of a race or a nation for the benefit of a select few cannot be treated as value. At the most it is a disvalue.

The so-called dichotomous division between fact and value have not only created havoc at the conceptual and cognitive level but it has also wrought havoc in the world. Therefore, now the time has come to rethink and re-evaluate the dichotomous division of fact and value. In other words, to use word of Friedrich Nietzsche, transvaluation of all values is the need of the hour. Value statements should be examined and re-examined in the context of man and society. In this connection the ancient Indian tradition has made an attempt on the fourfold values known as Purusarthas such as Artha, Kama, Dharma and Moksa. These values are supposed to guide and goad human behaviour and activity. They are recognized as the fourfold values of moral ideal. Some scholars interpret these as advocating pessimism. But I wish to argue that there is not an iota of pessimism in these values. The basic human needs have been classified into four types. Kama and Artha satisfy organic needs of humans though the literal Sanskrit meaning of the word Kama

is sex yet in Indian value system Kama has been viewed in a very broad and wide sense. It stands for a variety of things. In this sense, it stands for all types of desire, wishes and needs both organic and non-organic needs. Sex, hunger, thirst and sleep are some of the primary organic needs. But there are umpteen numbers of non-organic or created needs and desires. To build houses, weave clothes and garment, manufacture of ornaments and various types of goods for enjoyment. Acquiring various types of knowledge including creating science and technology come under this group of need or Kama.

Artha literally means meaning. Words and sentences have meanings. But in Indian tradition Artha is not used in this sense. Artha is that which human creates. All types of things, objects, ornament including knowledge i.e various branches of science and technology come under Artha. Artha is a value. Animals during mating season become restless without sex partner. In this sense there is no difference between humans and animals. But humans are told by their elders to control and channelize sex desire. Such societal control is not there in the animal world. The literal meaning of Dharma is religion. But in this context it has been used in a different sense. It stands for a set of regulatory principles. Without these regulatory principles humanity is likely to go astray. In the contemporary period, religious ritualism and terrorism arising from fundamentalism has posed serious problems. Why this is so? The answer is that Dharma in the sense of religion has played havoc. Ordinarily a religious person means one who performs a set of rituals and attempting to increase his or her number by resorting to superficial conversion and not real transformation of head and heart. Conversion as a method of changing the religion of some has created havoc throughout the world. Hindus were converted to Christianity. Now attempts are being made by some people and organizations to reconvert them back as Hindus, which has created socio-cultural problem throughout India. As a matter of fact, the literal meaning of conversion in Christianity and Islam means change of mind and heart. If a person has not changed his/her mind and heart then such a person is not truly a religious person.

Science and Technology over the last three centuries have grown by leaps and bounds. Physical sciences like physics, chemistry and mathematics etc. have grown and developed rapidly. Consequently, technology of various types has grown out of these basic sciences. But today technology has become independent that is to say

technology like engineering, medicine and surgery have almost become an independent discipline. Though in a very broad sense and at the root science and technology can be said to be dependent on each other, yet technology has almost become independent from the so-called basic sciences. Astounding discoveries in science and technology have made life comfortable by way of eliminating almost all the killer diseases. But what had really happened is that the frustration including environmental pollution has posed serious problems. It is also true that the development of science and technology has given rise to consumerist culture throughout the world. Consumerism beyond a certain limit has posed serious problems for humanity. As a matter of fact, do or die situation may come soon, unless humans learn to reduce the unnecessary variety of consumption, life may come to a halt. Good food and good medical care have increased longevity. But simultaneously, overpopulation has posed serious problems. Therefore, humans have to take a decision at this juncture. One must learn, consume and practice that much which is necessary to keep the body and soul together. In ancient Indian tradition and almost all cultures speak of the reduction of one's wants is treated as a value. The ancient Indian Upanishad tradition treats renunciation as the highest form of enjoyment. We enjoy in and through renunciation. On the surface it appears contradictory. How could one enjoy through renunciation? Renunciation means control of consumption. It does not mean starvation. The philosophy of renunciation cannot be merely talked of by giving lectures in classroom. It seems to me that teaching and giving lectures on values and morals are the begin-all but not the end-all. Understanding morals and value is the initial stage. The most important thing is living up to these values. One may be a great scholar on morals and values and yet he/she may be absolutely degenerated and immoral. Thought it has to be impregnated with action. Mere thought does not lead us anywhere. As a matter of fact, majority of us read, write and give lectures on values and morals tend to lead immoral life. It is no wonder that a highly competent teacher in the classroom on moral philosophy may have nothing to do with living moral life. Consequently, a highly immoral person may be a very good moral philosopher and an illiterate may be leading absolutely moral life. This is no contradiction but shock and surprise. All great prophets and saints like Mahavir, Buddha, Socrates, Confucius, Laostii and Christ were either illiterate or had very little formal education. But the world remembers them today because they practiced what they preached.

Moksa in Indian tradition has been treated as the highest value. Sometimes Moksa has been interpreted as liberation of the individual from the intricate and subtle bondage. A careful analysis of the fourfold value system does not talk of any other world. A liberated person is one who has control over one's desires and works for the welfare of other beings. In this sense a liberated person has renounced the world.

Unfortunately, there is nothing in our educational system today in the world that could inspire and encourage students to put into practice these values. Therefore, I wish to suggest that our educational system including methods of teaching and learning should undergo change root and branch. Now let us discuss the teaching and inculcating of values and morals. I may be allowed to make a statement in this connection about education and educational policy throughout the world: it is this: there is nothing in the modern education that aims at creating good human beings. Consequently, modern education in the world is a failure. It has created everything else except creating good human beings. The famous and distinguished universities like Harvard, MIT, Yale, Tokyo and others have created many great scholars from different subjects but they have failed in creating good human beings. As a matter of fact, universities and educational system have led to dehumanizing process almost throughout the world. Scientific research by unravelling the atomic structure of matter has led to the manufacture of atom bombs and tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan. The evil effects of atomic bombs and nuclear leakage are being suffered by humanity at large. Instead of creating morally perfect human beings, the modern education is creating devils all around. Wealth has increased manifold, comforts and luxury have also multiplied manifold by the fruits of science and technology but such fruits are enjoyed by select few. Even in the twenty-first century, poverty, squalor, hunger, illiteracy and diseases are rampant. Both national and international communities are working hard to reduce this type of disparity. Instead of reducing the disparity, the gap seems to increase even more because of the simple reason that something is seriously wrong at the fundamental level. What is this mistake? It seems to me that the first and foremost objective of education should be to create good human beings with critical and rational bent of mind. Unfortunately this is not being done. Managers of the university system throughout the world take for granted that individuals and families should take care of this dimension

of education. On the other hand the prevailing objective of education is how to create great scholars and intellectuals. Therefore, they forget the small thing that one may be a great philosopher or scientist and yet one may be a bad human being. Yes, society needs great philosophers, scientists and intellectuals but on top of them we need good human beings.

The faulty argument of the managers of universities is that educational institutions should be distinguished from the monastery. The duty of monastery is to teach and preach moral values. Moral values are personal matters. Educational institutions should not interfere with this personal aspect of life. But I wish to reiterate that the basic and primary aim of education should be to create good human beings. Great scientists and philosophers may be useless and sometimes they even pose danger to society if they are not good human beings. Let me submit that to inculcate moral values in students is an uphill task but at the same time this is not impossible. I wish to suggest and maintain in this connection that nothing is impossible. To begin with the teachers and educators at all levels should be exemplars before inculcating values in students. Leaders of society the so-called high ups such as President, Prime Minister and other top echelons concerned should live austere life. It is said that the late leader of Vietnam Ho Chi Minh used to live in a single room house. Abraham Lincoln and M.K. Gandhi used to live an austere life. In almost all ancient traditions, this has been clearly stated that kings and rulers should regard themselves as servants of the society. Such stories are told about rulers Khalifs in Baghdad living an austere life. They identify themselves with the poorest of the poor. But it is a fact that many kings and rulers used to live and wallow in luxury and comfort. I would like to suggest that people at the helm of affairs should cultivate moral values in their day to day life. A teacher whether at the primary or university should live an austere and exemplary life. In other words, simply giving lectures or writing research papers on values and morality can only be the Begin-all but cannot be the End-all.

It is very heartening to note that in India the educational leaders and managers have realized the importance of values and morals in educational system. Consequently, they have been deputing scholars of moral philosophy and to deliver lectures on values and morals. This is surely a positive move. But efforts should be made to inculcate values in the lifestyles of teachers. This is the most important stage in

value education. But unfortunately no government has taken any step in this direction. As a matter of fact, the objective of education throughout the world is to create excellent professionals of all types. Today, no country in the world takes any step to inculcate values and morals in the minds of students. As a result we create great scientist, technologist, engineers etc. who are not aware of morals and values associated or integral to their profession. In other words, in the process of civilization we have forgotten the basic ingredients of human values.

Humans have explored the world of various dimensions of matter. Rockets and men have landed on the moon and now working hard to reach to the distant planets, but in the process we have greatly polluted the environment. If pollution of the environment is allowed to continue at the present rate, days are not far off when life will be extinguished from the surface of the earth. This is not an exaggerated pessimism and desperation. As a matter of fact, highly competent scientists and environmentalists subscribe to this view. The recent international bodies meeting on environmental pollution expressed nothing but worry and anxiety. How to save the situation? It may be suggested that to create a fool-proof international law to protect environment is one part of the solution. In this regard, I would argue that legislating laws alone will not save the situation. The problem should be tackled at the fundamental level. It seems to me as I pointed out earlier, unbridled consumerism is the cause of degradation, destruction and pollution of the environment. We all should reduce unnecessary consumerism. I would suggest and repeat that values and morals should be taught in classrooms. Human being is such a creature that we tend to forget important lessons of life. Many people find it difficult to see beyond immediate gains. Unless this is done throughout the world at all stages, we cannot protect our environment. The immediate motto and slogan should be: let us reduce our consumption in all directions so that mother earth is kept clean and habitable for the next generation.

Rapid growth of population is one of the reasons for many maladies in contemporary society. The unchecked population growth is likely to give rise to many insoluble problems. Expansionist attitude is one of the outcomes of population increase, apart from many other unforeseen social and economic problems. In this context, social reconstruction does not mean planning of socio-economic development. Social reconstruction in this context means an all inclusive concept that is to say society includes states, polity and all other forms of socio-economic activities. We have allowed in course of time socio-economic structure

to take a natural course as for instance, when population began to increase, migration in large scale from one part of the globe to another takes place. When industrial revolution began in Western Europe, large-scale production took place, naturally they wanted to expand their market place. New markets had to be invented. This is how many European East India Companies were formed to carry on trade and commerce. Consequently, many Asian and African countries came under European rule. Development of science and technology gave rise to industrial revolution and industrial revolution gave rise to large-scale production. Extra produced had to be sold in the market. I wish to point out and maintain that colonialism is the direct product and consequence of the development of science and technology and as a result the growth of market economy. It appears as if the movement is cyclical, to a large extent this is true. Now what is to be done? One view is that we should only produce that can meet our consumption and market should be localized. But today the slogan throughout the world is to produce more for market and get more profit. In other words, production is not meant for consumption but for profit. To discover and create more national and international markets is the endeavour of all countries. This is the reason why even in the twenty-first century conflicts among countries are rampant including border conflict. It is necessary to remind ourselves of the story by Leo Tolstoy: "How Much Land A Man Needs?" Tolstoy clearly suggests that excessive desire and thirst for possession is likely to lead to death and destruction. This is most unfortunate that the great message of Tolstoy to humanity has been forgotten, landing ourselves in a whirlpool of suffering and misery.

Therefore, I would like to suggest that the revaluation and critical examination of all the dimensions of society is very essential. A society is a set of institutions such as economic, political, religious and cultural and so on. Without such institutions society becomes meaningless. What happened to them in due course of time? We forget to examine and re-examine the various aspects and dimensions of society. These institutions cannot grow and sustain us without examination and revaluation from time to time. Social reconstruction in nutshell means constant examination, re-evaluation and re-examination of these institutions. Collective memory is very short and transitory. We tend to forget the various social institutions created by us in course of time thereby they become degenerated. This is the reason why we need reformers, thinkers and critics of high order so that the dirt and filth accumulated over the years are removed and give a new chapter. This

is the travesty of fact that we tend to forget the great ideas and principles suggested by seers, saints and prophets. One example will suffice to prove this point. The recent horrific shooting in which 132 persons were killed and several injured in France in broad daylight has shaken our faith in our so-called contemporary scientific civilization. We tend to put blame on a particular religion. I wish to point out in this connection that no religion whether primitive, tribal or non-tribal tells us to kill or butcher our fellow beings. Jainism as an ancient religion goes even a step further in saying that it is a sin to kill even a poisonous insect. They tell us not to burn fire at night lest some insects will be killed. Further Jain monks tell us to put a piece of cloth on our mouth while breathing, so that innocent small insects do not enter into our mouth and get killed. What an ideal? The acme point of non-violence and non-killing is clearly prescribed. It is not proper to blame any religion in this regard. Let me reiterate that modern education has literally and miserably failed to inculcate genuine and high values of life. If violence is on the increase then there must be something very wrong at the fundamental level. Let us re-educate ourselves with the ideals of great men and women who inspire us eternally. Violence of any type i.e. to say violence in thought and deeds should be discarded. Love, compassion, kindness, sympathy and self-sacrifice should not only be taught but put into practice. Let us spread the message that the entire human society is the biggest classroom and planners, elders and policy makers are the teachers. Let us not teach and preach but put into practice in our day-to-day life. International bodies like the UNO and others were created with good intention but they also miserably failed in tackling conflicts and disputes in appropriate time.

But there is no need to be pessimistic. In human world we go through trial and error, thereby we grow and develop. To conclude, social reconstruction should be at the root of everything. We need industry, trade and commerce and many other things, but what we need most is good human beings. Let us put all our efforts to begin to create good human beings. Unless our education as a social institution is re-evaluated and changed, the noble objective of creating good human beings may remain a far cry. Yes, we also need great scientists, technologists, great intellectuals and great scholars, but on the top of them we need good human beings. Unless our educational system is geared to this, end of terrorism, conflict, aggression, confusion and the like will continue to grow unabated.

The Significance of Naga in Thai Architectural and Sculptural Ornaments

Phan Anh Tu*

Abstract:

The Nak (Phaya Nak or Naga) in Thai architectural and sculptural ornaments are an associational achievement between the indigenous serpent cult of the mainland Southeast Asian region and Naga of Indian religions in ancient times. It seems that the remains of indigenous serpent cult being only what is told in the Thai folklore. The majority of Thais follow predominantly Theravada Buddhism and their serpent worship includes aspects of Buddhism.

Introduction

Naga is the sacred name of mythical serpent in Southeast Asian and Indian literature. In Thailand, the figure has deeply impacted aspects of Thai traditional arts, especially in architecture and sculpture. The reference materials related to Naga are very scanty, however, and it seems that there are only a few books written by the Thai and foreign scholars.

The art historians implicitly confirm that the Naga in Southeast Asian cultures are originated in India. Others, however, have talked briefly about the indigenous serpent cult without proving scientific evidences. Thus, a big question is whether a form of indigenous serpent cult existed in Siam peninsular and mainland Southeast Asia? My discourse will be an expectation to answer partially this difficult question.

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The Indigenous Serpent Cult in Thailand and Southeast Asia

The serpent cults were by no means exclusive to India and it seems that the worship of serpents, as symbols of fertility and water, occurred independently in many parts of the world, especially in Southeast Asia where the water culture played a crucial part in the residents' daily life activities (Michael Freeman and Roger Warner 1987: 124). The serpent cult of Southeast Asian region has been mainly found among the communities living along the banks of Mekong River¹ (แม่น้ำโขง), from Yunan (ยูนาน) Province of China, to the lower part of its river in Vietnam. Here, the indigenous ethnic groups believe that the serpent is the creator of nature and life and that it nourishes human beings. The serpent, furthermore, is also supposed to have assisted people in establishing the state cities, the citadels and bestowing prosperity and richness. But the serpent can also punish people by releasing an over - supply of water, causing flood and destroying the state cities. Most of the imaginative mystery are truly believed by the indigenous residents, especially the serpent legends related to the state cities, citadels and the kingdoms; stories of the serpent being at the origin of the matriarchy lineage and human race are very popular among the ethnic communities in Thailand, Burma, Laos, Cambodia and the Khmer in Vietnam.



Nagini (serpent princess) decorated on stair of Phra Keo Pagoda, Bangkok.

Photo: Phan Anh Tu



*Naga King decorated on stair of Phra Keo Pagoda, Bangkok.
Photo: Phan Anh Tu*

A Tai Lu (Water Tai) legend called the story of Nang Sa² (นางสา) tells how the Tai³ race originated from the water serpent. Tai men in Sipsongpanna (สิบสองปันนา, Yunan province), Sipsong Chu Tai (สิบสองจุไท, the North of Laos and the Northwest of Vietnam) and the North of Thailand usually tattoo the water serpent on their back and arm as an obligatory rite when they come of age. Chinese and Vietnamese chronicles called them “Khin – man” that means “Great Snake” (Sumet Jumsai 1997: 138). Up to now, a few old Thais⁴ residing in the North and Northeast of Thailand still called the mythical water serpent “Tua Luong” (ตัวลวง) that is nearly similar with “Thuong Luong” in Vietnamese legends. The two words are pronounced with similar sounds which imply the belief of the serpent ruler of the water world has its source from human imagination. They could also be ancient names for the mythical water serpent of the Southeast Asian minority ethnic groups.

According to traditional beliefs, Thais and Laotians think that the mythical serpent lived in a zone of terrestrial moisture under the human world, called Muang Badan (เมืองบาดาล), the sacred citadel, located

somewhere in the Mekong river bed, in the river course between Nong Khai province, Thailand and Vientiane capital of Laos. From Muang Badan, the underworld river rose, and mythically linked to all the rivers and oceans all over the world. Muang Badan⁵ is also considered as a mythical kingdom which provides for the endless water source to keep the Mekong River (แม่น้ำโขง) and all other rivers from drying out. According to the ancient belief, the Thais and Southeast Asian people thought that the serpent spirits only lived in the water realm. With the influence of Indian culture, they came to believe in the serpent living in heaven (Suchit Wongthet 2003: 2). In the rain prayer festival, Bun Bang Fai⁶ (เทศกาลบุญบังไฟ), which is yearly held in Yasothon Province in the middle of June, village men launch the serpent shape bamboo rockets into the sky. The rockets send the human message to the God of Thunder, Phra In (พระอินทร์, Indra in Hindu mythology), to ask him to enter into his serpent cloud and make rain. These beliefs might have come from Indian culture, after having been assimilated into the Thai folklore, especially in E - San region which suffers from lack of water all year round.

Naga in Thai Brahmanism and Theravada Buddhism Naga and Thai Brahmanism

Brahmanism (ศาสนาพราหมณ์) is considered as the Arians’ main religion, founded in the Vedic period, about 3,000 years ago. Buddhism (ศาสนาพุทธ) came later, in the 5th century BC. Both of them, however, spread to Southeast Asian region at the same period, in the first centuries AD. The god serpent was called Naga in Sanskrit and Nag in Pali scripts. These terms are used to designate king cobra, elephant, mountain and water. It appears that the worship of the Naga as a type of totem originated from the Dravidian culture. Later it became the holy beast of Brahmanism in the post - Vedic Era, when the Arian absorbed the Dravidian’s indigenous cults. The Naga⁷ was called Nak (นาค), Phaya Nak (พญานาค) or Tua Nak (ตัวนาค) in Thai. Moreover, the term Naga refers to the indigenous people, for instance, the Naga tribes living in Naga Hill, Assam state in Northeast India. The Tam Nan Urangkathat (ตำนานอุรังคธาตุ), a Thai ancient chronicle, states that Naga was the term used to designate the ethnic people originally residing in Nong Sae (หนองแส), South of Yunan province, who emigrated by small

groups for settlement along the banks of Mekong River (Suchit Wongthet 2003: 4). Thus, Naga undoubtedly refers to the Tai race who emigrated southward as the development process of their ethnic history. In the first chapter of the Tam Nan Urangkathat (ตำนานอุรังคธาตุ), there is a part quoted from Indian trade men's narration as the following "Suvannaphum region is the living quarters of Naga race" (Suthit Wongthet 2003: 5). According to Indian chronicle, Suvannaphum (สุวรรณภูมิ) or Suvarnabhumi means "the Golden Land" which nowadays is believed to be Siam peninsular or mainland Southeast Asia. There, the indigenous residents were naked people as the descriptions in Funan Ki, by Khang Tai and Chu Ying, the ambassadors who were sent to the Funan royal court as the China's Wu emperor's envoy in the Three Kingdom period (220 - 280 AD). In other words, the Thai Tam Nan Urangkathat term of designating the indigenous people as Nagas must have come from the Indian influence.



Five headed - Naga at the end of balustrade, Khmer art, Angkor style, Ca: Late 12th century A.D Nakhon Raichasima. Photo: Phan Anh Tu



Head of Naga on the water pipe, Ca: early 20th century, Ubon Ratchatani National Museum. Photo: Phan Anh Tu

The Naga cult was assimilated to the indigenous serpent cult and turned into a state depended divine who is a protector of the new religion and the king's holy lineage. This is illustrated in the legend of a Brahmin, Kaudinya who married a Soma princess (พระนางโสมมา), the daughter of the Naga king, thereafter giving birth to the kings' descendants. A similar story was carved in the Champa⁸ stone inscription in My Son, the holy land in Central Vietnam, after which it was specifically narrated in the legend of the Funan Kingdom⁹ (อาณาจักรฟูนัน) established by Ambassadors Khang Tai and Chu Ying). The Khmer also have a similar story that tells of Prince Preak Thong marrying Princess Nieng Neak, daughter of King Naga, and ultimately it was adapted into the "Phra Ruong" (พระร่วง) story by the Thais, in 13th century AD, explaining the serpent princess lineage (Nang Nak - นางนาค in Thai) of the first

kings of Sukhothai Kingdom¹⁰ (อาณาจักรสุโขทัย). Along with the assimilation of Indian elements into indigenous cultures, all of the stories also bear the stamps of popular stories told in the South or Southeast of India (as the Indian Kings' stories under Manipur and Pallav dynasties). Mahabharata (มหากาพย์), the Indian poem epic in verses, moreover, told the story about Hero Ajuna marrying Naga Princess Ulupi, the daughter of King Naga Nila who was dominating Potala, the water realm. Nevertheless, there is main difference in the details among the legends; the Southeast Asian stories always tells of the serpent princess Soma or the empress Lieu Diep's very important role in the indigenous societies. She is both a supreme ruler of a powerful kingdom and a military chief but doesn't care about being clothed until her marriage to a Brahmin husband. These details are good illustrations of the cultural and social background of Southeast Asia in Pre - Indian influenced period. The indigenous residents are nearly naked and lived in a matriarchal society, with the female position respected within the family and community circles.

With Brahmanism becoming a dominant religion in the royal courts, the king god (Deva-raja) system found its justification of the king having a sacred role. The Naga was an essential symbol of matriarchy related to the kings' noble lineage. In *The Customs of Cambodia*, by Chou Ta Kou, a diplomatic attaché of China's Yuan dynasty (1271-1368 AD), visiting the royal court of Angkor in 13th century AD, told the story of the Khmer king who each night was expected to mate with a nine headed serpent princess to continue the royal lineage and ensure the prosperity of the kingdom. In the other Thai legend stories, the Naga is solemnly narrated as the state protector of devout kings; the Naga assists people to dig rivers for irrigation, protects water dams and constructs state cities for human beings. On the contrary, if the kings or their subjects are malefic, anti - religious, the Naga will punish them by raising water level and sinking the cities, damaging the soil and tearing villages down. Such instances are the stories which happened in the ancient cities of Nong Han Luong¹¹ (หนองหานหลวง), Vieng Nong Lom¹² (เวียงหนองลอม) and Yonoknagaphan¹³ (โยนกนาคพันธ์) in the North of Thailand, Nakhon Suvankhokham (นครสุวรรณโคมคำ) in Laos. Phadeng Nang Ay¹⁴ (ผาดงนางไถ้). The E - San Thai poem epic in verses, also tells the story of King Naga Suttho, who rules Muang Badan, and leads his serpent troops to flood the mainland and kill the entire people who ate meat of his son. Prince Naga Phangkhi.

Naga in Theravada Buddhism

The conflict between Theravada Buddhism (ศาสนาพุทธนิกายเถรวาท) and serpent worshipped cult is reflected in the legends in Thai folklore. Bang Fai Phya Nak¹⁵ (บั้งไฟพญานาค), the E - San Thai legend tells of the Naga living in the Mekong River before the time when the crown prince Sakya - Muni (สีกายมุนี) founded the religion in India. Other legends state that as Buddha came to preach his religion to E - San region, he met many powerful Naga kings who were dominating the area for long. Those stories show that the serpent worship cult was firmly entrenched and had permeated residents' spiritual activities in Siam peninsular in Pre-Buddhist period. Here, the issue needs to be understood in two main aspects of Theravada Buddhism, history and



Vishnu reclining on coils of Ananta - Shesha serpent, bas - relief decorated on the Khmer Theravada Buddhist Temple in Bac Lieu Province, Vietnam.

Photo: Phan Anh Tu

mythology. If the Lord Buddha had preached his religion in E - San region, this implies that Buddhism had expanded into this area, but it can't be true in the historical range because the Buddha had never set foot into Southeast Asia. Urang Kathat tells many conflicting stories between Lord Buddha and the Nagas. All of them, however, are described in the same main motive as following: the Lord Buddha was meditating in a certain sacred peak, located near the Naga kings' fief. The aureole behind his head shines so dazzlingly that it reached the Naga's realm, irritating the Naga kings. Thus, the Naga kings lead their serpent troops to creep into Lord Buddha's meditation seat and attack him by using their magical power. But the Lord Buddha could not be harmed, and the Nagas got tired and weak. The Lord Buddha brought forth his tenets and calmly explained them to the Nagas. The Nagas, henceforth, were persuaded and accepted to follow Buddhist moral codes. When the Lord Buddha made his journey to Laos, the Nagas asked him to set his footprint (Buddhapad) as a memoir for the next generations to worship. The Lord Buddha met the Nagas request, after which he continued preaching his Dharma in Laos and the Nagas stayed back to protect his relics.



Cobra King and his two concubines, mural painting on the Khmer Theravada Buddhist Temple in Bac Lieu Province, Vietnam. Photo: Phan Anh Tu

Among the legends relevant to the Buddha and the indigenous serpent cult, one can rarely find any story which describes the Buddha fighting against the Nagas. It is significant that Buddhism peacefully chooses an associational path in harmony with the animist serpent cult, rather than impose its victory on the indigenous belief system. Thus, the belief of the Nagas and the indigenous serpent cult plays a crucial part in Buddhist culture in Thailand and Southeast Asia. Along with the animist beliefs, Buddhism not only adapted Vedic philosophical elements but also accepted the Brahmanist divinities' presence in its sacred temple.

Naga in Thai architectural ornaments

According to Thai mythology, the Nagas had so faithfully served the Buddha's truth that there were given key positions in Buddhist temples under variable forms. The Nagas usually appear on finial, gable board, arch, balustrade, along the tiers of temple roof, and especially on skillfully carved stairs leading to the main shrine (Viharn in Thai). Most of the Naga significations in Thai architecture, however, possibly find their origin in Brahmanism which Theravada Buddhism had assimilated.



Naga on the roof of Phra Keo Pagoda, Bangkok. Photo: Phan Anh Tu

In accordance with Thai Buddhist conception, Buddhist temples symbolize the holy mount, Phra Sumen (พระสุเมรุ), or Mount Meru¹⁶ in Vedic cosmology, which represents Tavatimsa Heaven where Queen Siri Mahamaya (พระนางสิริมหามายา) (Buddha's mother) and Hindu divinities reside. Nagas decorated along the tiers of temple roofs represent the cosmic river of life source which springs from Mount Phra Sumen streaming down to the human world. This emanates from a Vedic belief which tells of a time during the Ice Age when a Naga swallowed all the waters of the world and coiling its serpentine body to hibernate on the top of Mount Meru. The earth suffered from a severe drought and human beings were dying. To restore life to earth, God Indra (Phra In - พระอินทร์ in Thai) hurled his thunderbolt to the deadly serpent. The bloated Naga busted, causing water to stream down the mountainsides, circulating as rivers throughout the parched world (Pamela York Taylor 1994: 57).



*Naga on the roof of Chom chaeng Pagoda, Chiang Rai Province.
Photo: Phan Anh Tu*

In Theravada Buddhist architecture, the Naga-shape carved stairs always hold a very important position in the temples, symbolizing the three ladders mythically linking earth to heaven. The pious believers' souls are said to be lead up to Nirvana (นิพพาน - heaven in Buddhism)

on the magic ladder by the Naga. The gods use them to descend on earth. Theravada Buddhist mythology also says that the Buddha uses yearly the Naga ladder to descend to earth on a sacred day in middle of November (วันออกพรรษา) after having preached to his mother and the divinities in Tavatimsa Heaven. Besides the signification of Buddhist mythology, a Thai folk legend also tells of Nagas bring earth from the bottom of rivers to build base of temples. Thus, the Naga shape carved stairs are present everywhere in Buddhist temples in Thailand. The most beautiful ones are found in Wat Phumin (วัดภูมินทร์) in Nan (น่าน) province, Wat Supat Thanaram (วัดสุปฏิฐนาราม) in Ubon Ratchathani (อุบลราชธานี) province, Wat Doi Suthep (วัดดอยสุเทพ) in Chiang Mai (เชียงใหม่) province, Chedi Phra That Chomkitti (เจดีย์พระธาตุจอมกิติ) in Chiang Saen (เชียงแสน) district, Chiang Rai province (Wat - วัด— means temple in Thai, Chedi เจดีย์ means stupa) where the wave like long serpentine stairs are skillfully carved, called Nak Sadung¹⁷ (นาคสะดุ้ง) in Thai, to symbolize primarily the cosmic water source streaming down to the parched world as described in Vedic mythology. On another note, the mythical Naga is considered as a guardian (Dvarapala - ทวารบาล) in the Theravada Buddhist temples, which frighten monsters away; therefore they may appear on Buddhist constructions as nothing more than in this capacity. There are, to sum up, variable forms of the Nagas found in Thai architectural art but all of them are present in harmonized relationships within cosmology, religions and the water culture.

Naga in Thai sculptural ornaments

In Buddhist mythology, the Naga figures have faithfully accompanied the Buddha since he was about to be born upto his Nirvana. Nagas even stay in the world of men to protect the Buddhist Trinity or the Triple Gems¹⁸ and to guard the Buddhist vestiges for the future generations. Buddhist mythology also states that when crown prince Siddhartha (เจ้าชายสิทธัตถะ) was newly born in Lumpini (ลุมพินี) royal garden (today, in the South of Nepal), the multi-headed *Naga* caused warm waters to gush forth for the baby prince's first bath. The Jataka¹⁹ (called Chadok (ชาดก) in Thai), a Buddhist literature work, created by the Ceylonese (Sri Lanka) in 5th century AD, telling of the Buddha's 547 reincarnations, mentioned in the Bhuridatta Jataka (ภุริทัตชาดก) episode how the Buddha was once born in a Naga form before being

reincarnated into the crown prince Siddhartha. The Naga theme, in Thai Buddhist sculpture, is represented in many ways as given below.

Naga-protecting Buddha

The theme called Pang Nak Prok (*ปางนาคปรก*) in Thai, which depicts the Buddha seated on top of the serpentine coils. Behind the Buddha, the Naga in its multi-headed form rising to form a shelter for Buddha. This image was very popular in the Mon and Khmer stone sculptural arts in pre-Thai Era, dated 7th - 13th centuries AD. In 1238, Sukhothai kingdom was established as the first Thai state; the Thais later inherited the Khmer theme of Naga-protecting Buddha which they transformed into their own styles. The most distinguished statue was found in Chedi Jet Theo (*เจดีย์เจ็ดแถว*), Si Satchanalai (*ศรีสัชนาลัย*) province. Many statues in this theme are also exhibited in the National Museum Bangkok. They are the most popular statues to be worshipped in Thai temples, especially in temples in the North and the Northeast of Thailand where the belief of the Naga is predominant.



*Buddha sheltered by Naga's hood, Lopburi style, Ca: 13th century, founded at Wat Na Phra Men, Ayuthaya Province, Bangkok National Museum.
Photo: Phan Anh Tu*



Naga protected Buddha, Chom Chaeng Pagoda, Chiang Saen district, Chiang Rai Province. Photo: Phan Anh Tu

The meaning of the Naga-protecting Buddha is a classic reference to Buddhist mythology, which tells how the Buddha meditated for the first seven weeks in different positions. In the sixth week, he was seated under the Muca-linda tree, home of a serpent god called Muca-Linda²⁰ (*มูจลินท์*). When a strong rainstorm suddenly poured down, the Muca-linda crept out of its lair. The Naga coiled its body into seven circles and lifted the meditating Buddha up above the powerful stream. In my opinion, the Naga-protecting Buddha image was possibly transformed from the Brahmanist legend of Vishnu (*วิษณุ*) reclining on the coils of the cosmic serpent Shesha-Ananta²¹ (endless serpent) and giving birth to Brahma²² (Phra Phrom - *พระพรหม* in Thai) the God Creator from a lotus blossoming out from his navel as recounted in the

Bhagavad-Gita, a part of the Mahabharata epic. Before the Naga-protecting Buddha image was known in Indian sculptural art; it appeared that people had come across the statue of Naga coiling around the Jainists' naked body with its seven heads spreading as a canopy. There are, however, some differences: Vishnu is seen to recline on the serpentine coils whereas the Jainists represent the Naga coiling around their bodies and the seated Buddha is shown to meditate on the Naga. The Buddha and the Muca – Linda might have been Indian traditional images which were formed in the pre-Buddhist Era and later transformed in the Buddhist Era.

Naga and Garuda

Garuda²³, the sun eagle (Khрут - ครุฑ in Thai), is the relentless enemy of the Naga, accordingly to the original description of these two holy beasts in Vedic mythology. In Indian iconography, people usually carve the Garuda image standing on the Naga, the two hands of the bird clasping the tails of the Naga but the Naga cannot be killed as it is also immortal as its enemy, the Garuda, according to the mythology.



Long line of Garudas stepping on Nagas and holding Naga tails in their talons, Wat Phra Keo, Bangkok. Source: <http://depositphotos.com>

The Thai sculpture depicts the image from both the Indian and the Khmer arts but the Thais think that though Garuda is standing on Naga, it is not destroying Naga. Together Naga and Garuda constitute a balance between sky, earth, rain and sunlight. The light from the Garuda illuminates the earth and the water source of the Naga helps growth of the cereals, allowing for continuous life. Differing with the Indian thought, the Thais consider the relationship of Garuda and Naga as a symbiotic association, leading to good harvest. In the traditional iconography, the Thai artists carved Garuda riding on Naga along the walls of Wat Si Sawai (วัดศรีสว่าง) in the ancient citadel of Sukhothai (สุโขทัย) or Garuda riding on Naga appears on the front of Wat Na Phra Men (พรหน้าพระเมรุ), Ayuthaya (อยุธยา) province and etc. In the Hindu temples, located at Phimai (พิมาย) plateau, the Khmer artists created long queues of Garuda – riding on Naga with two hands lifting the temple roofs. The motif was enthusiastically adapted by the Thai artist when they made a string of Garuda clasping the tails of Nagas, symbolically lifting up Wat Phra Keo (วัดพระแก้ว), Bangkok. The image represents the symbiotic association of Garuda with Nagas rather than their destruction.



Phra Narai on his mount (Garuda) subduing Nagas and Rahu. Source: <http://thailex.asia>

In some Thai temples, one sometime sees Garuda riding on Naga with God Phra Narai (Vishnu's reincarnation) on his back. This illustrates the association between the two holy beasts, both of them being Phra Narai's holy rides. Although the theme has taken its inspiration from Hindu myth, its signification leans toward Buddhism and is only popular when Theravada Buddhism flourishes in Thailand. They appear in mural paintings in Thai Buddhist temples, especially on the walls of Wat Phra Keo. The motif, Vishnu on Garuda clasping Naga on its talons, moreover, is present in a variety of artifacts in Thai art. On the black and gold lacquered cabinet exhibited in the National Museum Bangkok, thick swirling carved designs show Garuda carrying Phra Narai on its back with two legs stepping on Naga and its talons tightly clasping the serpentine tails.

Naga and Makara

Makara (mythical sea monster) is Varuna's holy mount, God of the Ocean in Vedic mythology. The Indian mythology describes Makara as having the shape of a fish, crocodile, and even lion or dragon. When the Makara²⁴ impacted on Thai culture, it was eventually made to resemble a Naga or a crocodile. The Makara has a unique head with



Naga emanating from Makara's mouth, Chong Chang Pagoda, Chieng Saen district, Chieng Rai province. Photo: Phan Anh Tu

two ears on the sides, an elephantine nose and a wide mouth with Sharpteeth. Especially, in Sukhothai period, the Sawankhalok potters made the ceramic Makara statues by adding two horns, their mouths holding "a pearl" as Chinese dragon. The statues can be seen in the National Museum Bangkok.



Naga emanating from Makara's mouth, Phra Chao Lan Thong Pagoda, Chieng Saen district, Chieng Rai Province. Photo: Phan Anh Tu

In Thai culture, the relationship between Makara and Naga is clearly recognized in sculptural art. Thai artists usually make Makara – spouting - Naga on roofs, stairs of Theravada Buddhist temples. This theme popularly appears in some Southeast Asian countries for instance Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. Besides this signification, they also act as holy beasts which frighten monsters away; they may carry a fertility meaning because both of them symbolize water and fertile soil. In Makara – spouting-Naga from its mouth, people can see Makara spouting vegetables or plants on wood or stone carving sceneries in Thai temples. On a field trip at Wat Chom Chang (วัดจอมช้าง), Chieng Saen province, I once saw many Makaras – spouting-Nagas on roofs and stairs. But here, Makaras' claws and fangs were broken and their eyes blinded by two cement pieces. The villagers considered Makaras as monsters. Their fangs and claws if left intact, the Makaras could come out in the field and kill cattle. As I can see, Nagas symbolize the

good deeds but Makaras personify evil. The Makara – spouting-Naga implies that he has no ability to harm the other animals. And the villagers think that if they blind the Makaras, and take away their fangs, they are harmless. When I travelled to the other regions afterward I also saw many statues of Makara – spouting-Naga but the Makaras are still intact. It proves that there are different conceptions of Makara in Thai culture, according to the identity of each region in Thailand.

Conclusion

The animist serpent cult of Siam peninsular, Southeast Asia and the Southern China was found in the Metal Age, where water played a preponderant role in human activities. Archaeological sites show that primitive people naturally inhabited along basins of rivers, streams and around lakes. Water was regarded as crucial highways, living means and it has influenced their cultural activities during this ancient period. Because of their shape and living environment, snakes were then considered as the symbol of water, fertility of the soil, of living beings, men and a totem. The oldest remnants of serpent cult were also discovered in some places in Thailand, Burma, Vietnam, Cambodia and Southern China.

When Brahmanism and Buddhism expanded to Southeast Asia and Thailand, these new religions clashed with the old system of the serpent cult. The clash vestiges can be easily traced in Thai folk literature. If Brahmanism imposed its victory on the system of old belief, on the contrary, Buddhism peacefully fused with indigenous animism. It is said that Buddhism has played an important role in the preservation of the indigenous serpent legends up to now. Thus, in Thailand, the Naga images are abundantly represented in the Buddhist architectural and sculptural ornaments.

The significance of Naga in Thai architectural and sculptural ornaments is a representation of the association of the water culture, indigenous legends and philosophical influence of Brahmanism and Theravada Buddhism. Furthermore, the architectural and sculptural images are inherited from different cultures such as India, Sri Lanka, Mon, Khmer, Java and China resulting into a specific Thai cultural identity, a sum of diverse influences. The serpent cult however did not last in Thailand and Southeast Asia as it did in Southern India. The reason was the widespread adoption of Buddhism, and the fact that Naga stories had permeated Buddhism to such a degree it became impossible to worship Nagas independently of the Buddha.

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- ²⁰ สุจิตต์ วงษ์เทศ ประวัติศาสตร์และพัฒนาการ ๓๐๐ หน้า สำนักพิมพ์ มติชน ๒๕๔๓ (Suchit Wongthet. History and Development. Thailand: Matichon Publishing House, 2000).
- ²¹ สุจิตต์ วงษ์เทศ นาคในประวัติศาสตร์อุษาคเนย์ ๒๓๕ หน้า สำนักพิมพ์ มติชน ๒๕๔๖ (Suchit Wongthet. *Naga in Southeast Asia Culture*. Thailand: Matichon Publishing House, 2003).

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- ¹ Called Mae Nam Khong in Thai; Mae means mother, Nam means water; Mae Nam refers to the river; Khong means things; Mekong River means the river full of things.
- ² A main character's name in a legend of the Tai Lu groups those living Sipsongpanna. The story tells that in olden times, a young woman, Nang Sa went fishing in Mekong River near her home in Southern Yunnan, and touched what she believed to be a log floating in the water. Later, she gave a birth to 10 baby boys. A serpent king one day showed up claiming that the boys were his sons. Nang Sa was scared so she took her children to run away but the youngest boy couldn't escape. Thus, Naga King came to lap him, after which brought him to bath in Mekong River. When 10 baby boys grew up, Nang Sa asked for girls' hand for them. Then, the youngest boy was appointed to be leader of the tribe and this clan multiplied the descendants who became Tai groups. Among those, there were the ancestors of Thai and Laotian people
- ³ The same racial name of Thai although it is used to means those living outside Siam
- ⁴ Using solely for the name of the race representing the majority of people in Siam. The adjectives Thai and Siamese are interchangeable because of the pre dominance of Thais in the country
- ⁵ A sacred city under Mekong river course, which is the water realm of Nagas in Thai and Laotian legends
- ⁶ Bamboo rockets used in rain propitiation
- ⁷ Considered as the symbol of Thailand Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperative. It is also one of six symbols of Kingdom of Thailand including in Naga (Nak), Garuda (Khrut), Lotus (Dokbua), Eravan (Elephant), Nang Wack and Orchid
- ⁸ Ancient Indianized Kingdom located in Central Vietnam was annexed by Vietnamese in the 17th centuries. Nowadays, there are still Muslim and Hindu Cham communities living in the Central and the South Vietnam.
- ⁹ Early Indianized State in Southeast Asia, its central is suggested to be located in Mekong Delta (Southern Vietnam). The French scholars hypothesized Funam Kingdom as pre - Khmer empire.
- ¹⁰ Means the Dawn of Happiness in Thai. Sukhothai is considered as the first independent state of Thai nation

- ¹¹ Is a district in Udon Ratchathani province. In Thai legend, Nong Han Luong is considered as a Great Lake where Naga lived before becoming mainland
- ¹² An archaeological site located in Chieng Rai province. Vieng means City, Nong means Lake and Lom means Sink. Vieng Nong Lom means Lake Sunk City. This name reminds more or less of a Thai myth to tell of Naga king who sunk the city as the human king and his court officials ate a great white eel caught from Mae Khong River
- ¹³ Kingdom of Naga Race, that implies to a certain mythical land in the North of Thailand
- ¹⁴ The story of Thai E - San and Laotian tells of a Naga Prince, who wishes to marry a Khmer princess. So the Prince, Phangkhi, transforms into a squirrel to be near her. The Princess asks her hunter to get it for her. But, she orders a poison arrow to be used by mistake, and the Prince is killed. she shares his meat with most everyone in the city. When the Naga King finds out, he marches his army to the city and kills everyone who dared to eat the meat of his son
- ¹⁵ Each year, at nights in the middle of November, there is so much blame lighted out of the Mekong River, in the current between Nong Khai province and Vientiane of Laos. The legends explain that Phya Nagi (King Naga) vomits the blame to welcome the Lord Buddha who descends to the men's world from Tavatimsa heaven after preaching to his mother and Hindu gods
- ¹⁶ Called Phra Sumen in Thai, pyre usually shapes in receding tiers to represent Mount Meru
- ¹⁷ Naga in wave - like motion, used in several parts of the monastery including balustrades and compound walls
- ¹⁸ Which are the Buddha, Dharma (Law), and Sangha (religious community)
- ¹⁹ The Buddhist literature that tells about the Lord Buddha's 547 previous incarnations. Based on Jataka, the Thais adapted into the new one, called Panasa Jataka or Chadot
- ²⁰ A mythical serpent protected Buddha for his meditation
- ²¹ Endless Serpent carries Vishnu on the Milky Ocean
- ²² God of Universal Creation, who was born on a lotus base blossoming out from Vishnu's navel in Bhagavad-Gita
- ²³ Khrut in Thai, mythical bird - man, a carrier of God Vishnu
- ²⁴ Sea monster resembles crocodilian shape that is considered as holy ride of Varuna, God of Ocean, in Vedic myth

Muslim Women's Educational Backwardness: Contemporary Contexts and Concerns

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In the backdrop of educational backwardness of Muslim community in India, and especially of Muslim girls and women, and the reasons thereof, an understanding of how Muslims perceive their location and condition in the larger socio-economic-cum educational context, cultural milieu and political environment would be worth it. A probe into Muslim community's perception, view and prevalent practices vis-à-vis education of Muslim children, particularly of Muslim girls as a manifestation of their outlook as perceived by various scholars over a period of time, might enrich and enlighten the contemporary contests and concerns as well as the salient paradigms and problems underlying their outlook, in general, and with regard to education of girls, in particular.

Muslims account for nearly 14% of India's over 1.3 billion people. They live in all States of India, albeit in varying proportions, including States like Jammu & Kashmir where they are in majority, and also in over 13 States with significant Muslim concentration districts. The socio-economic, religious and cultural contexts and the ambience relating to educational opportunities, government policies and political commitment or priorities in respect of Muslims are obviously not the same across all States. Muslims' perceptions and reactions about educational opportunities and threats could differ from State to State and situation to situation in the light of socio-cultural milieu generated over the

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centuries. How do scholars perceive the Muslims' attitude and outlook, their commonalities and contrasting features, their strength and weaknesses in such a scenario may be an interesting reading. Muslims in India unmistakably evince an overriding concern about their survival and security, their unique socio-cultural ethos and identity, their language Urdu as a cultural symbol in particular and Madrasas and Makhtabs for religious education, and a host of such other issues are their deep seated predicaments and bones of convention. The most commonplace and straight-jacket concern reflected in most scholars' perception about Muslims, is perhaps their deprivation syndrome, the 'Neglected Community Image, symbolizing aspects like insecurity, identity, primacy for survival, etc., besides educational backwardness, especially of girls, due to lack of educational opportunities, facilities, quality teachers, and monitoring of students' learning, indifferent attitude towards difficulties that the Muslims face in case of education of their children in the localities of their concentration, especially in Northern and Eastern Indian States where the neglect is said to exist in its most heightened form, which in turn, is referred to as the most potential contributory factor for their backwardness as well as Systemic Discrimination among others. We have made five broad categorization of perspectives based on the literature survey to map scholars' perception about Muslims' educational backwardness. The five categories are: Neglected Community Image: Deprivation Syndrome, Community's Socio-Cultural Practices, Religious Ethos, Accentuating the Gendered Educational Discrimination, Awareness, Adequacy, Approach and Access Paradigms, and Other Systemic Discrimination.

What Impede Education of Muslim Children?

1. Neglected Community Image: Deprivation Syndrome

The studies conducted on the perception of neglected community image include the studies of Ahmed (1995), Hussain (1995), Siddiqui (1998), Qadri et. al (1998), Siddiqui (2004), The Sachar Committee (2007) and Islam (2010).

Ahmad, A. (1995) in a survey of 15,000 households in the States of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, and in the national capital territory of Delhi found educational status of Muslims as highly unsatisfactory, mainly due to large family size, community's perception that modern education has no significant value, the nature of community's engagement mainly in the labour-force and casual attitude of successive central and state governments towards education of

Muslims. Hussain, S.M. (1995) in a sample of 100 Muslim women studying in four different women colleges run by government and non-government agencies in Hyderabad found that the higher level of education, the lesser the female representation and attributed to lack of proper infrastructure as well as inadequate number of teaching staff, especially in the Urdu medium sections. In another study, Siddiqui M.A. (1998) also found that the educational status of Muslims had not improved over the years, particularly in the northern part of the country. The worst condition was found to be in the State of Uttar Pradesh, which had almost one-fourth of the entire Muslim population in India. Uneven educational opportunities and facilities in different States of India, coupled with economic deprivation, had led to unequal educational development among Muslims across States. The educational programmes as envisaged in the National Policy on Education, (1986, revised in 1992 and its Programme of Action) had also not been implemented faithfully by the state governments. In 1998, Qadri et. al. found lack of Urdu medium and religious teaching in the government schools resulting in deterioration of educational status of Muslims, especially those who desired to educate their children in Urdu medium. Siddiqui, M.A. (2004), using micro and macro level survey data, found Muslims as one of the most backward lot of the people among those denominations in the Indian society, who were yet to be empowered through education; and needed to be equipped with education with a much faster pace than others. Referring to the moot issue, he mentioned that though orthodox sections of Muslim society oppose higher education of Muslim girls in certain areas, lack of proper educational arrangements restricted access of otherwise interested Muslim girls. Even the on-going schemes of the government of India for the empowerment of Muslims through education seemed to have failed to achieve their objectives. The Sachar Committee (2007) brought out the failure of the State to provide adequate educational infrastructure in areas of Muslim concentration, especially for the girls. The lack of school facilities and the Urdu medium schools have the strong repercussion on the education of girls as many parents see girls more as repositories of tradition and less as wage earners. Another study undertaken by Islam, N. (2010) related educational backwardness of Muslims to the governmental neglect, lack of policies and educational opportunities. The areas of Muslim concentration lacked even primary level school facilities. For example, the Murshidabad district had 63.7 per cent Muslim population but only one primary school for every

1,851 children was available whereas in Purulia with 7.12 per cent Muslim population, there also was only one primary school for every 852 children.

2. Community's Socio-Cultural Practices

The studies conducted on the perception on community's discriminatory gendered socio-cultural practices include Menon (1981), Shah (1982-83), Woodsmall (1983), Ansari (1989), Ahmad (1990), Ansari (1992), Khan (1993), Mondal (1997), Ruhela (1998) and Hasan and Ritu (2004).

Menon, M.I. (1981) found prevalence of custom of early marriages of girls, *pardah* and the preference for religious education were the contributory factors in educational backwardness among them. Shah, S.S. (1982-83) found the poor schooling among the girls was to be the outcome of the prevalence of gender-based discriminatory socio-cultural practices. The observance of *pardah*, early marriage and parental belief that education of girl means marriage at older age were identified as some of the examples of lower educational progress among them. Woodsmall, R. F. (1983) found a more pronounced educational disparity between Muslim men and women, mainly because of the prevalence of *pardah* and community's conservative attitude towards women's education. Ansari, I. (1989) underlined that Indian Muslims educational backwardness is mainly because of lack of motivation and opportunities for formal education, as well as the feeling of threat of survival. Ahmad, M. (1990) emphasized that *Islam* though does not discriminate in education on ground of sex, yet the girls suffered due to restrictions and superstitions that prevail in the community towards women's education. Ansari, A. (1992) noticed high dropout rates in an increasing order among Muslims as the level of education goes up. Muslims continue to have a closed society and their indifferent attitude towards modern education binds them to horizontal mobility. Khan, J.M. (1993) in a household survey of Tonk town of Rajasthan with concentration of large Muslim population, found very poor educational status of Muslim girls with majority of them not attending schools after attaining the age of puberty.

Using household level data of six villages of six districts of West Bengal viz. Cooch Behar, West Dinajpur, Malda, Murshidabad, Birbhum, and South 24-Parganas covering 240 households (40 in each village), Mondal, S.R. (1997) found the educational scenario of Muslim women as very depressing and disheartening. Ignorance and illiteracy being some of the major problems of Muslim community, the existing

programmes of adult education had also not made any significant impact in improving this educational status over the years. However, modern society younger generations wanted change believing that girls be given higher education. Ruhela, S.P. (1998) in 40 sociological case studies of Muslim adolescent girls and working women of diverse socio-economic and educational backgrounds residing in Delhi, found that though many girls had come forward to get educational benefits, yet majority of them were still struggling to achieve their basic human rights. Their educational backwardness was found mainly because of social discrimination, prejudices, oppression and atrocities due to a rigid patriarchal social order, cultural tradition and social restrictions.

Hasan and Ritu (2004), while examining primary data collected from 10,000 households from 40 districts in 12 States with high concentration of Muslims population, female population aged 18+ years with a household sample including 80 per cent Muslim households and 20 per cent Hindu households in each area found mass illiteracy and poor schooling among Muslim women; wide regional and inter community disparities in female literacy rates; with many girls dropping out of school after primary school. Factors that accounted for low school completion rate among Muslim girls were found varied. Most importantly, cultural norms and traditions influenced Muslim girls' education significantly. The level of boys' education was also noticed to be generally very low among Muslim sample households; hence, the effect of norm of *patrilocal* exogamy was seen very strong on Muslim girls' education as compared to Hindu girls.

3. Religious Ethos, Accentuating the Gendered Educational Discrimination

The studies conducted on the perception that religious ethos accentuates gendered educational discrimination include Ahmad (1991), Ansari (1992), Engineer (1994), Khalidi (1996), Rokaiya (1998), Ali (1998), Akhtar (2003), Agha Khan Foundation (2008) and Yousuff (2010).

Ahmad, S. (1991) found that Muslims lag behind in educational attainment because of their own attitude. Ansari, A. (1992) found high dropout rate among them and the rate increases as the level of education goes up. This is directly related to the community's own ethos as they continue to live in a closed society and, hence, their indifferent attitude towards modern education tends to contribute to their educational backwardness. Engineer, A.A. (1994) marked that the low level of women's education is mainly because of the ideology that visualizes

the aim of women's education as only to prepare them for performing certain religious duties and hence the need to just give them access to elementary religious education. Khalidi, O. (1996) found that Muslims were sending their children to *Madrasas* instead of modern schools, fearing that they might turn atheist or irreligious if they study in the latter. Rokaiya, B. (1998) in two Muslim dominated villages of the district Burdwan and Howrah in West Bengal found that Muslims were the least educated community, especially their women folk; and it was linked with their poor economic status, practice of female seclusion and parental negative attitudes towards women's education. Ali, B. S. (1998) found that Muslims lagged behind in education mainly because of their own attitude towards modern education. They failed to understand the value of modern education. They feel that they can survive without modern education. Akhtar, N. (2003) stressed that though Islam laid equal stress on education for men and women, many Muslim parents prefer to send their daughters to institutions that impart education in Islamic beliefs. Organizations imparting education to children in accordance with Islamic beliefs such as the *Jami'at-us-Salihah*, Rampur, the *Kulliyat-u-Aysha*, Malegaon and the *Jami'a Mohammadiya*, Bangalore, etc. are neither enough in number nor available in every part of the country that affects education of those Muslim girls whose parents want to educate them in religious traditions. This calls for setting up more such institutions and training institutes for teachers as well as strengthening their infrastructure facilities. In a household survey in 12 districts, 2 each in six States, namely, Kurnool and Chittoor in Andhra Pradesh; Siddharth Nagar and Rampur in Uttar Pradesh; Aurangabad and Yevatmal in Maharashtra; Malda and Midnapur in West Bengal; Jaisalmer and Alwar in Rajasthan; and Baruch and Junagadh in Gujarat, Agha Khan Foundation (2008) in its report *Chudgar also found* feeling of discrimination, illiteracy, ignorance and lack of awareness, religious or traditional mindset, and lack of educational opportunities, with their influence varying from State to State as importantly contributing to their educational backwardness. Yousuff, H. S. M. (2010) stressed that Muslims demand educational institutions for their daughter's education that provide them a more disciplined environment of religious piety. Lack of such institutions contributes to their educational backwardness.

4. Awareness, Adequacy, Approach and Access Paradigms

The studies included in the perception that lack of awareness, adequacy, approach and access to opportunities leads to Muslim children's

educational backwardness include Hussain (1990), Nainar (2000), Danish (2004), Jeffery et. al. (2005), Goswami and Kabir (2006), Ahmed (2008), Husain (2009), Sikand (2011) and Khanam (2013).

Hussain S. (1990) in a sample of 300 students in Darbhanga town in north Bihar, found Muslims as one of the most marginalized communities in the educational development and their educational backwardness emerged due to poverty, lack of educational facilities and sense of insecurity in the minds of Muslims. Using inter- and intra-State level data collected from 14,642 women of different communities, classes and age groups of both rural and urban areas of 46 districts across the country having high, medium and low density of Muslim population, Nainar, V. (2000) found very low literacy rates among Muslim women because of Muslims' poor economic status and their discriminatory attitude between sons and daughters in accessing educational resources and opportunities. Danish, I. (2004) in Siddharthnagar, Barabanki and Moradabad districts of Uttar Pradesh found high dropout rates among Muslim girls from schools as well as from junior-level *Madrasas* both at the primary and secondary levels. Factors that contributed to dropout rate were mainly religious as well as socio-economic in nature. In a case study of a Muslim dominated village namely Qaziwala in Bijnor district of Uttar Pradesh, Jeffery et al. (2005) identified major constraints in the educational development of Muslim children in general and of Muslim girls in particular were lack of schooling facilities, particularly at the secondary level in Muslim concentrated areas, proper infrastructure facilities in schools, non-availability of facilities for *dinitalim* (religious instructions) in schools and parents' resistance to modern education, especially for girls. Goswami and Kabir (2006), analyzing 2001 census based evidences on literacy and educational achievement of children belonging to different socio-religious communities, found that Muslim men and women were far less educationally accomplished than their non-Muslim counterparts, and this was so across almost every State in India. Women universally suffer discrimination vis-a-vis men, but the extent of discrimination was found to be far greater for the Muslim women; more discriminated in matters of education by their own families. Ahmed, F. (2008) found that Indian Muslims had acquired a ghetto mindset by sticking themselves to the non-progressive localities and archaic attitude because they were misled by their fundamentalist leaders. They did not send their children to modern schools and girls were kept away from schools altogether. While citing the findings of the survey undertaken by the

Friends for Education Society (an NGO), he mentioned that in every 100 Muslim girls admitted in schools at the primary level, only four managed to go to high school and only one to a college. Husain, Z. (2009), using unit level National Sample Survey (NSS) data (61st round, 2004), in a comparative analysis of the educational status of minorities, including Muslims, in primary education in West Bengal, found that Muslim children lagged behind children of other communities both in rural and urban areas in terms of enrolment and dropouts, even than children of backward classes. The study found over 60 per cent parents perceived education not necessary for Muslim girls while 20 per cent perceived education not necessary even for boys. The need is for affirmative action targeting minorities. Sikand, Y. (2011) noticed Muslim organizations generally concerned about issues that pertain either to religion or what they regard as Muslim identity. Educational conditions of the Muslim masses hardly occupy any concern. Their concern, if any, is limited, by and large, to religious instruction and preaching. Hence, a large portion of resources of the mullah-led community organizations spend on building places of worship and from within their premises running *Maktabs* and *Madrasas* to provide generally free education, boarding and lodging to students. These institutions attract a large number of minority children from poor Muslim families. The education they receive shapes their mind in a way as trained professional mullahs that tend to development of the community in the secular context of a plural, modern society. Husain, Z. (2009) in a unit level National Sample Survey data (61st round, 2004) found more than a tenth of Muslim children aged 6-15 years were never enrolled in school and the proportion of never enrolled children was even higher in urban areas. This was directly related to their view that education is not necessary for girls and education imparted to them in schools does not carry high importance to them. Khanam, A. (2013) worked on the problems of backward class Muslims from a sociological perspective and analyzed their socio-economic and educational conditions at macro as well as micro levels. Based on empirical evidences collected from a Pihani block of district Hardoi in Uttar Pradesh, the author identified a number of factors characterizing the backward class status of Muslims and attributed those factors to their educational backwardness.

5. Other Systemic Discrimination

The studies conducted on the perception that systemic discrimination causes educational backwardness includes Hasan and Ritu (2005), Jafri (2010), and Nuna (2012).

Hasan and Ritu (2005) observed that Muslim women lagged far behind women of other communities in terms of education because of lack of availability and accessibility of elementary schooling facilities in Muslim areas coupled with non-availability of opportunities for Urdu- medium instructions in schools and poor infrastructure in schools. The discontinuation of Muslim boys' education at a very early stage of education also adversely influenced continuation of Muslim girls' education. Importantly, many Muslim families like to send their children, especially girls, to schools that impart secular education but function within Muslim ethos. The government schools did not provide such an ambience and ethos, hence, parents withdraw them from school once they attain puberty. Based on household data, Jafri, S.S.A. (2010) while studying educational status of Muslims in two districts namely Barabanki and Shahjahanpur in Uttar Pradesh covering 60 villages and 1800 households (900 households from each district), found low literacy rates among Muslims in both the districts. Their educational backwardness emerged largely due to poverty, that does not permit the Muslim population to avail of the educational facilities even if available free of cost, with mid-day meal and scholarship. Nuna, A. (2012) in sample study of two districts of Uttar Pradesh found lack of awareness about governmental programmes and schemes for the upliftment of Muslim girls as one of the major contributory factor in educational backwardness of Muslim girls.

Discussion and Results

The studies are revealing and can be recapitulated. The range and breadth of the studies reviewed indicate (i) the household surveys, village case studies, inter-village, inter-block, inter-district, inter-State comparative studies, (ii) the State and city-specific and inter-State comparisons, encompassing Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Delhi, Goa, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal and (iii) the district level comparative studies. The sample size ranged from less than 100 to 15,000 households in one case and 33,000 households in rural areas spread over 1,765 villages of 195 districts across 16 States of India. The studies covered have a wide range of the number of the individuals, households and geographical units, villages, towns, cities, districts, regions and States. With respect to the scale, magnitude, area and population coverage, the studies seem to be adequate to enquire into the extent and the exact nature of educational backwardness and regional and State level

variations which highlight important changes in socio-cultural, economic, and linguistic differences in the pattern and extent of deprivation in general and of the educational deprivation in particular, especially of the girls and women. It is clear from the literature survey as a whole that the Muslims are not a well off section all over India. They are in occupations which do not require and cannot easily afford high level of formal education. Under normal economic conditions, an average Muslim favoured education for their sons only but never try to educate them in adverse economic conditions. Also, an average Muslim equates modern education with government job and failure on this front disillusioned them. Moreover, majority of them are engaged in small petty businesses and sending children to schools is not seen to bring higher returns in their life. Most of the studies pointed out that due to the poor socio-economic conditions, girls who do get enrolled in schools drop out before completing even elementary education. The poverty, household workload, opposition to co-education after puberty, parental belief that rightful place of women is at the home are the factors which play important roles.

However, more specifically the scholars recognize that the poor socio-economic condition places them at a disadvantaged position, culturally the Muslims are a closed community, as compared to other religious and ethnic communities. Across the country they are seriously concerned about (i) safety and security of the girls if they have to go out of their locality or the village for education, (ii) about the difficulty to find a suitable spouse for an educated girl, and (iii) about the discrimination in parental attitude regarding the need for modern education for their sons in preference to their daughters. This is against the prospect of girls' education in Muslim families. It becomes evident from the literature survey that there is no other issue which has disturbed the scholars as much as the gender discrimination in education of girls and women in the Muslim community. It is also an issue that almost every scholar had taken cognizance of and gave their considered opinion. In portraying the attitude of Muslim community towards education of girls, scholars pointed out that the deprivation of girls has been very acute in the northern and eastern States and low in the southern and western States. The fact is that all the scholars bring up this as the reason for the educational backwardness of Muslim girls and women.

The scholars observe that the systemic discrimination against Muslim students in education has been particularly acute in northern

and eastern States. In States like Kerala, as scholars show, there has been a significant improvement in their educational status, partly because of the deliberate policy of the government to reserve admissions in schools and colleges for Muslim children and also in government jobs, and partly because of declaring the Muslims as part of the backward castes/classes to extend them the facilities to them also meant for the backward classes.

An overview

In the last 20 years or so, there seems to be a paradigm shift in the discourse on the problems of Muslims, their perceptions and the solutions. The scholars first questioned their own understanding of the perceptions of the community and view that the community is not a homogenous unit, but as a conglomeration of different strata. They have noticed different interpretations of Islam with regard to the equality and education of girls and women – the more liberal interpretation by the economically better off and progressive sections, and narrow interpretation by the conservative sections which has wielded considerable influence over the economically vulnerable majority of the Muslim community. The scholars, of late, also put the onus on the policies of the government for discriminating the community and side tracking the Muslims from the advantages of development. The scholar also put the onus on the Muslim leadership for not proving them the role model. They have sharply underlined the policy deficit in respect of the development approach of the government towards the community. Almost all the studies reviewed in this paper point that the community needs to be mainstreamed with regard to their educational upliftment, which would also by implication improve the prospects of girl's education.

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I, Dr. Lata Singh, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

June 13, 2016

(Sd) Dr. Lata Singh
(Signature of Publisher)

Astha Bharati Annual Lecture : A Report

Astha Bharati has instituted an 'Annual Lecture Series' on vital issues and subjects relevant to the country. The first annual lecture was delivered by Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche at 7.00 PM on May 8, 2016 at the India International Centre, New Delhi on the subject of 'Modernity and Tradition.' It was presided over by Dr. Jayanta Madhab, President Astha Bharati.

Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche is a renowned Buddhist scholar. An ordained Monk and Bhikshu, he is a descendent of the Nalanda Tradition and is, therefore, richly imbued in Indian traditions. During his academic and spiritual journey he had developed life long relationships and friendships with Indian scholars including Jiddu Krishnamurthi, Raiman Pannikar, Prof. A.K. Saran and Krishnnathji among others. Prof. Rinpoche has held a number of prestigious social and political assignments. He was also the first elected Prime Minister (Kalon Tripa) of the Tibetan Government in Exile (2011-11), Director and Vice-Chancellor of the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, (U.P.) a Deemed University, and is currently the Chancellor of the Sanchi University of Indic & Buddhist Studies (M.P.)

Introducing the subject, Prof. Rinpoche stated that while there is no authoritative or documented definition of 'Tradition,' it was often taken to be social customs and long standing social patterns, habits, practices and norms, which would be good for the society. However, such claims may be rejected by the progressives or modernists. Neither was the right course. He then commended the definition of tradition given by Coomarswamy, which has three parts viz. the knowledge should be of divine source, such an authoritative source should be direct and that it should be verifiable by common sense, logic and rationality. He urged to understand the true nature of traditions, as urged even by Buddha, by shedding pre-conceived notions, and mindsets, and only after testing and analyzing it logically, even if it emanated from Buddha

himself. In this context, Prof. Rinpoche also distinguished between "knowing" and "accepting," and 'accepting,' without testing it by knowledge and logic, is superstition. This is often happening in our educational institutions where students are urged to accept blindly whatever is in the books.

He added that true tradition can only be beneficial to mankind and not harmful. If it is harmful tradition then it cannot be true. He said that Mahatma Gandhi went a step further and had said that tradition should also serve public good and giving the example of 'untouchability,' Gandhiji had asserted that untouchability was a social evil, worthy of outright rejection and that even if it could trace its origin to some religious texts and classics, he would have no hesitation in rejecting those religious texts. He also highlighted the need to steer clear of evil social practices which are often projected in the guise of tradition. These could be long-standing practices, and rituals, but not traditions.

Prof. Rinpoche went on to say that initially he believed, as suggested by some people, that Tibet was lost to China because of its backwardness and lack of modernity. But later on during his stay at Varanasi, he discovered that despite all talks of modernity, the old Indian traditions, were still alive in learned people like J. Krishnamurthi, A.K. Saran, G.C. Pande, Hazari Prasad Dwivedi and others. He was, thus, able to discard the argument that Tibet was lost because of lack of modernity.

In regard to 'Modernity,' Prof. Rinpoche said that it's attributes were novelty, self grounding and violence, and that it should be different from tradition and its claims must be accepted without scrutiny. He also said that modernity was unconnected with any existing process or reality. It claims to be self-evident. He again recalled Mahatma Gandhi who had understood the true nature of modernity and had asserted that it was like a dream in which everything seemed good but like waking up, one realised the falsity of it. He added that the modernists and progressives believe that anything which is old and ancient, must be rejected. This mindless rejection is deemed necessary to be called modern and progressive.

Prof. Rinpoche found it worrisome that modernity had blunted our sensitivity towards humanity and most importantly, caused loss of vision to see the truth and reality. By casting anything traditional as backward, they have disturbed the balance in human life.

He felt that the modernists and traditionalists should attempt to restore the sensitivity and balance in life. He said that he could see the

signs of change in the outlook of modern science, which has realized the Tibetan wisdom of knowledge in several areas and are asking to revise many scientific findings, especially in the field of mind (chitta). He exhorted research on traditional knowledge in subjects like medicine, mathematics, economics and philosophy etc.

His address was followed by a lively discussion with the audience and Prof. Rinpoche fielded a number of questions. These mainly pertained to the difficulty in practical life in distinguishing between real tradition and prevalent practices. Prof. Rinpoche explained the nature of tradition and reiterated that no tradition should be accepted blindly, but should be subjected to the test of reliability, logic and public good, before being accepted, as many evil practices are often projected as tradition which they are not.

The deliberations came to a close with a vote of thanks by Dr. Lata Singh, Secretary, Astha Bharati.



Dr. Jayanta Madhab, Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche and Dr. Lata Singh on the dais



Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche with (l to r) J.N. Roy, Treasurer Astha Bharati, Dr. Lata Singh Secretary, Dr. B.B. Kumar Editor, Dialogue/Chintan-Srijan, and Shri Pawan Kumar Gupta from SIDH, Mussoorie.



Dr. Jayanta Madhab presenting a shawl to Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche

To,
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