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Globalization and Social Stratification in India

Virendra Pal Singh

Globalization (along with privatization and liberalization) affects not only the economy of a given society but also has important implications for other social institutions of the society. Therefore, it is important to analyze the impact of globalization and the processes associated with it on the patterns of social stratification in India. In order to analyse the impact of globalization on social stratification system in India following questions can be raised: In what ways globalization has to affect the caste system in India? What type of class structure has to emerge with the globalization of Indian economy? What kind of changes may take place in power structure (at different levels) in Indian society? How may it affect the educational institutions in years to come? Whether computer based new information and communication technologies may further divide the society and add new social strata to the stratification system in India? In what ways globalization has to affect rural and tribal population in India? The present paper examines these questions and argues that as a result of globalization (and associated processes) social inequality has to increase further in Indian society and new patterns of social stratification have also to emerge.

Globalization in its present form is a process, which has implications not only for social and cultural institutions of developed countries but is also transforming the social fabric of developing countries like India.

At the most general level, globalization refers to a process of change, which affects all regions of the world in a variety of sectors including the economy, technology, politics, the media, culture and the environment. According to Held et al. (1999: 2) ‘globalization may be thought initially as the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life, from the cultural to the criminal, the financial to the spiritual’. There is a general agreement among the scholars on the ‘interconnectedness’ dimension of the process of globalization. But they differ from each other on other dimensions of globalization. The commentators on globalization can be identified into three broad categories: hyperglobalisers, skeptics and transformationalists.

The Hyperglobalizers believe that globalization represents a new epoch in human history, in which all types of relationships are becoming integrated at the global level, transcending the nation states and making it increasingly irrelevant. Ever-increasing cross-border flow of capital, commodities, people and ideas are a defining factor of the new age. Hyperglobalisers can be further divided into two sub-categories: the positive hyperglobalizers, mainly those who advocate...

The *skeptics*, who also focus on economic aspects of globalization argue that there is nothing new about this international economic integration. It is comparable to the period proceeding to First World War. They generally prefer the term ‘internationalization’ to globalization (Hirst and Thompson 1996, Weiss 1997). They also argue that the role of the nation-state remain as strong as ever.

The *Transformationalists*, however, argue that globalization is the central driving force behind the major economic, cultural, social and political changes that are affecting virtually all the world’s people today. Globalization is seen as the overall consequence of closely inter-linked processes of change in the areas of technology, economic activity, governance, communication and so on. Developments in all these areas are mutually reinforcing or *reflexive*, so that no clear distinction can be drawn between cause and effect. Transformationalists regard contemporary patterns of cross-border flows (of trade, investment, migrants, cultural artifacts, environmental factors, etc.) as without historical precedent. Such flows integrate virtually all countries into a larger global system, and thus bring about major social transformations at all levels.

Thus, the process of globalization is not confined to economic and political concerns of these societies. Its impact can also be observed in the field of mass media communication and other social institutions of the society.

The process of globalization can be analyzed at two levels: globalization as a structural process and globalization as a cultural process. As a structural process, globalization is associated with major institutions of the society such as social stratification, economic institutions, political institutions, legal institutions, educational institutions, media and communication organizations and religious institutions of society. As a cultural process, it is associated with public opinions, moral values, individual and societal norms and beliefs.

Social stratification is one of the core concepts in sociology and much of sociological analysis is centered on the form of social stratification in a given society. Therefore, from sociological point of view, it becomes important to analyze the impact of globalization on social stratification system.

Again, it can be analyzed at two levels: at the global level and at the local level. At the global level, globalization is creating a hierarchy of structural units or organizations in different spheres of social life. It can be seen in the form of multi national companies (MNCs), corporate, global agencies like IMF, WTO, global organizations for protection of human rights, global media organizations, global expansion of religious organizations etc. The scale of these organizations is global. Thus, a hierarchy of institutions can be easily identified at three levels: global, regional and local. As these organizations are functionally interlinked with each other, they are passing through a process of transformation. These organizations, on the one hand, are coping with the changes taking place at the global level. On the other hand, they have also to cope with the local conditions that is with local structures and cultural patterns.
The consequences of globalization on social stratification system can be analyzed in terms of its bearings on caste, class, power structure, educational institutions, administrative hierarchy, religious institutions, legal institutions, media organizations etc.

Traditional social stratification system in India was based on caste system. Therefore, it is pertinent to understand the bearings of globalization on caste system in India. Caste system is characterized by some features, which are either core or peripheral to it in contemporary Indian society. Membership based on ascription, endogamy and hierarchy are considered as core characteristics of the caste system by sociologists in India (Atal 1968). The other characteristics such as restrictions on taking food, occupational choice and interaction with members of certain castes etc. are now peripheral in character and are not maintained strictly by its members in view of changes taking place in last few decades. In fact, it is endogamy, which as a typical characteristic of caste system provides it a solid base and is responsible for the stability of the caste system in India (Ambedkar, B. R, 1991).

Globalization as structural process is also creating social inequalities at different levels. In rural areas, it is affecting agricultural growth negatively and thereby generating more and more poverty in rural areas. Which in turn may initiate a new wave of massive migration from rural to urban centers in search of jobs. The acquisition of land for large-scale development projects by MNCs such as Nandigram and Singoor in West Bengal may be resulted into high incidence of landlessness among the farmers as well as significant changes in land use patterns as highly fertile agricultural land is being acquired for such projects in different parts of the country. Another implication of the globalization can be seen on the public sector undertakings. There has been a tendency among the policy makers of the country to privatize the public sector undertakings in the recent past. Gradually most of the public sector undertakings are to be privatized for one or the other reasons. As a result, number of jobs in public sector are to be decreased and more and more jobs are to be available in private sectors controlled by the chain of global, regional and local level players. The growth of private sector, an essential element of globalization, has to generate massive migration of people both within and outside the country. The social interactions between the people of diverse caste background may affect core characteristics of castes such as loosening of hierarchical position within and between castes and by an increase in inter-caste marriages although within a limited range. This has also to lead the polarization of castes into two or three broad categories: upper (twice born castes and castes of middle order) and Dalit castes. Inter-caste marriages may take place within these broader frameworks of castes. Politicization of economic issues such as reservation in education and jobs in public and private sectors may also give rise to tensions and conflicts within and between these castes.

Another important category of social stratification is class structure. Globalization as a structural process has wider implications for class structure of developing as well as developed societies. It has to bring significant changes in the existing class structure of all the societies. However, it has to lead more negative consequences in developing societies rather than in the developed ones as it leads to marginalisation of the underprivileged classes in these societies. Consequently, there may be an increase in high incidence of poverty and unemployment for these classes as majority of them are either illiterate or have a very low level of education and also lacking in occupational skills required for the jobs in the fast-changing occupational structure of these societies. Furthermore, the application of computers and information technology is
transforming the occupational structure in such a way that the jobs of lower cadre may be reduced significantly if not disappeared. As a result, more tensions and conflicting situations may emerge in these societies. The pauperization of these sections particularly of small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers in the rural areas and of workers in declining local industries and other marginalized workers in urban centers on the one hand, and the prosperity of the upper middle classes of the urban centers on the other, has to create sharp cleavages in the class structure of these societies. New global market situation has to give rise to new classes mainly at the middle and upper levels of occupational structure of these societies particularly in secondary but more dominantly in service (tertiary) sectors of economy. Information services are transforming the basic structure of different economic institutions of the societies, which require different kind of occupational skills and work culture more suitable to MNCs. This is creating demands for the jobs (such as in call centers), which are totally new to the existing work ethos of these traditional societies.

The power structure, an important dimension of social stratification, has also to be affected by the process of globalization. It has already been pointed out by the social theorists that the globalization will lead towards the weakening of the nation states as it will snatch some of the powers of the political elites particularly of controlling the economy of these countries (Giddens 1999). This may lead to political instability at the center in these societies and the rise to sub-nationalism in border areas of these nations. The decline in the power of political elites may also affect the interest of the under privileged classes in the liberal privatized global economy. It may has serious negative consequences for the existing reservation policies as the political elites will not be able to pressurize the private companies particularly MNCs and their local associates to adopt the policy of reservation in their institutions as these organizations have a different kind of orientation emphasizing on achievements rather than on ascriptive traits of the candidate. Moreover, the global character of these organisations enables them not to succumb to such political pressures. However, the locus of power may shift to new political institutions (human rights organizations, NGOs and civil society) both at the local as well as at the global level, which may intervene in political processes in these societies.

The changing class structure of the society is to be reflected in educational institutions, as they have to be further differentiated and stratified at the levels of primary, secondary and higher education. The growing demands of the globalizing economy are to be fulfilled mainly by the private educational institutions to be set up as per international standards and would be accessed only by the affluent sections of the society. The public sector educational institutions, in the initial phase, may try to cope with the changes in globalizing world. But the due to certain structural limitations, they may not be able to compete with the private sector educational and professional institutions. Moreover, attractive salary packages and perks in private sector have to attract the talented faculties of public sector educational and professional institutions to shift in private sector institutions. Thus, the educational institutions and professional educational institutions have to become more and more stratified and have to produce high degree of social inequality at different levels in the society.

Similar changes can be observed in the health care organizations. The investment of corporate sector in health care services in the developing world has significant implications for the structure, nature and cost of these services in coming years. The emergence of high class hospitals
in metropolitan cities provides good health care not only to the local people although at a very high
cost but also attract patients from the abroad particularly those patients from developed countries
who come from lower class background and can save money by health tourism (if the cost of the
treatment plus their travel expenses are two to three time cheaper what they have in their own
country). Similarly, the patients of affluent classes of other developing countries may also prefer to
come here for health tourism. Again, there may be efforts in public sector health organizations to
compete with private sector health institutions. but finally, the conditions in public sector institutions
may be deteriotated due to lack of sufficient capital, incompetency in the management, political
interference, corruption and mainly due to high rate of mobility of the talented medical professionals
to corporate sector health organizations within and outside the country. These changes in health
sector may give rise not only to new patterns of health care in India but may also stratify the health
care institutions along the class structure of the society.

As a cultural process globalization will have significant consequences for the organizations
responsible for pattern maintenance. Interactive technologies of communication are at the heart of
the communication revolution that is occurring in India. The computer and its various application
in satellite and cable television, telecommunications and the Internet are the main driving force of
communication revolution taking place in India. Communication technology includes the hardware
equipment, organizational structures and social values by which individuals collect, process and
exchange information (Singhal and Rogers 2000: 31). The new communication technologies have
certain characteristics that are similar in some respects to those of both interpersonal and mass
media communication, but that are different in many other respects. The new media integrates the
characteristics of both interpersonal and mass communication. Communication that occurs through
these media often links two individuals or a small number of people (Singhal and Rogers 2000: 31). In this sense, the new media are like interpersonal communication, in that the messages are
targeted to specific individuals (de-massification). But interactive communication through the new
media is somewhat like mass media communication in that hardware equipment is necessarily
involved. Information exchange via the new media is interactive, meaning that the participants in
a communication process have control over, and can exchange roles in, their mutual discourse
(Singhal and Rogers 2001: 31; Mc Quail 2000 : 128).

Among the new communication technologies internet and mobile phones have tremendous
capacity to penetrate the remote corners of the society and thereby creating at least two new social
strata of Information Rich and Information Poor in all major types of social formations: the tribal,
the rural and the urban. The most important characteristic of the Internet is that it has blurred the
notion of time and space, in the sense that the communication through Internet can take place in a
fraction of a second connecting two or more people at the same time from any corner of the world,
which has important implications for social processes both for the developed and developing societies.
Globalization with new communication technologies is also providing opportunities to popularise
different kind of values, beliefs and normative aspects of different cultures of different societies to
disseminate at the global level through internet (websites, blogs etc.) and TV channels (like Sanskar,
Asth, Sadhana etc.). There is a conscious effort among the religious institutions, particularly
those having liberal and universal elements in their ideology, to adopt new communication
technologies for dissemination of the message of their sect not only at national level but also in the
developed countries. The main target of these organizations are non-resident Indians (NRIs). In last two decades, the spread of some elements of Indian culture by a number of religious organizations. For example, popularity of Pranayam and Yoga of Baba Ramdev, organization of yagnas by Akhil Vishva Gayatri Parivar in USA and Australia, the increasing demand of the programmes of Radha Soami Satsang, Vyas and many other institutions at the global level is not only helping in the development of modern management system in these religious organization but a conscious effort can also be observed among these organisations to present their (religious) ideas with scientific reasoning. Thus, globalization of the different religious ideologies may spread values, beliefs and normative aspects of a culture to other part of the world and give rise to multiculturalism. In this kind of efforts the structure of these religious organizations is also taking a new shape with several hierarchical positions within their local, regional, national and global units. Thus, a high degree of differentiation and stratification is gradually emerging in these organisations. Similarly, the cultural industry (mass media industry) is also being globalized at a faster rate and many significant changes are also taking place in their orientation and organization in last two decades (this issue requires separate treatment hence is not being discussed here).

It is now clear that globalization is a multidimensional process and affecting almost all the institutions not only of the developing societies but also of the developed societies. The multidimensionality of globalization enables it to bring some significant changes in the existing social stratification system of societies like India. An increase amount of geographical and social mobility may have some repercussions for the caste structure particularly in large urban and metropolitan centers where pressure of population is increasing day by day. The range of geographical mobility of the people is not to be confined to the neighbouring urban centers but the people have to move outside the country in search of the jobs or as part of their job in corporate sector. These conditions can play an important role in opening up the closed nature of caste system to some extent. In recent years, urban middle class families although prefer to marry their children within their caste but the degree of resistance is significantly decreased if their children are engaged and marry to a person of other caste. The exposure of the women to higher education and economic compulsions motivate them to opt a job career. As a result the option of getting a match of the same caste with suitable occupational status becomes very limited. In such circumstances, either they have to compromise with whatever best is available in their caste or they prefer to choose a partner of suitable professional status even if he belongs to other caste. This trend is seen not only among the upper caste persons but also among the mobile scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. But the range of preference of the mate is limited. This phenomenon is not the consequence of a decrease in the degree of caste consciousness but, in fact, it is a result of circumstances prevailing in Indian society in last three decades. The problems of unemployment and underemployment have a kind of pressure on the mind of the children from the very beginning. This pressure is expressed in various forms in different castes and classes in different ways. The educated upper caste parents have a tendency to create a pressure on the child to perform extraordinary in examinations from the very beginning as they feel that the caste factor may restrict the chances their children in public sector jobs due to reservation policy and being in general category they have to face a tough competition in years to come. This similarity in the market situation put them in the same ‘class situation’ (in Weberian sense) and bring a kind of consciousness of falling in the same political category of ‘general castes’. They look towards the castes having reservation in educational, professional
institutions as well as in government jobs not only at the entry point but also in their promotions, as their caste/class enemy (in Marxian sense). These feelings are not expressed openly but generally either they have in their mind or express in private discussions with their caste fellows or with those who are also in the ‘general caste’ category. Similar feelings can also be observed among scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and recently among the other backward castes. But among these, the major social stigma is with scheduled castes because of their lowest position in caste hierarchy. Therefore, the degree of social distance is towards them is more in comparison to OBC and scheduled tribes (who either claimed status of high caste as a result of their hinduisation and therefore have relatively a better chance of acceptance or become out if they adopted other religious faith e.g. christianity, buddhism etc.). The homogenisation of the scheduled castes in a singular category of dalits is, in fact, a result of increasing caste/class consciousness among these castes. The intensity of the caste/class consciousness in various groups is to increase in years to come. As globalization along with privatization and liberalization has to create more jobs in private sector and number of public sector jobs has definitely to decrease. If private sector companies do not adopt reservation policy in jobs. The employment situation may be worst for the weaker sections of Indian society in years to come. This is one of the reasons that why the globalization is welcomed by upper castes people. They see in it the answer of reservation policy which they feel restricts their chances of occupational mobility in government and public sector organization. Therefore, they are now more and more oriented towards the corporate sector and abandoning the government and public sector organizations. This process may give rise to new forms of social inequality in Indian society in years to come. The increase in cost of education in private schools, colleges and universities which claim to provide best education of international standard have to create not only a sharply stratified education system but also a highly fragmented and stratified social structure in India.

Thus, the processes associated with the globalization have the capacity to transform both the structure and culture of not only of the developing countries but also have significant consequences for the developed countries as well. In this sense, the globalization is different from modernization which could not generate the impetus for the transformation of the system of social stratification in India and is considered only as a cultural process by Indian sociologists (Singh, Y. 1986). In contrast, globalization is a multi-dimensional and multidirectional process which has now generated the impetus to transform the social and cultural institutions of the developed as well as of developing societies. The types of societies which will emerge as a consequence of this forceful process of 21st century will definitely be highly stratified, multi-ethnic and multicultural in character.

Note: The paper is revised version of a paper presented in the 4th session of RC 08 on Social Stratification, Professions and Social Mobility, XXXII All-India Sociological Conference, University of Madras, Chennai, December 28-30, 2006.

References


Before the discussion of the role of communication in emerging middle class, it is important to address the role of communication in society. As a matter of fact, a society cannot be imagined without its communication. However, the nature of society depends mostly on the ways and means of communication. To begin with, the primitive communities had direct interactions/communication with other members of the community. With the growth of population, mass communication has got the prominent place in day to day interactions. Even though we call it a global village, but in reality, the family members often speak on telecommunications. The change of communication pattern has its impact on cultural dimension of the society in day-to-day social action. The symbolic interactions are exclusively based on communication. The communication has several aspects, such as thematic, methodical, etc. What is communicated is not always enough, but how is communicated is more important.

It is important to analyze the role of communication in widening the scope of market economy for the betterment of almost all. Communication provides the greatest number of opportunities for the greatest number of people. Development or economic growth is justified only if its benefits reach to the maximum number of people (Bentham: 1789). Since the government stands for public welfare, hence this message of Bentham has been communicated to the society at large both by the government as well as by the owners of means of production. This message can be understood with reference to classical political economy in which the dialects of class conflict decide the social course of action. The workers of all countries were communicated to unite and destroy the private property system and its defenders, particularly the capitalist state. Revolutions were considered to be the tool to achieve the goal. A few countries experienced such revolutions as conflicts between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

The concept of social change had added new dimensions with the arrival of communication revolution when the nation-states, much bigger and varied than the city-states, introduced the process of democratization of which communication is the vital force. Society has become more organized than ever before. Such an organization based on participation relied more and more on ways and means of communication. With the invention of technology, communication became global leading to the process of globalization. The term ‘global village’ is nothing more than the symbolic expression of intensive and extensive interactions as seen in a village situation. As mentioned above, communication has several aspects—what is communicated; how is communicated and who are communicated to. These three aspects are mostly determined by the *vox populi*, the voice of the

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people. Up to the Second World War, states directly nourished the interests of the capitalists. During the Cold War, the conflict between the capitalism and socialism carved a new path called mixed economy (with control over private sponsored capitalism) in which states declared themselves the agents of public welfare and nationalized a number of private institutions. This new role of the state as the mediator mitigated the century old conflicts over the ownership of means of production. The memorandum of understanding, i.e., the constitution embodies in it the phrase, “We the people of…” The constitution declared itself more powerful than the legislative laws and executive orders. Judicial reforms could fetch the confidence of the vox populi. The role of communication in emerging market demands is to be studied in this context.

After a certain stage of development, the LPG system (Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization) has become the new modus operandi. The letter has been replaced by SMS. With a small electronic gadget, everyone has become mobile without being disconnected. This mobility as well as connectivity has enormous sociological importance particularly in Indian context. One can go to any extent with one’s own cultural pattern. It has facilitated social mobility in all directions leading to the institutional reforms taking place on large scale. The terms like ‘knowledge society’, ‘information commission’, etc. are giving new dimensions to social relations and communication patterns.

In the wake of LPG system introduced in India in 1991, communication got proportionate momentum in order to promote both markets and transactions. This was not possible in isolation of cultural environment. Communication has created favourable social conditions for what we call consumerism today. This consumerism, in turn, promotes the LPG system. The market based on consumerism is ultimately dependant on communication. Here, the more important question associated with communication is what is communicated. The calculation we do while buying any goods / services is that the utility involved is more than the amount of money spent on it. This mere calculation could not allow market to grow beyond certain limits linked to population growth, purchasing capacity etc. What has communication revolutionized in this context is the creation of social conditions based on consumption. In the past, consumption was based on needs; at present, it has become our deeds. This culture has a bigger connotation than our being simply consumers. It is linked to our social status. “When we consume objects, we are consuming signs, and in the process are defining ourselves. ……..Through objects, each individual and each group searches out his or her place in an order, …Through objects, a stratified society speaks……in order to keep everyone in a certain place,” (Baudrillard, 1988). Pierre Bourdieu (2002) calls it an “expression of symbolic capital”. He is of the opinion that “such a kind of consumer sovereignty arises in societies where powerful groups encourage consumption to ‘want’ more than they need. In cosmopolitan cities consumer culture depends on mass mediated advertising and simulation which exercise sovereignty on the consumer. Theodore Levitt (1983) terms it as the ‘global standardization of local culture’. According to Singh (2000), so far as consumption is concerned, Indian society has become a post modern society. Therefore, the consumption of certain goods and services are no longer merely biological but a lot sociological. The amount we spent on staple food is no longer an indication of social status, but the amount spent on luxurious goods and services directly linked to the upward social status. Another interesting aspect associated with consumption is of fewer goods and more services. We have limited capacity in consuming goods, but the consumption of service is unlimited. Therefore, the increasingly growing service sector is exclusively dependant on the
communication system. The service providers leave no stone unturned to get their customers. Advertisements not only provide information but also titillate our cravings for such goods and services. A crucial transformation takes place at this juncture. Desires turn the shape of demands. The most crucial aspect is how desires are given the shape to demands. The market strategies provide opportunities to create potential customers, and therefore create the opportunities for consumerism. The deliberate process to create potential customers is at par with the interests of market economy. Though market values and social values are at loggerhead, not necessarily always, our tilting towards market values encourage us to avail of the market opportunities to become economically viable. Here the question arises why we are tilting towards the market. The society offers us reward considering how we earn, and the market offers us regard considering how much we spent. As society is getting fragmented and market, on the contrary, is getting consolidated, we prefer to reciprocate market values sincerely. We tend to spend more and more and get involved in the cycle of earning and spending more and more. The middle class intelligentsia is growing leaps and bounds in the context of knowledge economy. It is also pertinent to note that the knowledge economy is exclusively based on the communication system which is global in dimension. Giddens argues that the media of communication play a more important role in creating new forms of interdependence than do market integration. The world has become inter-connected electronically in ways that are far more radical and far reaching than was true ever before. However, the concept of solidarity as proposed by Durkheim is slightly twisted in the view of Giddens since the degree of interdependence and integration is not always in the same proportion in the post modern era of globalization of which communication is one of the aspects.

The evolution of market can be understood from the following model:

(i) goods → goods (primitive societies),
(ii) goods → money → goods (early civilizations),
(iii) money → goods → money (trading),
(iv) money → money → money (marketing).

The overall reality is that the process of production itself is not sufficient. The products are to be sold at the earliest in order to continue the process of production. Here lies the importance of customers. Desire is not demand. One has to have the purchasing power to buy it. The capitalists cannot consume everything they produce. On the contrary, productivity has got increased manifolds owing to the advancement of science and technology. This bumper product must have its consumers, or the system cannot run otherwise. Who could be its potential consumers? The answer is those who can afford or are close to affordability. It’s not an easy task to increase the purchasing power of the poor and to make them economically viable. Therefore, the middle and middle class has been made the recipient of economic upliftment programmes since they require a little threshold to boost up their status. What is that upliftment programme? It is a package which contains ample opportunities and economic incentives for them to go ahead, starting from education loan to honeymoon loan. Banks and financial institutions are at the doorsteps to offer credit cards and loans sometimes at 0% interest rate. Companies tie up with banks or financial institutions to offer credit facilities to customers at lower interest rate in order to facilitate the mutual interests of both the companies and the customers. Such schemes are abundant during festivals. While giving loan, banks consider other aspects of credibility rather than mere financial status.
The sociological perspective of advertising can be articulated from the communication angle. Advertisement is sought in economies that have surplus goods and/or services. When goods are scarce, people chase goods. People seek out what they require, while suppliers strive to produce what people need; advertising serves no purpose. Suppliers produce what they believe people can purchase. Advertising becomes a necessity. When demand out-weighs supply, producers seek to increase supply; when supply out-weighs demand, advertisers seek to increase or even create demand. From the sociological perspective, advertising encourages uncritical consumption as the style of life, and therefore at the same time paradoxically encourages waste as the style of life also. Advertising is a dominant influence in our culture, encouraging people from the time they are children to remain undisciplined, purchasing on impulse. Individual becomes voracious to have everything. The techniques used in advertising are inherent in communication capable of promoting opportunities for the middle class towards conspicuous consumption.

There are innumerable programmes on several TV channels where opportunities are given to be rich overnight. The *kaun banega crorepati* or *Indian Idol* programme can be cited an example. Internet has created another global market. It has created unlimited opportunities not only to buy and sell but to earn a lot. With this, the concept of literacy has also got changed. It has become the age of digital literacy. This internet generated market has pushed forward the boundaries of the basic concepts economy and commerce. It has expanded the circumference of the middle class and its purchasing power. There is no class conflict between the owners of means of production and those who do not own. With the institutional reforms of market and the recognition of intellect as property, the class conflict has oriented to class cooperation. People in general are holding the shares of different companies and look into the business as their own. Today, Tatas are not merely known for their manufacturing of steel and automobiles but for their financial institutions helping people to create wealth through mutual funds. The state being the entrepreneur of business in mixed economy is hardly the defender of the capitalists. Therefore, it becomes imperative for the capitalist class to get its so-called intellectual opponents as the promoters of their business. Cutting across the national boundaries, we see multinational companies are becoming customer friendly. The treatment given by private banks or institutions is cozier than that of government establishments. This is an important message communicated to Indians at large. People at their hour of ire destroy mostly public property but rarely private property. Education, which has so far been in the hands of the government, is under the patronage of corporate houses. English medium schools, professional colleges, and hospitals are sprouting like mushrooms. The process of promoting middle class consumers is augmented by two drastic but unavoidable realities. They are competition among producers and consciousness among consumers. So to say, both are due to the impacts of communication empowering people in resource generation and mobilization. It’s very difficult to think of a day without a mobile set.

In the classical political economy, risks involved were mostly confined to the entrepreneurs. With the introduction of limited liability (Pvt. Ltd), the middle class prefers to have shares, debentures, mutual funds etc. of different companies, and takes part in the day to day affairs the companies they have invested in. The institutional changes have introduced transparency and as a result cohesion between the entrepreneurs and their customers has become social liability.

With the building up of knowledge society, the technically sound middle class enjoys much of the advantages available. Foucault (2003) argued that different forms of knowledge produce
different ways of life. He uses the term ‘discourse’ to refer to a knowledge based way of thinking and acting. According to him, the most significant aspect of a society becoming modern is not so much the fact it has a ‘capitalist economy’ (Marx) or a new form of ‘solidarity’ (Durkheim) or that it is the outcome and embodiment of ‘rational action’ (Weber). It is the way in which new forms of knowledge—unknown in pre-modernity—emerge. Critiques are of the opinion that the revolution is made in technology and not proportionately in the message. That is why wealth is getting concentrated in fewer hands, or a section of the society is getting benefited out of globalization. Sociologically speaking, communication has reduced the gap between the different strata of social classes.

In an interview to Tehelka, 20th October 2007, Dr. Jagdish Seth, an economist, argued that “…the new Indian middle class, whom I define as Call Centre Couple, are driving the future of market economics. They are both college educated, husband-wife working in office, not purchasing products from the neighborhood grocers on a monthly bases but seeking global brands for low rates. Eventually, the market will be a buyers-economy as compared to a sellers-economy.”

With regard to the lower strata, his assessment is that “Companies must ensure the smile on the face of the farmer, educate his son and make him empowered.” Why? His answer is that “The migration of skilled people from the small town to big city will eventually stop because India will turn to Bharat for business. The tier-II cities will get modernized and more jobs will be created. Big companies will find little space to expand in the cities. Bharat would define India’s future in 2020.”

It has become crystal clear that communication has become a tool for social change and its related aspects like culture, politics, economics, etc. The social group (the literate middle class) which is taking maximum advantages of communication is on the rise. They can easily access to resources and grab the opportunities available for the flatulence of their wealth and status. With the rise of service sector, intelligence has become a property and is growing without limits. This intellectual property unlike the means of production of classical economy won’t remain confined to the hands of a few, making others poor. On the other hand, this property grows without the inherent vices of classical capitalism. This intelligence is very much required for the business to grow. Economics and commerce support each other. In Indian context, the call centres and outsourcing opportunities are promoting the middleclass to be affluent. The middle class students are crazy to have foreign qualifications and foreign jobs that fetch them salary in dollars and pounds.

References
One of the major preoccupation of an urban middle class family has been to ensure status continuity besides striving for further status escalation between the present and the next generation led by their children. Quite evidently most parents in urban middle class families endeavour to help their children in raising their social and economic positions, and attempt to provide them the most sought-after professional education. Pursuit of professional education is, indeed, to be seen as the pursuit towards higher socio-economic status. This paper examines the parental influence and efforts involved in the process of the pursuit of achieving social mobility through professional education.

Methodology

Bangalore City is the area chosen for the study. Bangalore has the distinction of having a large number of institutions imparting professional education namely engineering, medical, law, dental etc and due to which it has become the breeding ground for number of professionals every year. The growing number of professional colleges intersects with the demand for professional education among the students and their families in Bangalore city. The dynamics of professional education in the city offers social space for academic research on educational aspirations and social mobility.

There were 45 respondents who were interviewed extensively and detailed case study was conducted on six of them. All the respondents were students from Pre- University Colleges in Bangalore. Pre University students were chosen as they were preparing for an entry into one of the professional courses. There were in a crucial point of their educational career and therefore helpful in providing the required information about the social mobility they are aspiring to achieve through professional education. The parents of the students were also involved in the study to assess the role they play in shaping their children’s educational and professional aspirations. While the questionnaire method was used to collect information from the parents of the 45 students, repeated and in-depth interviews were done with the parents of the six students who were selected for case study. Multi Stage Sampling in the initial stages and Simple Random and Purposive Sampling method in the later stages were used to draw the sample from a populated Bangalore city. Two PUC colleges, (namely, MES Arts and Science College and Vivekananda Arts Science and Commerce College) were selected for our study. Each college had around 3 to 4 sections in both arts and
science streams. Only one section in both colleges in both the streams was identified and students were selected from that particular class using simple random sampling. There were a total of 30 science students and 15 arts students. Of them six students, two from arts and three from science streams were picked up for the detailed case study.

**Discussions and Analysis**

The desire to acquire professional education is not some thing that can emerge overnight, or at least a few weeks before taking admission in such a course. Instead, there is a good deal of preparation within a socio-psychological environment for that. Students develop aspirations for such an education and there may be multiple sources for them. This section aims at examining the sources and the process of aspiration formation among the students desirous of pursuing professional education. Parental background and parental efforts, being a crucial aspect are dealt in detail.

**Parental Background**

The choice of professional education made either by the parents for the children or by the students themselves, is the result of wide ranging influences. First, let me take a look at the parents themselves. A few common questions that come up in this regard much prominently are: Are/were parents themselves (a) Science or Arts students, (b) Professionals, (c) Rural or Urban background. It is indeed a well established fact that students with professional and urban parentage are more likely to have a positive impact on the students. The urban environment facilitates the flow of information while the professional background of the parents offers a wider and stable platform for the students to visualize their education and career possibilities in future. Does parental background affect the performance of students in their education? In order to find answers to this question we examined the relationship between the parental backgrounds of the students with their performance in matriculation (See, Table 1). As reflected in the table, I found the largest number of distinctions among the category of students whose parents have urban background while only 16.5 per cent of the students with semi-urban background have got such distinction marks. There is none from an urban background who has had a third class grade.

**Table 1: Parental Background and Performance of PUC Students in Matriculation (In Per cent)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background of Parents</th>
<th>Performance of PUC Students During Matric</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-Urban</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both students and parents perceived parental background to be a crucial factor not just in the performance but also in the aspirations of the students. My findings confirm with the study of Davis and et al (1981:363). His paper tries to address the relative influences of parents and peers on the level of educational aspirations. It indicates that parents are stronger influences in determining the educational aspirations of adolescents. He argues that parental influence as being an important intervening link explaining the effects of social class that are mediated through parental aspiration for their children. But, at the same time, the findings in my study does not convey that higher class
parents have higher level of aspirations owing to their advantages of social class. Rather it has been found through intensive case studies that it is the parents of the lower class students who are more ambitious and have more aspirations on their children than the other class. This is reflected in studies like Reissman (1959:364) etc., who found that the lower the status of parents, the higher were the relative aspirations they held for their children. Reissman observes that the parents who suffered status frustration “try to assuage themselves by projecting their hopes and ambitions onto their children”.

Formation of Aspirations

Formation of aspirations in an individual takes place constantly and at different stages. For some, a specific factor may have an impact on aspirations at one stage while for others it may be several factors, and or at different points of time. When does aspiration take a concrete shape in student’s mind? How does it take place? Who are the individuals playing an active role during that stage? These are some of the questions which this section attempts to answer.

Different factors affect the aspiration formation of the students at different stages of their lives. A close observation of the activities of a few PUC students and an interaction with them reveals that Family encouragement, Peer group pressure, Education and occupation of the parents, Socio-economic status, Media, Personal and psychological factors are the prime sources of aspirations among the students. Personal and psychological factors refer to the characteristics and attributes like ability motivation, ambition and hard work. These prime sources of aspirations influence the individuals through external factors, namely, demonstrations, choices, opportunities and information. Information and demonstrations are more closely related while choices and information are interrelated. The influence of different sources of aspirations on an individual varies with the demonstration affect, information received, opportunities given and choices available. These factors play a crucial role in influencing the PUC students in choosing an educational course as their vision and eventually as a goal.

PUC students offered different explanations for selecting a particular course as their choice. A majority of the students (33 per cent) attributed peer influence as an important reason which influenced them in choosing a particular course as their educational goal. Followed by it were the 29 per cent of the students who felt that they had chosen a particular educational destination out of their personal interest and 25 per cent of them who attributed it to the parental pressure. There were around 13 per cent of them who felt that they didn’t know exactly as to why and what made them to choose a particular educational destination. Interesting trends emerged when the influence of these factors were examined against the socio-economic situation of the students. (See, Table 2)

Peer influence seems to have great pressure upon the lower middle class students followed by upper class students. Peer pressure works more effectively when there is insufficient support and attention from the family, namely, parents and siblings. It looks as though lower middle class and upper class students do not get the required attention over educational matters from their family the way the middle class students get. Similarly, upper class parents who are busy with their own schedules fail to attend upon their children regularly. Most often the needs of the children whether it is personal, academic or medical is taken care by the servants, tutor, nurses and maids. While the upper class parents are busy either with their high profile careers, business establishments or societal and cocktail parties, the lower middle class parents, on the other hand, seem to be
earning for their decent livelihood. There are instances of both parents taking up part time job or over time assignments with a view to earn more money which enable them to provide good education to their children. In the course of time, amidst their busy life, it is likely that many parents do not have any time left for their children. Even the siblings in such families are under their own personal and professional pressure which does not always allow them to concentrate on their younger kin. In such a situation, students are more likely to be influenced by the external factors most often by the peer pressure. As a result we find that, nearly 67 per cent of lower class students attributed their aspiration formation of future educational goals to peer pressure followed by 50 per cent of upper class students. Similar might be the case with the 37.5 per cent of upper middle class students who were with similar opinion.

Parental pressure seems to be an influencing factor largely among the middle class students. There were 31 per cent of students who felt that parental pressure led them to certain educational plans. Indeed, it was a common phenomenon that middle class families gave top most priority to children’s education and all the members of the family worked towards it. Their daily schedule, financial planning and domestic activities revolve around child’s education. As a result, the children in such families did not feel the need to depend upon their friends, seniors and classmates while deciding their educational goals. It does not mean that peer association is completely ruled out to such children. Rather, it can be argued that peer association does not effectively influence middle class students while deciding their educational goals, as it might influence the students from other classes.

### Parents’ Perceptions and Rationalization

Parents play a crucial role, both in terms of care given during the stressful times and in influencing the educational career decisions by the students. While some students perceived this role as interference, many considered it also as being advantageous. What was perceived as interference resulted in irritations, stress and anxiety among children. Non-involvement on the other hand, was perceived as indifference among them. In this section I refer to the perceptions of parents themselves over the matter concerning children’s educational choices, what they expect as outcome of such choices, and the rationale for their support for such decisions. Fathers and mothers were asked separately to comment on the choice of educational course for their children, keeping in mind the question of aspirations for social mobility. Considering the nature of changes in family in urban India, it is little surprising that the views of the father and mother of students does not

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-Economic Class</th>
<th>Source of Influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Class</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Middle Class</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Middle Class</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 : Socio-Economic Class and Factors Affecting Aspiration of PUC Students (In percent)
necessarily coincide in regard to what they perceive as the outcome of children’s education. Thus, the analyses of parents’ perceptions throw some light on the emerging nature of family dynamics concerning children and their future.

Three factors can be pointed with respect to the specific choice of specialization and education of a student. First, it could be a decision taken by the student, independent of the parents. Second, the parents may have supported such a decision. Finally, it may be a decision forced upon the children. Although there may be varying combinations of these, I may focus on the second and the third, while the first is to be taken for discussion separately since it involves students’ agency. An important reason indicated by both the parents in choosing or supporting a particular specialization was the employment opportunities that it offered. Indeed, many parents preferred to refer to this reason as ‘the marketability’. There were 22 per cent of the fathers and 18 per cent of mothers who felt that they had chosen a particular profession for their child because of its marketability viewed as offering employment opportunities. They viewed that marketable professions would be innovative in offering new career options to the younger generation. About 18 per cent of the fathers thought that they had chosen certain educational course or profession because it was a surviving one, meaning which was safe and established. According to this viewpoint, by entering an established profession, the threats of job and income insecurity were minimized. Interestingly, it was only the fathers who expressed such a viewpoint, while the explanations of mothers did not include this viewpoint. (See Table 3).

What is curious in the range of explanations offered, as above, is the difference between those views of the mother and the father. As was pointed out earlier, employment is a matter of concern predominantly by the father. Concern for an education leading to established professions, likewise, is exclusively by the father than the mother. Instead, the mother seems to have a greater preference for a given educational choice since it enables the child to take up employment in a foreign country or provides for travels abroad. An explanation providing space for ‘child’s agency’, as could be perceived from ‘matches child’s interest’ is more by the father than the mother. A similar response, however, is shared equally between the mother and the father, expressed as ‘my child’s dream.’ In sum, however, the range of responses by the mother and the father reflect that

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons Given</th>
<th>Parent’s Views</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment opportunities</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading to established professions</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse’s preference</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Has been my dream’</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities abroad/ foreign travel</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matches child’s aptitude/interest</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child’s dream</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No particular profession in mind</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responses not available</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>**100</td>
<td>**100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Parents Rationalising the Educational Choices
the former has more emotional considerations while the latter is in support of economic and material considerations.

**Parental Dream and Child's Agency**

For many parents, children are the medium through which their own aspirations to be a professional be accomplished. About 22 per cent of the fathers and 18 per cent of the mothers (See table 3) felt that they chose particular professions for their children in order to fulfill their own long cherished dream. Since they could not accomplish it for themselves, they wanted their children to fulfill the dreams. There were also a few parents, who were already professionals such as engineers, doctors or lawyers, wanting their children to continue the ‘parental occupation’ such that what they or their own parents had established as a family tradition was continued through their children as well. It was the fathers who felt in such a way than the mothers. Indeed, only 9 per cent of both fathers and mothers attributed their choice of career line to their child’s dream. This opens up several questions. Is it that the children have their dreams about their future life, but the parents do not take note of them? Is it that the children are used as a means to accomplish parental dreams about what the children should be? Do the children have an ‘agency’ in determining their own career paths and options to pursue them? Interactions with students and parents showed that many ambitious parents had a tendency to dictate the educational paths to their children. Thus, in pursuing a dream, many parents had little space for child’s agency. Little concern was shown to respond to the interests, aptitude and of the aspirations of sons or daughters, especially if they were different from those of the parents.

Indeed, a majority of the parents felt that it was unnecessary to seek the opinion of children while deciding upon their future educational course. It also needs to be noted that socialization process in an Indian families legitimates the decision taken by the parents on behalf of the children to be appropriate. Most parents and elders in the family begin with a premise that ‘children do not know anything’ and therefore, all the thinking has to be done by someone else, preferably elder and with experience of age rather than of the specific field. Hence, a parent not seeking the opinion of the child over their future educational plan is not a lapse within the family. What vary among different parents is the stages until which they do not involve the child in the decision-making process. While some do not involve them during their primary or secondary school stage, others take their opinion seriously only when they reach the high school. It is a cultural norm in India where parents take the complete responsibility of the children until they complete their education. As a result, the parents themselves finally take most decisions on educational matters. The tendency among some of the parents to decide over educational destinations of the children at different stages and some even before the child is born is phenomenal. The child seems to have absolutely no role although the issue revolves around him or her. Commercialization and market orientation of the educational system eventually pressurizes the parents to pay limited emphasis on the interest, skill and aptitude of the children.

**Is Professional Education a Vehicle for Social Mobility?**

Preoccupation with and anxiety to equip their children with professional education that too in a good institution was a common phenomenon noticed among parents. Education was perceived as an important tool through which social mobility could be achieved for these families. In order to confirm this hypothesis parents were asked whether they considered educational and occupational
attainment as a channel for achieving social mobility. To be more precise, do either the parents or students, or both consider professional education and entry into professions as a vehicle for social mobility? Even if some consider it in the negative, why then the insistence on a professional education, and why all the pressures and anxieties? In respect of the second question it may be pointed out that for many parents as already mentioned, children were the means to realize their own aspirations. Interestingly, many mothers who were ‘housewives’ confirmed this. For such mothers, accomplishing a professional education seemed to serve two purposes: one of employment and the other a goal of entering professions.

Thus, mothers, more than the fathers considered professional education as the only important tool for social mobility for their children. They were keen that their daughters should be well educated and economically independent just as their sons. Fathers were more in numbers who despised the hypothesis of professional education being the only channel for their children to achieve social mobility. They felt that there were other avenues as well with which social mobility could be achieved. In this direction many argued that education alone would not equip their children to lead an economically stable and balanced life. They did not want their children to idealize education as an end in itself.

It can be concluded that despite some variations in the degree and intensity of responses almost all parents, and to a considerable extent, the students confirm the hypotheses, namely, the perception that professional education and occupational attainment as the only important means of achieving social mobility. In this regard, the children and parents of the so-called lower castes and of Scheduled castes and tribes were much more than the rest. Even in this regard it was the mothers who had a greater conviction than the fathers. The fathers tended to perceive the economic security and opportunities of employment, either as a paid professional or self-employed to be more important than one of social mobility. Quite a number of researchers in the west have regarded education as the only weapon for the working class to increase their opportunities and chances for mobility. It is stated that, opportunities to rise in the economic and social scale depends more on the possession of degrees and diplomas. Morish (1972) narrates the experiences of America and England in understanding social mobility and its relation with the education. It was found that educational mobility whether of the ‘Contest’ or ‘Sponsored’ variety, or some combination of both, appears to be at least one of the keys, if not the chief one, in unlocking the doors which hinder social mobility.

Parental Willingness to ‘Run the Extra Mile’

Parents were generally trying their best to provide whatever necessary for their children to ensure good education. It is possible that having invested their lifetime savings in children’s education, by paying for tuitions, school and college educational costs, including a capitation or establishment fee, etc., some parents are never satisfied with what they have done. The urge to provide for more facilities and to ensure comfort for their children prevails among most parents. The responses to a question on this issue have been presented in Table 4.

Interesting opinions emerge from the parents. A majority (20 per cent) of the fathers felt that they should have put more pressure upon their children in the past couple of years, which would have probably yielded better results. Most fathers felt that they had pampered their children and as a result, there were no expected performance in the past. They wished they had made them aware of the expectation from them and pressurized them from the beginning instead of making high demands of performance in the 12th standard. A majority of the mothers, on the other hand
said that they would not have put pressure upon their children. About 16 per cent of the fathers felt that they should have given better financial help. They said that had they spent more money on education it would have ensured better performance from their children. Probably they wanted to spend more money on reading material, better coaching, smooth transport etc. However, a few mothers had similar opinions indicating that they were satisfied with the money spent over their children’s education both in the past and in the present.

There were also more number of fathers than mothers who were reluctant to do anything extra, apart from what had already been done. These fathers seemed to be bit discontent and expressed that they had done whatever possible to the children and were satisfied about it, but dissatisfied with the results yielding from their efforts till now. Women, on the other hand, were calmer and such dissatisfaction was showed by a few. Better guidance was also a thoughtful response from the parents. There were 9 per cent of both mothers and fathers who thought they should have given better guidance to their children at every stage of their education. It is significant that at least a few parents realized the importance of guidance to the younger generation which need to be more focused. Most children complained that they lacked proper direction in their schooling. Some mothers expressed that they liked to be full-time mothers and help their children. It seems that these mothers were full time employees and were not able to give enough time to their children and were guilty for it. Given a chance, they wanted to live their lives once again becoming full time mothers and helping their children in whatever way they wanted. A few others also felt that they should have extended better emotional support and better financial support. Career aspiring mothers with their busy schedules spent less time with their children and they were regretful about it. While fathers in the same situation proudly felt that they were busy and had no time for anybody including their children, mothers on the other hand were apologetic about it.

Parental influence in deciding one’s career among the students and their encouragement for attaining good education was evident. Education seemed one of the great obsessions among the urban middle class families and they were anxious to help the children in their educational endeavor. Indeed, it is now a common character of the majority of the families in India to give greater emphasis, if not putting children under pressure, in preparing them for the professional courses. Studies have showed that parental encouragement is one of the prominent factors influencing the aspirations of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extra Efforts</th>
<th>Mothers</th>
<th>Fathers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better financial support</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better schooling</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better coaching/tuition</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not put much pressure</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put more pressure</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better guidance in every stage</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give more emotional support</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do the same thing again</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be a full time parent</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
children. Parental encouragement is a powerful intervening variable between the socio-economic class background, intelligence of the child and his/her educational aspirations. It appears to have a strong effect on educational plans of children (Sewell et al 1976; Davis et al 1981; Lorenz 1972). It can be observed that parent’s aspirations for their children actually determined children’s own aspiration for themselves. Often it is observed that children did not have their independent aspirations or plans. They were in fact translated from their parents and gradually got internalized over a period of time.

There is a difference between the parents and children (preparing for professional education) in perceiving the role that professional education plays for social mobility. While parents seem to think that profession bestows upon the individual an exalted status in society, children seem to merely respond to the parents’ desires and pressure than acting on their own in pursuing professional education. So internalized the parental influence has been among children that many are unable to identify a career aspiration to be originating as a consequence of parental influence. Children, in particular, experience an excessive pressure from their parents for better performance. While students are willing to acknowledge the positive role parents play by encouraging them to pursue a professional education, they are also quick to point out that often such encouragement tends be a negative pressure for performance. Further, children seem to be pursuing a goal of attaining professional education on behalf of the parents as though they had no agency for themselves. Apparently, for parents, children are the means to fulfill their long cherished but unaccomplished dreams and aspirations. Finally, almost all the parents, and to a considerable extent the students, confirm the hypotheses, namely, the perception that professional education as an important means for achieving social mobility.

References
Understanding Popular Culture and Youth Violence

Shailendra Kumar

Impact of media on youth is complex and exhibits contrary results according to the analytical framework. e.g. there are evidences that watching violence excites violent tendencies but also that sometimes violence on screen is watched by those who already have violent tendencies and behaviours. The present paper is aimed to confront the root causes of youth violence by making an attempt to understand contemporary popular culture and why it is meaningful to the youth who consume it. The understanding in the paper comes from listening to and taking seriously what young people have to say. The paper doesn’t look cultural artifacts as simple chemical agents like carcinogens that produce predictable results upon those who consume them but as complex bundles of often-contradictory meanings that can yield an enormous range of different responses from the people who consume them.

Indian youth like its global counter part is no monolith class; region and gender largely determine its access to media and technology. Also his or her position at home would determine whether she or he is able to twin on the program of her choice. Percentage of T.V viewers in India is very small and largely city centered. However the range of media options available to us has expended at a dramatic rate over the past several decades we see this expansion everywhere – the introduction of CDs led to an expansion of the range of popular music kept in circulation; the introduction of cable television has dramatically increased the spectrum of television programmes we can watch; the introduction of digital media introduces us to a much broader array of ideas and stories that we would have encountered in a world of centralized gatekeepers; niche marketing has led to an explosion of new specialized magazines, many of them targeting youth. New media technologies are being introduced at an astonishing rate enabling a more participatory relationship to media culture. In such a world, each of us make choices about what kinds of media we want to consume, what kinds of culture are meaningful or emotionally rewarding to us. None of us devote our attention exclusively to only one programme, only one recording star, only one network or only one medium. People define their own media environment through their own particular choices from the huge menu of cultural artifacts and channels of communication that surround us all times.

When it comes to popular culture, we all “roll our own”. We cobble together a personal mythology of symbols, images and stories that we have adopted from the raw materials given us by

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the mass media, and we invest in those symbols and stories meanings that are personal to us or that reflect our shared experiences as part of one or another sub cultural community (Bruner, 1976: 46-57).

American Studies have shown that Banning black trench coats or violent video games doesn’t get us anywhere. The black trench coats or the song lyrics are only symbols. To be effective in changing the nature of contemporary youth culture, what we want to get at are the meanings that are associated with those symbols, the kinds of affiliations they express, and more importantly, the feelings of profound alienation and powerlessness that pushed these particular Kids (and others like them) over the edge. Consuming popular culture didn’t make these boys into killers; rather, the ways they consumed popular culture reflected their drive towards destruction. For most Kids most of the time, these forms of popular culture provide a normal, if sometimes angst-ridden, release of frustration and tension. Sometimes, indeed most often, as the old Jokes, goes a cigar is only a cigar and a black trench coat is only a raincoat (Henry, 1991: 22-39).

Symbols don’t necessary have fixed or universal meanings. Symbols gain meanings through their use and circulation across a variety of contexts. Some of these meanings are shared, some of them are deeply personal and private, but once we perceive a need to express a particular feelings or idea, human beings are pretty resourceful at locating a symbol that suits their needs.

It would be useful to see that it is not just modern media but ancient scriptures, which inspire a great deal of global violence not only in history but also at present. The religion inspired violence is committed by a very large number of young inspired people. According to certain scholars we need to remember that many violent crimes have been inspired by one or another passage from the Bible. When we hear such stories about religious fanatics committing violent crimes, we recognize that reading the Bible did not cause these murders, even though some of the violent images that got stuck in the killers’ minds originated in one or another passage of scripture. When we encounter such situations, we may want to say that these criminal actions resulted from a misreading of the Bible, that they took those images out of context, that the killers invested those passages with their own sickness. The same claim can be made about the works of popular culture. Popular films and television programmes may not have the spiritual depth of the Bible, they will almost certainly not survive as long, but they are still complex works that express many different ideas and lend themselves to many different uses and interpretations. Sometimes one or another image from mass culture does become part of the fantasy universe of a psychotic, does seem to inspire some of their anti social behavior, but we need to recognize that these images have also been taken out of context, that they have been ascribed with idiosyncratic meanings. Despite the mass size of the audience for some of the cultural products. We are discussing, there are tremendous differences in the way various audience members respond to their influence.

There are reports which talk about ‘Mahabharat and Ramayan’ serials being watched by children, and their use of bow and arrow leading to eye injuries. Many scholars have also tried to show links of ‘Hindutva’ as a violent and militant movement being encouraged by serials like ‘Chankaya’. These studies are largely academic, correlational hypothesis which propose that certain actions have had their correlation with certain representations but a statistical scientific causal study has never been done to show that the same people who did these actions watched the representation or would not have done the action had it not been for the watching. This is a serious issue.
Even when we are passionate about a particular program or CD, it’s pretty likely there will be aspects that frustrate, disappoint, annoy, or even actively offend us. We are drawn to a particular media artifact because it seems to be the best available vehicle for exploring some issue that is deeply important to us, because it entertains us or provides us with pleasure in a way that most other available choices in the marketplace do not. If they did not fascinate us on some level, we would not devote so much of our attention and energy to them. But, if they did not frustrate us on some level, we would also not spend much time scrutinizing, critiquing, and rewriting them. These media artifacts do not fully meet our needs and so we’re pushed towards a more intense and often a more critical engagement with them. We want to rewrite them to more perfectly reflect our own desires and fantasies. And these competing feelings of fascination and frustration give rise to the fan websites that are becoming increasingly common on the web (Tapscott, 1998: 37-59).

It is very hard to tell what these artifacts and myths mean from a position outside the cultural community that has grown up around them. All we can see are the symbols; we can’t really get at the meanings that are attached to them without opening. Some kind of conversation with the people who are using those symbols, who are consuming those stories, and who are deploying those media. Indian children and youth watch and play violent foreign video games with titles in English also with image, which are foreign some of these are translated in local language. Interestingly some media ideas of the west are adopted in local forms like ‘Shaktimaan’ from superman or the Saas Bahu Sagas from ‘The Bold and the Beautiful’. These indigenized and foreign images and ideas on screen are interpreted in very complex ways on which very little research exists. In times of globalization and connectivity it is even more contested. It would also be an over simplification to say that rural youth is more alienated from the foreign influence as compared to the urban and would interpret foreign media differently. Much of humour in cartoons has been found to have universal response also images of violence Whether American or Chinese seem to elicit universal response of fascination across the globe. But these issues are not well researched.

For methodological reasons, empirical research on “media effects” chooses not to address any of these issues, tending to bracket from consideration issues about media content, context and form us beyond its purview. Empirical researchers can only work with simple variables. Consequently, they offer only crude over simplified insights into the actual consequences of consuming violent media within specific real world contexts. They can tell us that certain media images stimulate neural responses, creating a state of tension or arousal: They can measure certain attitude shifts after consuming media images. But, in both cases, it takes a series of interpretive leaps and speculations to move from such data to any meaningful claim that media images cause real world behaviours. Most “media effects” researchers pull back from making any confident claims about the possible links between popular culture and youth Violence, because decades of research on media violence still yields contradictory and confusing results (Hodge and Tripp, 1986: 49-65).

Media effects research typically starts from the assumption that we know what we mean by “media violence”, that we can identify and count violent acts when we see them that we can choose or construct a representative example of media violence and use it as the basis for a series of controlled experiments. Under most circumstances, our children don’t experience violent images abstracted from social or narrative contexts. Exposing children to such concentrated doses of
decontextualize violence focuses their attention on the violent acts and changes the emotional tone, which surrounds them. Storytelling depends upon the construction of conflict and in visual based media; conflict is often rendered visible by being staged through violence. Stories help to ascribe meaning to the violent acts they depict.

Some works depict violence in order to challenge the culture that generates that violence; other works celebrate violence as an appropriate response to social humiliation or as a tool for restoring order in a violent and chaotic culture or as a vehicle of patriotism. Some works depict self-defense; others act of aggression. Some make distinctions between morally justifiable and morally unjustifiable violence; some don’t. We know this, of course, because we are all consumers of violent images. We read murder mysteries; we watch news reports; we enjoy war movies and westerns; we go to operas and read classic works of western literature (Kinder, 1996: 78-93).

Our work amongst college goers showed that youth defines and understands violence in various ways. A quick survey on boarders and day scholars of Lucknow University from General, OBC, SC and ST boys and girls revealed that with an exception of one almost all believe that some forms of violence are justified.

On the understanding of what constitutes violence it was largely reported that any unnecessary damage to a persons body or psyche is violence. Many reported that on grounds of vested selfish interest when a person is discriminated on grounds of economic, social and religious considerations it should be treated as violence. Exploitation and assault on the dignity of a person are to be considered as violence.

On what kinds of violence are justified the largest number responded by maintaining that violence done for self-protection, security of the nation and benefit of the largest number can be justified. Self-defense also included defense of the family in many cases. Altruistic motives for violence seemed to be justified.

Violence against traitors and rapists to the extent of killing seemed acceptable. Violence in case of external aggression on the state or to maintain internal security and peace seemed justified to most respondents.

The list of ideal persons who have done some violent deeds included Bhagat Singh, Chandrashekar Azad, Subhash Chandra Bose, Lala Hardayal, Maurya ruler Ashoka, Mangal Pandey, Mao Tse Tung, Lenin, Rajguru, and Sukhdev.

The list of ideal persons had certain very interesting entries like Kiran Ahluwalia who killed her husband who molested her for 10 years.

Some respondents included the names of Che Guera and Fidel Castro, while many mentioned the revolutionaries and soldiers who fight for the country’s honour.

On a personal note some respondents considered their father and teachers as ideal but violent. A couple of respondents mentioned Hitler while one mentioned Narendra Modi, Praveen Mahajan and Bal Thackery as ideal persons who have done some violent deeds. The largest number however mentioned that violence of revolutionaries was justified.

When it comes to the most popular form of violence depicted on the small screen most respondents felt that they were emotional and psychological very few felt that there was a display of physical and sexual violence on the small screen.
In terms of responses from boarders and day scholars boys and girls, those from joint or nuclear families membership of General, OBC, SC, ST caste groups, urban, Rural or semi urban backgrounds there was no significant difference.

There seems a general consensus that violence for the protection of the state is justified and revolutionaries are heroes. In terms of media response most felt that it showed psychological and emotional violence. Altruism as reason to justify violence is seemed more acceptable while a few did mention that one could justify violence to protect one’s kith and kin.

One respondent mentioned Amir Khan in ‘Rang De Basanti’ as an ideal person who did violent action. Interestingly this media character was placed with real revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh.

Works that have provoked enormous critical debates because of their thematic and aesthetic complexity, because they seem to be trying to say something different about our contemporary social environment and they seem to be finding new images and new techniques for communicating their meanings. Depicting violence is certainly not the same thing as promoting violence. Cultural Studies research tells us we need to make meaningful distinctions between different ways of representing violence, different kinds of stories about violence and different kinds of relationship to violent imagery.

Media effects research often makes little or no distinction between the different artistic conventions we use to represent violent acts. At its worst, media effects research makes no distinction between violent cartoons or video games that offer a fairly stylized representation of the world around us and representation of violence that are more realistic. Other researchers, however, show that children learn at an early age to make meaningful distinctions between different kinds of relationship between media images and the realm of their own lived experience (Laura Kipnis, 1996: 49-77).

Some studies suggest that children are fairly adept at dismissing works that represent fantastic, hyperbolic, or stylized violence and are more likely to be emotionally disturbed by works that represent realistic violence and especially images of violence in documentary films (predator – prey documentaries, war films) that can not be divorced from their real world referents. Such research would suggest that children are more likely to be disturbed by reports of violent crimes on the evening news than representations of violence in fictional works.

One of the most significant aspects of play is that play is divorced from real life. Play exists in a realm of fantasy that strips our actions of their everyday consequences or meanings (Bruner, Jolly and Sylva, 1976: 46-57).

We do things in our fantasies that we would have no desire to do in real life, and this is especially true of fantasies that involve acts of violence.

Our children feel put down by teachers and administrators, by kids on the playground; they feel like they occupy a very small space in the world and have very limited ability to shape reality according to their needs and desires. Playing video games allows them to play with power, to manipulate reality, to construct a world through their fantasies in which they are powerful and can exert control. The pleasure stems precisely from their recognition of the contrast between the media representation and the real world. It is not the case that media violence teaches children that real world violence has no consequences. Rather children can take pleasure in playing with power precisely because they are occupying a fantastic space that has little or no direct relationship to
their own every day environment. Fantasy allows children to express feelings and impulses that have to be carefully held in check in their real world interactions. Such experiences can be cathartic, can enable a release of tension that allows children to better cope with their more mundane frustrations (Singer, 1990: 47-85).

It is not the case that children learn nothing from the many hours they spend consuming media and that the content of our culture makes no difference in the shape of our thoughts and our feelings. But we should also be concerned about the content of our culture; we should be worried if violent images push away other kinds of representations of the world. We can turn off a television programmes or shut down a video game if we find what it is showing us ugly, hurtful, or displeasing. We can’t shut out the people in our immediate environment quite to easily. Symbols do express their rage and frustration, but the media did not create the rage or generate their alienation. What sparked the violence was not something they saw on the internet or on television, not some song lyric or some sequence from a movie, but things that really happened to them (Seiter, 1999: 53-84).

As a teacher, some would love to be able to decide exactly what we want our students to know and transmit that information to them with sufficient, skill and precision that every student in the room learned exactly what we wanted, no more and no less. But, as teachers across the world can tell you, teaching doesn’t work that way. Each student pays attention to some parts of the lesson and ignores or forgets others. Each has their own motivations for learning. They don’t try to clear away other distractions. Consumers don’t sit down in front of their television screens to learn a lesson. Their attention is even more fragmented; their goals in taking away information from the media are even more personal; they aren’t really going to be tested on what they learn.

Many adults want children to spend time working with their computers because they see them as necessary tools for educational and professional development. There has been an enormous push to wire our classroom as well as concern about those children being left behind by the digital revolution, those who lack access to technologies that can shape their future. But, many adults also perceive the amount of time children spend on the computers as a form of addiction, which potentially isolate them from others. Who feel isolated in their own schools, who have become out caste or social pariahs, going on line becomes a way of forming alternative social support networks, of finding someone out there somewhere who doesn’t think you are a gross-geek-even if that person lives on the other side of the country or the other side of the planet. Yes, our children can fall into bad company on-line, as they can in real life, but the internet has expanded the potential that our children will be able to find their way into a good and supportive community because they are not restricted to the people in their own immediate geographic area. We need to try to develop a more sophisticated understanding of what our children are doing when they go on-line (Henry and Schwartz, 1999:1).

**Conclusion**

On a global scale, media scholars observe there is less and less space in increasing urban and suburban metro culture that is not developed; more and more children live in apartment complexes and do not have backyards; more and more people feel anxious about the safety of their children playing in public parks and in their neighbourhoods. Video games offer these latchkey children a virtual play space that enable them to engage in competitive or exploratory play within the safety of their own homes, video games promise children a “complete freedom of movement” that contrasts sharply with their direct experience of domestic confinement. In doing so, they
transmit many of the values of traditional “boy culture” into this technological environment. Indian growing middle class, urban culture has similar but more complex character because of joint families’ tradition and rising aspirations of a kind, which is not rooted in tradition. The need is not to jump to simplistic conclusions but to develop a more sophisticated method of close research and patiently analyze the multiple aspects of media and its impact on youth violence.

References
Media in India: Colonisation of the Reader

Kalpana Tallur Rao

Today media in India is a lucrative business, a huge industry, employer of a large workforce and a persuasive presence in the lives of citizens. Entertainment, information and communication which were simple, participative and community oriented have grown into a multi-billion dollar industry. Radio stations (news), news channels and newspapers decide the agenda of discussion in the public sphere while private FM channels, general entertainment television channels and magazines provide a passive one way entertainment to a citizen.

In the present era there is a revolution in communication technology — satellites technology, cable networks, fibre optics, computer systems, digital technology and their integration with mass media has brought about a transformation in terms of extensive reach and speed, lower costs and accessibility of media to remote areas of the hinterland. Notwithstanding this level of the development of productive forces, the mass media always have their basis on the prevailing economic structures comprising specific mode of production at a given point of time. Further the media system is closely related to the prevailing structure of political and economic power. The state is the driving force in the perpetuation of the economic system. It is not a neutral arbitrator in the society but an active agent in deciding the concerned economic pattern. The state and its various institutions is in fact a creation of the dominant class to ensure its survival and perpetuation. Its perpetuation is done pervasively both through material and ideological means with the mass media, among others, being a prominent ideological tool.

In the 1980s the economic crisis in the United States and the Western Europe led the industry to newer forms of organisation of production and capital. Capital entered a new phase as transnational capital which developed a stranglehold over the economy, telecommunications, IT as well as the mass media. With the World Bank as catalyst capital entered the third world countries for markets and production sites with suitable laws, tariffs and cheap labour. Media facilitated this globalisation of production, trade and finance. It evolved into an ideological tool for the propagation and perpetuation of capitalism. The media in turn has been affected by this globalisation with the centralisation and concentration of the media industry leading to emergence of giant global conglomerates, increased transnational flow of media products and consequent spread and intensification of the commercialisation of media output (Herman and McChesney, 1997).

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Emerging Trends in Development Research
Media in Society: A Perspective

The media are the chief cultural institutions that mediate the culture and the value system that promotes and legitimises capital. They are the chief agents of cultural colonisation of the society, and the propagation of patriarchal, consumerist and individualist mind set and reinforcement of conservative and regressive values. Capitalism needs markets to survive and therefore new consumer ethos is propagated in society. The media has an important role in political socialisation i.e. the processes through which values, cognitions, and symbols are learned and internalised through which operative social norms regarding politics are implanted, political roles institutionalised and political consensus created. Ruling class world-view is disseminated and comes to dominate the thinking of the society. Dissenting ideas are either ignored or get a cursory view. The media helps in the establishment of an ideological hegemony, an order in which a certain way of life and thought is dominant and one concept of reality is diffused in society in all its institutions and manifestations, informing with its spirit all taste, morality, customs, religious and political principles and all social relations. In capitalism the entire public sphere, the production and consumption of social knowledge depends on mass media (Williams, 1960). Alternate community based eco-friendly world-view that threatens the status quo which is essential for capital to survive gets a perfunctory treatment. Mass media performs the cultural function of selective construction of social knowledge, of social imagery, through which we perceive the worlds, the lived reality of others (Hall, 1979). Media further create a consensus and consent for capitalism by production of and ignorance of social reality, the political-economic system, and the relations of domination and exploitation, preventing the development of a class consciousness and the replacement of the exploitative capitalist order by a more egalitarian and humane system. The private sphere of free time and leisure is offered and colonised by the leisure sector of the mass media industry through newspaper supplements, magazines, radio and the television. The latter offers a cafeteria of entertainment ranging from daily serials, quiz and music shows, cricket matches, spirituality, cartoons, feature films, fashion, pornography and awards shows. A consumer culture is offered not only through advertisements but through the accompanying editorial content. The mass media in a capitalist framework implies cultural poverty, debased commercialism, systematic triviality, violence, exploitation of sex and sadism. Advertising promotes brands and images and creates artificial wants that have to be satisfied by the advertised products. The process of socialisation into consumerism as a coveted value and aim of life associated with success and happiness starts on children. Further advertising sells business as an activity that is benevolent and beneficent to society. Advertising in media, ensures its economic viability while at the same time setting the agenda for the media content. Hence advertising is accompanied by articles that support consumer culture, acquisitiveness, and are supportive of business. ‘Feel good’ stories that support globalisation and the new economy are the norm. Articles challenging the status quo and profiling community solutions are not carried.

Globalisation: Media Oligopoly

Historically capital has never restricted itself by geographical or political boundaries for accumulation and expansion. This capital expansion has been touted as globalisation and a very desirable development for the integration of the third world into the glamorous global world. As mentioned in the preceding paragraphs to pave the way for the entry of multinational capital into the third world the media moved across boundaries with mergers, acquisitions and consolidations.
This has led to the emergence of truly global media characterised by the emergence and oligopoly of a few large transnational corporations, larger cross border flows of media content, centralisation of media control, accentuation of commercialisation, privatisation of the media and related sectors like telecommunications, the implantation of commercial model of communication to broadcasting and other media and the commodification of media content. However it needs to be mentioned that since many decades news agencies, radio broadcasting, and Hollywood films have had a global reach.

A synergy has developed between the telecommunications, television and the information technology industry with the global media oligopoly evolving into a global communications sector oligopoly. This synergy has developed mainly due to the digitisation of these three technologies. The “basic aim of the future of mergers and acquisitions is to control the transmission of three basic telecommunication products — voice, data and video” (Robinson, 1996:24). The economic infrastructure of this global info-communications sector the International Telecommunications Union terms it is a large part of the global economy with the output valued at almost $ 1.5 trillion in 1994. Globally the mergers and acquisitions have resulted in a three tier of media firms. The first tier of 10 colossal vertically integrated media conglomerates which are major producers of entertainment and other news software with an annual sale in $10 to 25 billion range. They also rank in the first 500 global companies. The second tier has three dozen large media firms with annual sales in the $2-10 billion range which fill up the regional or niche markets in the global system. They have working arrangements with each other and with the first tire firms. In the third tire are thousands of relatively small and national or local firms that provide services to the large films or fill small niches.

**Media Industry in India**

The 1990s saw a loosening of the controls on the media industry in India. Controls on print and radio were eased considerably and in the next few years it is expected that there will be more easing of the controls. Over 2004 and 2005 investors have poured Rs. 20 billion into the Media and Entertainment industry (Kohli, 2006: 15). The growth of media in India has been comparable to the industry globally. In 2002 the revenue from the media industry was Rs. 246 billion while in 2005 it has grown to Rs. 420.27 billion, a 70.84% increase while in the same time period the global media industry has grown from $ 766.57 to $ 1,375 a 79.37 % increase.

**Television**

Among the various mass media, television is a potent medium whose visual character crosses the barrier of language and literacy and its glamour mesmerises audiences. Television existed as a state owned and controlled medium from its humble beginnings in 1959 up to 1991. These three decades of its existence saw advent of colour television, commercials on TV, a cautious beginning of serials but the emphasis of the state broadcaster remained on education and development. Satellite broadcasting of CNN and Star TV in 1991-1992 across political boundaries and its distribution by the newly formed unorganised cable network across cities by enterprising cable operators, led to the availability of private television channels in India in the early 1990s. Television fitted the bill perfectly of a medium that reinforces the value system; consumer ethos, patriarchy and individualism that is needed for the extension of globalisation. With the advent of a new way of its distribution through cable network, together with channels broadcast through satellite from
location outside the borders of the nation, television became a powerful medium for the propagation of globalisation. It is estimated that there are about 160 channels, distributed by around 30,000 cable operators to 60.8 million of the total 108 million TV homes. Television received a revenue of Rs. 185 billion and 41% of the total ad spend in 2005 (Kohli, 2006).

Television channels in India have a cafeteria of channels that offer a variety of fare to the viewers. There are niche channels like health, religious, film, business, animation, pop music, sports and wild life. Among the most popular are the news channels and general entertainment channels. The latter offer an eclectic fare of sitcoms, daily soaps, cookery shows, quiz and reality shows. General entertainment channels get the maximum TRP ratings. And among the fare offered; daily soaps attract the maximum TRPs. These serials reinforce patriarchal value system and consumerism in society. This value system gives a secondary position to women notwithstanding their age, experience or social status. Their social role is of submission to men, as reproducers of their labour power, biological reproducer, taking sole responsibility for nurturance and socialisation of young, care of the old and infirm, taking submissive position to men and if the economic situation of the family so demands, entering the wage labour market. Television perpetuates this ideology and prevents development of consciousness among women. These serials do not challenge materialistic values nor reveal harsh reality but show people who spend lavishly and have status by acquisition and consumption, displayed in surroundings of wealth. The plots are family oriented, the ambience accommodates advertising easily and stories are shaped in accordance with advertiser and audience demands. These family serials centre on joint business family and its trials and tribulations. Women have prominent roles in these serials. The protagonist is a woman who is the daughter-in-law of a large joint business family. Her character is strong, bold, and positive, believes in family values and takes the lead in solving the problems of the family, sometimes even coming into conflict with the men in the family. Under this bold veneer the woman is nevertheless subordinate to the male; economically dependent and deferential. Her sexuality and fertility is controlled by the men and she has the demeanour and follows all the religious rituals of married woman. While outwardly progressive these serials subtly reinforce the subordinate position of women by projecting such women as good and ideal. As against this the negative character is a woman who is economically independent dresses boldly and disrupts the peace of the family. The women also are shown as prominent consumers themselves; of fancy sarees, jewellery, hairstyles, makeup. They are consumers of lavishly furnished palatial homes, use cell phones, latest cars, celebrate all festivals thus subtly promoting consumerism and the good life while standing up for family values, family integrity, family unity and truth. Globalisation has brought this regressive portrayal of women on television.

Print Media

In 1992 both newsprint and printing machinery were put in the Open General License making their import easier. The government in 2002 allowed 26% FDI in the print media but with various restrictions that were eventually removed in 2005 when FII’s were allowed to invest up to 26%. The result has been that post 2005 the print media has been in the expansion mode. Following the policy of liberalisation of the media industry Indian Express (Mumbai) picked up a 10% stake in Mid-Day multimedia in March 2005 and is launching more editions. Cyber Media, a speciality publishing company raised money from the primary markets. HT Media has had three rounds of private equity funding, an IPO, has bagged radio licenses and has launched in Mumbai. BCCL-BBC World wide’s joint venture Worldwide Media will be launching various magazines.
billion is raised by Jagran Prakashan from the Dublin based Independent News and Media Plc. Tamil daily Dinakaran has been bought by Kalanithi Maran’s Sun Network. In 2006 BCCL bought a stake in Sandesh group, Sahara One, Percept Picture Company and Media Vision.

Starting two decades ago BCCL was the first media company to aggressively market its newspaper The Times of India as a commodity and thus transforming it into India’s largest and most profitable media company. Others companies like the Eenadu, Mid-Day, Dainik Jagran, Dainik Bhaskar, Amar Ujala, Malayalam Manorama, followed suit.

Aggressive marketing of newspapers are in the form of color supplements, different pricing on different days, cross-brand advertising packages and price cutting, coupon schemes, free issue of paper on the eve of its launch. The content of the newspaper that was hitherto the sole domain of the editorial department was now encroached by the marketing department. This first came in the form of the glossy packaging; colour in both supplements and daily pages, trendier layouts, slim size of the broadsheet, more photos, followed by the tabloidisation of the content. Page three content was no longer restricted to page three but spilled over to the other pages. Gossip, interviews, parties and photos took a key editorial space. Celebrity stories, lives of the rich and the famous; film and television stars, models, fashion designers, cricket stars, and socialites got priority. Trend stories of the urban angst, subcultures, alternate sexuality, fashion, food, clothes, events, pop psychology and opinion polls on topics like sex got right of the way. Lives and the times of Hollywood celebrities also found space in newspapers. Consumer culture was also reflected in the stories that indirectly promoted products. For good measure stories on spirituality and the discovery of the self also found prominent place. Other feel good stories have been the hallmark of many newspapers especially The Times of India (the largest selling English daily with a circulation of 2.54 million (Registrar Newspapers in India March 2006). Stories of an alternate India that is marginalised; the gut wrenching poverty, hunger deaths, abuse of human rights, illiteracy, unemployment, the millions in the unorganised sector that do not have access to the benefits of globalisation is totally glossed over. Other than exceptions like the Indian Express other newspapers do not do investigative stories into abuse of power, depict an alternate reality of India, or study the abuse of corporate power. Feel good stories are preferred. Investigative and negative reporting on business other than coverage of explosions in factories is not even an exception as their advertisements are crucial to the economic survival of the newspapers. The tabloidisation and trivialisation of the content of the print media has ensured that it provides no forum for discussion, no fodder for intellectual thought, and has shrunk the public sphere in India.

Radio

The potential of the medium in terms of its reach, penetration, cost and accessibility is unique as compared to other media. The controls over this medium have not been eased as much as the others. AIR (with 215 stations) rules over the airwaves while a dozen private FM stations have come up since 2003. In 2005 the government announced a new radio policy which eases up some of the controls on radio to an extent. In this year we expect to see 337 radio stations in 91 cities and the emergence of 5 main players; Kalamithi Maran’s South Asia FM and Kal Radio (Suryan) with 71 stations, Anil Ambani’s Adlabs Films with 56, BCCL that owns ENIL (Radio Mirchi) with 28 stations and India Value-Fund Music Broadcast (Radio City) with 20 stations (Kohli, 2006). However since no company can own more than 15% of all the stations in the country their no fear of consolidation. The content of the FM station is restricted to film music presented by radio jockeys.
There are no special interest programmes, talk shows, dramas, classical music. News and current affairs are not allowed on Private FM. Radio has only been marginally affected by globalisation.

Note: This is the revised version of a paper presented at a UGC sponsored national seminar on ‘Media in the 21st century: Escalating Challenges’ organised at the Gujarat Vidhyapith, Ahmedabad on 22-23rd March 2007.

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In 1894, a student of drawing and painting section of Sir J.J.School of Art Bombay, Ganpat Rao Kashinath Mhatre (1876-1947) made a significant mark in the field of sculpture by executing a perfectly balanced and self sustaining figure of a female devotee in plaster titled ‘To The Temple’ (Plate: 1). It was a rare instance when a student from drawing and painting section had shifted to the modelling section to work in a medium that was considered to be non-profitable in all respects. However, it was an important event as Mhatre’s work initiated a style of sculpture that embodied the values of academic-realist style. The sculpture is a realistic representation of a young Maharashtrian woman carrying offerings to the temple. The theme is traditionally Indian and a large number of sculptures are available on this theme from the ancient and medieval periods. Mhatre, in his sculpture reinterprets a traditional motif in an entirely alien mode.

The immediate models for this work can be identified in the Neo-classical works imported from Europe as well as the plaster copies of Graeco-Roman sculptures available in the school. Thus, ‘To The Temple’ heralds a new era in Indian sculpture.

‘To The Temple’ attracted the attention of important personalities like Sir G. Birdwood, who after seeing a few photographs of the sculpture appreciated the skill of Mhatre at great length in a detailed letter that appeared in the Bombay Gazette of the 26th Nov., 1896. (This letter was reproduced in The Journal of Indian Art and Industry, Vol. VIII, No.6, 1898, pp. 1-4.) While asking local people to give Mr. Mhatre the remunerative commissions, he also suggested them the subject-matter for the sculptures in the following words: “I hope his co-religionists will take pride in giving him both private and public commissions for ideal subjects, statues, and bas reliefs, illustrative of their national epics, and, within specified limits, of the mythology of their religion; {for) mythological subjects imperatively demanding a conventional treatment of the human frame/ amounting to what in fine art would be regarded as a monstrosity, should be excluded; and that equally in the interest of religion and art. Thus, for example, it would be impossible to represent Siva, in his more dreaded aspects, otherwise than in the strange detriment to those divine ideas these often repulsive forms symbolise. But, Saraswati, with her lettered scroll, bright Kamadeo (with his flowery dart) and joyous Krishna (with the Gopies), and the heroes and heroines of the Ramayana and Mahabharata can be represented quite artistically in sculpture without any abatement of the force of their popular divinity.”

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These observations, comments and suggestions of Sir Birdwood did make some impact on the minds of the young sculptors of the time and also brought in much needed patronage as they were struggling for a foothold in the field. This was the time when a new kind of sculpture was emerging but was completely divorced from and diametrically opposed to the values of great sculptural tradition of India. like humanistic and iconographic content and, more or less, conceptual and idealistic sculptural form. These norms were established in the early stages of the evolution of traditional sculpture and persisted through the entire range of Indian sculpture.

However, this new type of sculpture did not find favour with the later generations as the artists failed to convey the ideas and the essence of these themes through such images. The new academic-realist style introduced by the British was unsuitable for this kind of traditional subject-matter. However, the Indian sculptors continued to take great interest in their tradition especially in the mythology and literature and subsequently some of the artists were able to establish a kind of a synthesis for their expressive purposes between the tradition and the world in which they were living.

In the 1950s while a large number of contemporary Indian sculptors were turning to the west for inspiration and had been working on the norms developed by the avant-garde sculptors, there were some others who felt intense discontentment with an open borrowing from foreign sources. Although trained in the academic-realist style taught in the various schools of art, they started to disentangle themselves from the restrictive rules of their training and turned to seek inspiration from indigenous sources of art. They started exploring the norms of traditional Indian sculpture and the living traditions of folk and tribal arts to imbibe the thematic and formal qualities like the realisation of their (traditional arts) two-dimensional aspect, surface design, the process of simplification and abstraction of form etc. Some of these sculptors adopted folk and tribal art techniques to a great creative advantage by reconciling these to the modern industrial technology and new attitudes. Their subject-matter is drawn from both, traditional Indian mythology and literature, and also contemporary day-to-day life around them. Sculptors like Dhanraj Bhagat, P.V. Janakiram, Nandagopal, Meera Mukherjee, K.G. Subramanyan, etc. have been inspired by the local art streams akin to their individual temperament. They freely incorporated symbols, signs and motifs from these and have developed their own idioms and also employed the traditional materials and techniques.

Even though this interest in the local and traditional art forms can be noticed in many sculptors of this period from different parts of India, initially it was in South India that a large number of artists felt the necessity of returning to their roots and I have restricted myself to study the works of mainly three sculptors: Janakiram, Dhanraj Bhagat and S.Nandagopal.

In Madras, K.C.S. Panikar and a number of his colleagues of Madras Government College of Art including Dhanapal, in the late 50s and early 60s, started exploring the folk and tribal art forms besides taking inspiration from the traditional classical art. In the field of sculpture it was Dhanapal who in the late 50s, inspired by the Chola and Pallava sculptures, moved towards incorporating local elements in his sculptures, such as the compositional arrangement of the subject, the distribution of space, the articulation of form in a rhythmical and simplified manner. He sensed a commonality of approach between modern European and traditional Indian sculpture and developed a characteristic type of figure in which the solid volume and masses were replaced by graduated planes of convexes and concaves. The silhouette like form thus evolved was penetrated by space
forming openings on the mass. This type of work is characterized by marked frontality and simplified masses while a smoothly flowing line binds the figures in an organic relationship.

The earliest efforts towards clearly redefining the traditional Indian art forms can be perceived in the works of P.V. Janakiram (b. 1930). A concern with frontality and flattening of surfaces can be seen in Janakiram’s early work ‘Two Horses’ of 1959 in cement. This tendency was further developed in his later work ‘Mother and Child’ (1961) in lead. In this work he has not as yet completely compressed the mass and volume but the figures are definitely conceived as forms with two principal surfaces. Besides, the surfaces are uneven and in a certain way impart contrasting textures to the work. But Janakiram was interested in completely shedding the mass and removing the textural surfaces in his work. For this purpose he started looking around for a suitable material and significant imagery to work upon. During this time, he came across the traditional technique of repousse, used earlier in fashioning metal doors of temples in South India and ‘Kavachas’ (covers made in silver and gold for the temple idols), in which metal sheets were beaten to arrive at specific shapes. Although Janakiram is not the first to employ this repousse technique as Dhanraj Bhagat worked in this in early 50s, he gradually modified it into a highly individualistic style of his own. Unlike Bhagat’s naturalistic works, Janakiram initially worked on simplified human shapes which were beaten out of brass or copper sheets but gradually he combined an additive process with the repousse technique. Thus, he developed an interesting technique in which a basic form is designed by hammering the sheet on to which were welded various repoussé shapes, motifs, and ornaments separately executed. Often the details are highlighted by thin metal rods and wires added on to the work.

His subject-matter for these sculptures comes from Indian mythology, traditional literature and also Christianity. However, some of his works are free from any kind of religious association. These works can be divided into two principal types: first, single figures, iconic stele type and second, horizontally laid reliefs with multiple figure. In the single figure type are to be seen a number of icons conceived in terms of new media and style such as ‘Buddha’, ‘Devi’, ‘Madonna’, ‘Christ’, ‘The Virgin’ etc. These themes were repeated many a time by Janakiram with subtle formal variations and surface treatment. The ‘Buddha’ (Plate: 2) of 1965 takes its formal attributes from the famous ‘Standing Buddha’ from Mathura of the classical period. Working in repousse Janakiram creates a version of it in copper sheet with the stylized drapery lines and highly decorated aureole at the back of the head. The sculptor captures the serene mood and suppleness of the body within the limited space available. The body planes have been simplified but there still persists a love for natural human body. A change in treatment is noticed in another version of the theme fashioned during the same year. In this sculpture, retaining the physical features of the earlier work, Janakiram, instead of beating out the details of the drapery, welds metal rods to the sheet surface to create a semblance of folds. This technique has also been employed in the creation of the, face, and hair. A feeling of peace and serenity exudes through these works.

Janakiram skillfully exploits the basic qualities of his materials and make use of these to execute expressive sculptures. In his works on the themes of “Madonna” and “Christ” he makes a subtle use of material to evoke various moods and emotions. The oval faced ‘Madonna’ (1965), holding the child Christ, is treated with a soft, sensitive, surface texture. With subtle modulations of the surface of the metal sheet, Janakiram creates an aura of grace mingled with sorrow. In other versions of the same theme he instills the image of the Mother with both a perceptible degree of
piety and a sense of the weight of the tragedy that awaits her child. His images of ‘Christ’, often formed as heads and busts, contain within them a complex gamut of emotions: sorrow, a benign acceptance of the torture and violence that he underwent. In these he creates jagged surface texture and welds curling metal wires to express these emotions. In the works such as ‘Balaji’ (1969), ‘King of Kings’ (1970), ‘Crown of Thorns’ (1971) and ‘Divine Child’ (1971) not much change is discernible in his technique and modes of representation.

In the second type of work he fashions multiple figures on large panels of metal sheet. ‘Krishna Slaying Kaliya’ (Plate: 3) of 1965 and ‘Deity with Worshippers’ (1966) are works where he creates necessary environment in the background for narrating the story. The rod and wire have been put to utmost use, not just for delineating human and animal figures but for an entire range of suggestive details of costume and jewellry as also flora and fauna and other natural elements. The figures are still frontal, however, a sense of movement is imparted in the relief through the gestures and postures. In his later works he simultaneously uses tin, copper, brass, and silver. He fashions each figure separately as individual units and put them together to make a complete sculpture. ‘Krishna with Gopis’ is one such example where the figures are spatially related as they stand on a low pedestal.

Working in a similar technique Dhanraj Bhagat constructed some images of Hindu deities in the mid-sixties. Combining repousse technique with welding Bhagat built his images on an inner core of metal rods. Unlike Janakiram, Bhagat cuts and hammers pieces of sheet metal separately and then welds these to a skeleton of thick metal rods as can be seen in his ‘Cosmic Dance’ (1966). The work seems to grow and spread like a tree. Unlike the almost static and compact forms of Janakiram, Bhagat opens up the form with the help of metal rods, capturing in the process light and fluid body movements. The image shows the terrible aspect of dancing Siva. The weight of the body is balanced on one leg while the other is raised in an upward sweep. ‘Cosmic Mother’ (1966) is another sculpture based on a traditional theme depicting the goddess Durga in the act of vanquishing the demon. This work has been executed using steel rods. The open form of the sculpture is built by welding together steel rods. The open form of the sculpture is built by welding together steel rods which clearly define the images of the goddess and the accompanying lion. The intricate structure carries the characteristic linear rhythm of Bhagat’s earlier sculptures and encompasses space within its lines. A starkly frontal character further defines these figures. In a similar style he executed ‘Monarch’, ‘Becoming’, ‘I Support the Universe,’ ‘Cosmic Circle’, ‘Luminous Being’, etc. were all done in the seventies.

A concern with traditional forms of art and subject-matter can also be seen in the works of S.Nandagopal (b.1956) who extended the use of repousse technique further. He executed monumental images in sheet metal in repousse combined with welding technique. Though he derives his subject-matter and motifs from such indigenous sources as folk and tribal art forms, traditional art, iconography, mythology, artifacts and appurtenances associated with local temples, chariots, festivals, and rituals, sati tablets, hero stones, toys, and dolls and gramadevatas on the outskirts of villages. However, unlike Janakiram who worked mainly with the human figure, Nandagopal expanded his vocabulary gradually making use of various animal, bird, and plant figures in combination with the human figure. In his work, his primal concern seems to be with the creation of a pure sculptural form without any emotional value toning.

His early works such as ‘Deity on Animal’ of 1968 and ‘Man-Animal’ series of 1971 are fashioned almost in round in silver plated copper sheet. The sculpture is constructed by welding
together various shapes, fashioned separately. ‘Deity on Animal’ presents an eight armed deity riding on a two headed goat like animal. The forms are stylized and have been reduced to their bare minimum when compared with the natural figures of man and animal. The surfaces in this sculpture are profusely ornamented by welding shaped metal sheet and wire pieces and also by beating different patterns on the body of the sculpture. However, these decorative appendages do not integrate well with the main sculptural form. This work has certain obvious connections with the representational forms of traditional art forms of India. ‘Variation-I, (Plate: 4) of ‘Man-Animal’ series is a solidly built sculpture depicting a composite figure of a man and animal. The ornamentation and decoration appear, once again superfluous yet the image has a mystical presence of its own.

After some time Nandagopal made a complete departure from the three dimensional images of this kind and started executing works with a dominant frontality combined with the details worked out in very low relief. Following an additive process he cuts and welds pieces of sheet metal to construct oblong or rectangular structures. On the body surfaces of these are welded figurative images and motifs of various shapes and dimensions, which are fashioned separately. In the sculptures thus created, the surface details take on greater importance than the body structure, as it is through these that the meaning of the image crystallizes. This can be seen in his work such as ‘Deity’ (Plate: 5) and ‘Snake-Deity’ of the year 1971. Executed in silver plated copper and brass, their contours give a semblance of gopurams of South Indian temple. The details on the surface of these depict snakes, fish, leaves, spirals, triangles and crescents. All these motifs are welded to the basic structure which collectively then forms the image of the deity. At certain places in these works these superimposed motifs are also used as surfaces for further over-lappings. This way Nandagopal constructs multiple levels of planes in depth just like a relief carved in stone. Often Nandagopal fills the space around the deity with some incised and stamped patterns and also welds cut out motifs, which have no direct relationship with the theme as such. These large works, “…. compel the viewer’s attention in two strikingly different ways. They first impose themselves as objects isolated in space and then
invite a close up reading of their numerous surface details.” “This remarkable synthesis of a large, imposing, external shape with an intimate playful surface detail, Nandagopal himself relates to India’s ancient art traditions, both fold and courtly. He has stated that he was impressed by the way the gopurams of South Indian temples acted in two radically contrasting modes. These massive, soaring towers that can be sighted from miles seem only large monolithic structures simple and stately. “But as you approach it from close, you are amazed at the dimensions of the basic structure and the wealth of the lovingly carved detail on it, i. e., depicting deities, animals and even landscapes and narrating tales from mythology.”

In these early works, it is noticed that the super-imposed images are not satisfactorily integrated with the main surface. There seems to be a tension that Nandagopal could not resolve, between the static background surface and dynamic surface motifs. Nandagopal tried to resolve this conflict between the two planes by harmoniously synthesizing both to realize a unified form and this was achieved gradually. In his ‘Deity’ of 1974, in silver plated copper he has tried to minimize the feeling of separate identities by giving equal attention to both the planes. Now, the background structure itself has become a part of the complete sculptural shape with two panels outgrowing from its sides just like wings and a crescent shape formed by three fish figures crowning its top. The surface details, which were earlier used to stand against it, have now become organic part of the main structure. Apart from this integration, the sculpture, no more a compact structure, opens up into the surrounding space as the serpentine figures on the fringes now move beyond the surface and break the contour. In ‘Vrischika’ (1974-75) in silver-plated brass and copper, this synthesis is further emphasized as the back plane of the sculpture is no longer treated as a carrier of the main image but supplements the other details to make a complete sculpture. However, a total synthesis is achieved in sculptures fashioned after 1975 where the separate identity of different planes has been diluted to such an extent that it is almost impossible to separate one from the other. The sculpture ‘Tree’ (1975) in silver-plated copper stands on a base that is together formed by an image of a goat with two heads. The tree with spreading branches is enclosed within a fence like structure. The branches of the tree with a leaf at each end unfold in three parallel, gentle curves, encompassing space. The central space is filled up by serpent heads like shapes, and these superimposed motifs have finally achieved an organic unity with the background.

With the ‘Tree’ Nandagopal arrives at a point where the sculpture is no more conceived as a closed form. The compact form of the earlier sculpture has been opened up and spreads around with a vitality of its own. His other works of the same year ‘Shattered image’ and ‘Koorma’ of 1978 both in silver plated copper, show similar features. ‘Shattered image’ is visually a very intricate sculpture, as the surface details are spread over the entire work. The form is conceived like that of a tree with the structure broken at various points so as to incorporate space and use that as part of the sculpture. The surface details which consists of mythical animal, bird and stylized human forms, besides, a large number of geometric patterns, spirals, embossed numbers and grids now appear to veil and complete the larger geometrical base structure. Another point of departure that is noticed in this work is that earlier the surface details provided clues to the identification of the deity but here the details are varied, making such complex patterns that it is difficult to relate them to a specific myth or deity as perhaps here “…. the transformation into a new language, leaving behind obvious reference to the old is complete.” Though ‘Koorma’ is also an abstract work like the earlier one yet the image of the turtle in the centre, somehow, relates it to the ancient myths. ‘Ritual
image’ (1978) (Plate: 6) made in silver plated copper in 1978, presents plains of varying depths in space and a contrast of curved and smooth flat surfaces.

Nandagopal has used varied motifs and images, which are used both as surfaces and then as surface details as is evident in his earlier works. In his later works, He has made use of similar images and motifs: double headed goat, fish, tortoise, birds, snakes, multi-armed figures of men, geometric shapes, spirals, stamped numbers and grids etc. He attempts various permutations and combinations, modifying them a bit here and there to fit them in the new context. Even the basic structure of the sculptural forms differs only a little, in the sense that the original arrangements of the panels seen earlier have been somewhat altered. The works done during 1979 and 1980 are generally titled as ‘Deity’, ‘Serpent as Deity-II’, ‘Tiger-Tiger’, ‘Vishnu’ etc. In some of these works executed in silver plated copper and brass, a remarkable surface finish is achieved, and surface details, which used to proliferate on the entire surfaces are drastically reduced as can be seen in ‘Tiger-Tiger’ and ‘Deity’, both of 1980.

Throughout, the period of his sculptural development, Nandagopal, has shown a keen interest in emphasizing the totality of his image whereby the main structure and the details complement as well as supplement to each other creating a complete image. In this process animal, bird, and human figures, which are never naturalistically treated always appear as pure motifs just like other abstract symbols and traditional motifs used by him. Even though Janakiram and Dhanraj Bhagat had also used simplified figures to a point of near abstraction in their sculptures yet a vague semblance to naturalistic forms always remained there and did convey a narrative meaning.

Notes
1 This sculpture was first exhibited in the ‘Bombay Art Society Exhibition’ in 1896. Later it was exhibited in ‘Sculpture Court’ at the ‘Paris International Exhibition’ in 1900. In 1902-03 it was exhibited in ‘Indian Art at Delhi’ Exhibition. See Brown Percy, Cat.: Indian Art at Delhi, 1902, pp. 449-454.
2 There are many examples of such themes from Sanchi, Amaravati, Mathura, etc. depicting women devotees carrying offerings. ‘Prasadhika’ from Fyzabad is an example.
3 See James, Joseph, ‘The Madras School,’ Lalit Kala Contemporary, No.6, April 1967, pp.31-36.
4 See Krishnan, S.A., P.V.Janakiram, N.Delhi, 1970. np.

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Origin and Growth of Bishnupriya Manipuris’ Language Movement in Barak Valley

Aparna Sinha

The origins of the Bishnupriya Manipuris date back to the pre-historic era. They are the early settlers of Manipur who inhabited the Loktak Valley. They are the remnants of the Indo-Aryans and descendants of the Vedic Kshatriyas as such carried with them their traditional culture, language and religion. They are the sincere followers of Lord Vishnu and hence the name. This particular community established their ancient capital town at Bishnupur as referred by the 7th century Chinese Pilgrim Huein Tsang in his account known as the Ishangupul. Further the Burmese regarded Manipur as “Kathe”, which belonged to the Kshatriyas coming from Western and Northern India. Referring to these very facts they were reputed as the first cultured ruling race of Manipur but had to face the utmost violence of Kuki-Chins’ sudden attack. As such the valley ultimately went under the Meiteis. These various oppressions upon the Bishnupriya Manipuris followed by the unreasonable burning of books and various other records which happened during the very reign of King Pamheiba in the early part the 18th century proved very disastrous and resulted in the wiping out of old traditions. Continuous Burmese attack followed by despotic rule impelled a wide range of Bishnupriyas to leave their heart and home. They then migrated partly to Cachar, Sylhet and Tripura and partly to Burma. The remaining population of the Bishnupriyas merged with the “Meiteis”. They had to see a rapid fall of their moral identity and material standards and thus their mother tongue was forced helplessly into oblivion. These events continued to ward off any possibility to sketch out the history of Manipur. However various other scholars and historians came out with various views and facts about the Bishnupriyas. Two eminent scholars W. Shaw and Raj Mohan Nath viewed that the ‘Bishnupriya’ (language) along with its Devnagiri script was the court language of Manipur which was replaced by King Khagenba. Further Dr. Greirson on his Linguistic Survey in the early part of twentieth century traced out a thousand speakers of the Bishnupriya Manipuri language though it is extinct in present Manipur. Thus works of both Indian and European scholars declare solemnly to the existence of Bishnupriya Manipuri in Manipur since the ancient times.

The Meiteis had the power of the Manipur state behind them and in the post sixties period, this particular clan had been engaged in waging continuous organized campaigns with an aim to discredit and disown the Bishnupriya counterparts. They suggested that the Bishnupriya was never the language of Manipur and declared themselves to be the real Manipuris. Further the passing of the Language Bill of 1968 by the Manipur Government made the “Meiteis” synonymous to Manipuri
and included their language in the eight schedule of the Indian Constitution by the Indian Government. This very event was sufficient enough to damage the ethnic and cultural identity of the Bishnupriya Manipuri speaking people residing in Manipur, Assam and Tripura. The Bishnupriya Manipuri’s thought it completely unjustified to provide with the terminology of Manipuri only to the Meiteis and also thought this to illegal and irrelevant to regard or consider only the Meitei Language as the Manipuri language despite the providence of various evidences of the originate of the Bishnupriya Manipuris as per various studies. According to the Constitution Act of 1956, Article 350A and 350B, there is a constitutional validity that each Linguistic Minority in India has got the fundamental right to receive instruction at a primary stage of education through mother tongue. But this provision has not been honored in respect of the Bishnupriya Manipuri children. They were continuously deprived of enjoying it only due to the illegal and unwarranted interference of the Government of Manipur. Further there was full of fake and imaginable information, purely intentional and politically designed in the 1961 and 1971 census as the census authority was guided by mischievous force all through. This underground conspiracy was sufficient to throw the Bishnupriya Manipuris into long deprivations and further to a brink of extinction. So with an aim to emphasize for the illumination of their original identity and language, the Bishnupriya Manipuris organized themselves into various movements.

There was a resolution passed in the Nikhil Bishnupriya Manipuri Mahasabha in 1955 which urged the Government of Tripura and Assam in order to provide various facilities to Bishnupriya Manipuris’ children at an early date. The Government took no steps regarding this matter. As such the Mahasabha directed the Bhasa Parishad to organize a democratic movement aiming at the quick fulfillment of the language demand. There was also a delegation of the Bishnupriya Manipuri Sahitya Parishad who urged the Government of Assam to favor their demand. This later led to the formation of the Manipuri Bishnupriya Andolan Parishad which started a Satyagraha Movement manner with various objectives. They demanded an immediate implementation of introduction of Bishnupriya Manipuri Language as a medium of instruction at the primary stage of education in Assam and Tripura. They also demanded the Broadcast of Cultural programs in Bishnupriya Manipuri at the AIR station, Guwahati. They also sought for financial assistance to the Nikhil Bishnupriya Manipuri Sahitya Parishad and also to all students of this linguistic minority irrespective of division. They further demanded proper representation in the Central and State Legislatures by way of reservation and nomination: reservation of special and quota in Government and Semi-Government services. Finally they demanded a correction in the census reports.

With these objectives the Bishnupriya Manipuris of the Barak Valley jointly with other Bishnupriya Manipuris scattered all over Assam organized initially with the Bhasa Dabi Divas led by various other movements. The former secretary of the Nikhil Bishnupriya Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, Jagat Mohan, played an impressive role in the language movement demanding the recognition of Bishnupriya Manipuri language in the post 60s and 70s. He was a brave and a dynamic leader and was respected with the title “Sarvashri” given for his dynamic and courageous leadership. Another remarkable community worker and a dedicated worker was Late Sri Dinnanath Singha of Tilakpur, Bangladesh. He worked throughout his life for the betterment of Bishnupriya Manipuri community.

The movement continued from 1961 till 2001, the main events of which can thus be focused. It was on July 2nd 1961 when the Bhasa Parishad chalked out programmes the day being observed
as The Bhasa Davi Divas. On July 25th 1961, the matter of the implementation of Bishnupriya Manipuri was communicated to the Government of Assam, Education Department. After a few years on May 23rd 1966, a deputation of the *Nikhil Bishnupriya Manipuri Bhasa Parishad* met Sree K.K.Sharma, Secretary, State Board of Elementary Education and discussed the necessity of immediate and speedy implementation of Bishnupriya Manipuri language at Assam. On November 1967, the *Bhasa Parishad* started a self operated Census and reviewed the faulty report of the Census of 1961. On May 1968, there was token strike all over the district. There were picketings of schools, colleges and demonstration with aggressive slogans. There were also public meetings and processions and the burning of token of controversial Census of 1961. In the year 1969, there were further picketing and bandhs all over. These ferocious events continued till 1979. When in August 1983 MBMM and BMSU once again submitted memorandum to the Chief Minister of Assam to take immediate action for implementation of Bishnupriya Manipuri language. After a long struggle and continuous efforts through submitting memorandums to the Chief Minister of Assam, the Government of Assam, on October 25th, 1983, in a Cabinet Meeting decided to introduce Bishnupriya Manipuri language at the primary stage of education as a medium of instruction in the districts of Cachar and Karimganj. The language movement is still continued for the fulfillment of their remaining demands. Bishnupriya Manipuri Student Union was formed during a rally for the proper recognition of Bishnupriya language. The brutal Police firing in Gungajhari station of Karimganj caused the death and injury to hundreds of satyagrahis.

All these events attributed to the recognition of the community as “Bishnupriya Manipuris” and ‘Bishnupriya Manipuri language’ as their mother tongue by the Assam Government and later, The Supreme Court of India, also recognized Bishnupriya Manipuri community and their language in a landmark judgment on March 8, 2006. This particular community besides the recognition of the identity of Bishnupriya Manipuri language is still in ways of entailing further provisions for its betterment and development and the movement still continues.

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Tribal Development in Uttarakhand: Problems and Prospects

V. K. Sisodia

Tribes in India constitute the weaker section of Indian Society. Their total population as per 1991 census is 67.76 millions (excluding Jammu and Kashmir, where the census was not held) which is 8.08 per cent of the total population of the country. A majority of them live in a closed system, hence it is a challenging job to draw the tribals out of their shell through better communication and employment opportunities. Tribals are viewed with awe and suspicion and hence an apathy towards them. Due to their backwardness and feeble articulation with larger society around them, they are given a number of special facilities and constitutional safeguards to integrate these tribals in the mainstream of larger society. Attempts have also been made directly or indirectly by government and a number of voluntary organizations to improve the conditions of tribals in the country, but it can be said without much hesitation that the results have not been up to the expectations. “It has been mentioned in a plan document that though substantial benefits have accrued to tribal people over plan periods, the results have not been commensurate with expectations” (Yonus, Khan and Zaheer, 1991: 65).

Though the development is popularly regarded as an economic process, equal emphasis should be placed on the qualitative aspect of human development. Sociologically speaking, development should be looked upon as an organized activity with the aim of satisfying certain basic needs and to psychologically orient the people to adopt new skills, attitudes, and life styles, so that they build up the inner strength and appropriate social and cultural infrastructure to stand the pressure of the new situation and accrue benefits from the new programmes and maintain higher levels. From this point of view, development is a multidimensional process to progressively improve the social, cultural, economic and human conditions of the people (Singh, K.S. 1986: V). Tribal development is an area where some of our sensitive minds have been at work, where many administrators have made an impact, where there has been no dearth of ideas and suggestions for improvement. It is one of the intensively discussed subjects. And yet the overall picture that emerges of the implementation of the accepted tribal policy and of the status of tribal people, of their exploitation or depletion of their resources and of damage to their environment is dismal (Nagla, B.K., 1986: 59). In this context the present paper aims to discuss some of the problems of tribals in Uttarakhand. Attempts have also been made to develop an action plan for the development of these tribes.
Uttarakhand, the 27th state of Indian Union, came into existence on 9 November, 2000 in the name of Uttaranchal which was changed to Uttarakhand on 1 January, 2007. Though as a political unit, the state of Uttarakhand is quite new, but it has long existed as a separate geographical and religious unit in the name of Uttarakhand in the Puranic literature. The state of Uttarakhand lies in the north-western part of the country. Surrounded by Nepal in the east, Tibet in the north, Himancal Pradesh in the west and Uttar Pradesh in the south, the state with a total land area of 53,483 sq. km. lies between 28° 42' and 31° 28' north latitude and 77° 35' and 81° 50' east longitude. From administrative point of view the state comprises 2 divisions namely Garhwal and Kumaun, 13 districts, 42 sub-divisions or tehsils and 95 development blocks. The state is predominantly a hill state as except two districts of Haridwar and Udham Singh Nagar, the remaining eleven districts lies in the sub-Himalayan or the Himalayan region.

As far as the tribal population in Uttarakhand is concerned, the five tribes of Uttarakhand namely Bhotia, Raji, Jaunsari, Tharu and Buxa were scheduled by a Presidential order in June 1967 i.e. full 20 years after independence. As per 1981 census the tribal population of Uttarakhand (then Hills of Uttar Pradesh) was 1,96,260 which role to 2,49,427 in 1991 thus registering a decadal growth rate of 27.09 per cent. It constitute 3.54 per cent of the state’s total population (cf. Table: 1). As a matter of fact the tribal population in Uttarakhand, though small in size, occupies an important position i.e. the affairs of the state due to their habitat being adjacent to our international border, their vital contribution to forest economy, their role in ecology and their rich cultural heritage.

Among these five tribes Tharus are most numerous (47.54 %) followed by Jaunsari (26.04 %), Buxa (16.85 %), Bhotia (9.38%) and Raji with only 0.19 % constitute the smallest tribal group in the state (cf. Table: 2).

The tribes in Uttarakhand live in two well defined geographic regions i.e. Hilly region and Tarai-Bhawar region. The Jaunsari, Bhotia and Raji tribes live in the mountainous region forming

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>S.T. Population</th>
<th>%to Total Population</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uttarkashi</td>
<td>2,39,709</td>
<td>2,300</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camoli</td>
<td>4,54,871</td>
<td>10,273</td>
<td>2.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dehradun</td>
<td>10,25,679</td>
<td>84,076</td>
<td>8.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pauri Garhwal</td>
<td>6,82,535</td>
<td>1,502</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tehri Garhwal</td>
<td>5,80,153</td>
<td>615</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pithoragarh</td>
<td>5,66,408</td>
<td>18,313</td>
<td>3.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almora</td>
<td>8,36,617</td>
<td>2,739</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nainital</td>
<td>15,40,174</td>
<td>90,020</td>
<td>5.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>59,26,146</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,09838</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.54</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: District of Rudraprayag, Bageshwer, Champawat and Udham Singh Nagar were Not in existence in 1991.

Source: Census of India 1991 : Series I Paper I Volume II.
part of the great Himalayas at altitude ranging between 1500 feet to 6000 feet. The Jaunsaris, well
known the sociological and anthropological literature for their practice of fraternal polyandry, live
in an exclusive area i.e. Chakrata Tehsil of district Dehradun which is known as Jaunsar Bhawar.
“These polyandrous people called Jaunsaris on scheduling are as a matter of fact not a homogenous
tribal group. The Jaunsaris represent three main classes, namely the Khasas (The Rajputs and the
Brahmins) at the top, the artisan classes, such as Lohar, Badi, Ode and Bajgi forming the middle
tier and the Harijans like the Auji, Dom, Koli, Koi and Kolta constituting the third and bottom tier
of hierarchy” (Singh, K.S. 1986: IV-V).

Bhotias are found in the four hill districts of Uttarakhand along the Indo-Tibet border i.e.
Almora, Pithoragarh, Chamoli and Uttarkashi. “Locally the Bhotias in these four districts are
known by different names such as Shouka and Johari in Pithoragarh and Almora, Marcha and
Tolcha in Chamoli and lak in Uttarkashi. However due to lack of frequent contacts and
communication these four territorial groups of Bhotias have developed as endogamous groups”
(Hasan, Amir 1992: ) 5Not long ago these Bhotias were seasonal nomads. However many Bhotias
of Pithoragarh, Chamoli and Uttarkashi still migrate to Malla Dharma and Beyas in Pithoragarh,
Mana in Chamoli and Bagori in Uttarkashi in summers and come down to areas of lower altitudes
in the winter season. The Raji, the smallest tribe among the Uttarakhand tribes occur only in nine
villages in an area of about 200 square kilometers in Pithoragarh district. They are the most backward
among all the tribes in this state. Tharus are mainly concentrated in the Tarai region of Nainital and
Udham Singh Nagar. The Buxa occur both in Tarai and Bhawar regions in the districts of Nainital,
Udham Singh Nagar, Puri Garhwal, Haridwar and Dehradun.

Problems of Scheduled Tribes

Planned efforts for the development of tribals have not made much visible impact. Despite
the constitutional safeguards and special measures initiated to accelerate the pace of development
in tribal areas, they continue to suffer from poverty, illiteracy, exploitation and social degradation
(Sisodia, Asha, 1982). Development is a long-drawn process but its success depends primarily on
a proper appreciation of the problems. The problems of the scheduled tribes trough uniform to

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bhotia</td>
<td>34,144</td>
<td>18.54</td>
<td>9,184</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>23,410</td>
<td>9.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buxa</td>
<td>23,317</td>
<td>12.67</td>
<td>34,195</td>
<td>17.42</td>
<td>42,027</td>
<td>16.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tharu</td>
<td>67,944</td>
<td>36.94</td>
<td>88,554</td>
<td>45.27</td>
<td>1,18,558</td>
<td>47.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raji</td>
<td>1,918</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaunsari</td>
<td>56,699</td>
<td>30.84</td>
<td>63,710</td>
<td>32.46</td>
<td>64,938</td>
<td>26.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1,84,072</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>1,96,260</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>2,49,427</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Tharus are found all along the Tarai in the district of Gonda, Bahrich and Lakhimpur of UP. so the district wise and tribe wise population figures differ.
certain extent throughout India have their own characteristics in different parts of the country due to varied ecological and demographic situations and historical traditions. Some of the common problems faced by almost all the tribal population in the country are low level of literacy, indifferent attitude towards formal education, lack of proper and adequate medical facilities, isolation and lack of communication, poverty and exploitation by money-lenders and middlemen etc. Apart from these general problems each tribal group has its intrinsic problems associated with their ecology and environment. A detailed analysis of problems faced by the different tribes in the Uttarakhand is presented below:

1. Illiteracy

Sociologically literacy is one of the most important instrument of social change and development in human society as it brings consciousness and awareness among the people in society, makes changes in norms, customs and traditional ways of life in social environment. Socio-economic and cultural changes occurring in the society, may be directly and/or indirectly be attributed to the impact of rising level of literacy (T. Lakshmaiah 1992: 143). So there is no denying the fact that education whether formal or informal is particularly and essentially needed for the tribal community for various reasons, as for example, it provides for social mobility, it promotes occupation mobility. It enables these communities to adopt new innovations and acquisition of new skills needed for their development.

Among Uttarakhand tribes, when compared with the general population in the state, they have a very low literacy level. The total literacy among the tribes of Uttarakhand was 20.45 per cent in 1981 which role to 37.70 per cent in 1991 where as these figures for the state as a whole were 46.06 per cent and 57.75 per cent respectively for the year 1981 and 1991. The situation is more grave among females as in 1991 against 49.95 per cent males only 19.86 per cent females were literate (cf. Table: 3).

It is worthwhile to mention that the Government, in fact, is constitutionally committed to provide additional facilities to these tribal communities with regard to education and employment. As a result of this commitment schools have started coming up in such areas but in remote tribal areas attendance in school is still very poor. The population in such areas is still to appreciate the value of formal education. As a result of indifferent attitude towards formal education they still prefer to utilize their children to help in agricultural operations, collecting firewood from forest and graze the cattle. The girls of school going age, in particular, look after their younger siblings and carry out petty domestic jobs in the absence of their mother and other elder members in the family who are away in the fields or forests.

2. Poverty and Indebtedness

The scheduled tribes are acknowledged to be the poorest among the poor groups in India.

### Table: 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>31.22</td>
<td>08.69</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>49.95</td>
<td>19.86</td>
<td>35.70</td>
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</table>
According to the working group on the development of scheduled tribes during the \(i^{th}\) five year plan, nearly 4.25 crores i.e. 85.00 per cent of their total population belonged to the category below poverty line (Ram, R.B. and Urmila Kumar 1991: 151). Agriculture is the main axis of economic activities of tribal population (except Bhotias who along with agriculture are engaged in manufacturing and marketing of woolen handicrafts) in the state. Agriculture happens to be the main stay of these tribal people not because it is remunerative or developed but because the other sectors of economy are totally absent in these tribal areas. Due to small land holdings, poor quality of land (except in the Tarai region) associated with traditional cultivation pattern and lack of irrigation facilities, the return from the land does not fully justify the labour put in the fields. Thus, the uneconomic small land holding and low production from agriculture are the main causes of poverty of the tribal population in the state.

As a result of wide spread poverty, the incidence of indebtedness are very high among the tribals of Uttarakhand. Although Government has formulated and implemented a number of poverty alleviation programmes for these tribal people but they have not been fully successful in achieving their goals. The only comment about these programmes can be made is “poor are the tribals, rich are their protectors. The more the plans, the more the tribals are moving from poverty to absolute pauperism”. The various schemes of cooperative credit and other form of institutional finance have not been able to mitigate their problem of indebtedness among these tribals. It has been reported that 90.90 per cent of the Kolta families of Jaunsar Bawar were indebted and also bonded. 85.90 per cent of Raji tribals living in Pithoragarh were suffering from the burden of debt (Government of India 1984). Incidence of debt among the Buxa was as high as 85.00 per cent (Sisodia, V.K. and Asha Sisodia, 1986: 116). Even among the land holding Tharus 1/3 families were found indebted to private money lenders, businessmen and big farmers.

One of the significant features of tribal indebtedness in the state is that most of the tribal families are indebted to private moneylenders, businessmen, farmers and contractors. The contribution of institutional financing (banks or cooperative societies) is decidedly low. Tribal indebtedness provides a powerful weapon in the hands of exploiters, who exploit these poor tribals in all possible ways. D.P. Government enacted two legislations to eliminate private money lending namely, Uttar Pradesh Moneylenders Act 1976 and Uttar Pradesh Debt Relief Act 19778, but in the absence of any proper publicity these laws are only on papers.

During 1976-77 a large number of LAMPS (Large Size Multipurpose Cooperative Societies) were organized in the tribal areas of U.P. hills. Commenting on the efficacy of these LAMPS, Tribal Sub-Plan for 1991-92 mentions, “The LAMPS have not yet succeeded in their triple objectives of providing credit, purchase of surplus agricultural and minor forest produce and supply of essential commodities to the tribals. The LAMPS have only been able to provide credit to the tribals on a limited extent. As a matter of fact, most of the LAMPS are dormant.” Regarding the role of nationalized banks, the same document aptly observes, “the role of institutional financing institutions In providing loans to the tribals has been almost negligible”. It further shows that even in the implementation of IRD schemes, the bank’ contribution has been unsatisfactory.

3. Land Alienation

Though by law the sale of land of tribals to non-tribals is prohibited, large tracts of land belonging to the tribals have been alienated in the state. The main tribal area where the problem of
land alienation has assumed an ugly dimension is the Tarai of Nainital and areas in district Udham Singh Nagar and unfortunately, this situation has been created by the State Government’s Policy of normalization. The tribal areas specially the habitat of Tharus and Buxas was developed in the late forties to settle refugees from Pakistan and certain other categories of persons on government estate land.

Later a large number of adventurers, tough guys and other unscrupulous outsiders entered the area and occupied government and trial land by hook or by crook for large scale farming. Later they also forcibly occupied tribal land specially those belonging to Buxas on a large scale. As these tribals were shy and peaceful, instead of putting up any resistance, many retreated in the interior and several of them even took shelter in Nepal. In course of time these trespassers have become prosperous and have gained political clout. No wonder, the tribals have become second grade citizen in their own homeland. Amir Hasan in a study during 1970-74 found 22 per cent of the Buxa population was affected by land alienation (Tribal Research Centre 1992) these figures have risen to 98 per cent by the year 2000. On an average 17 acres of land per family has been grabbed by the other communities at the negligible Cost (R.E.S.M.O). The improved transport and communication system in the Tarai area has helped mostly non-tribals to enter interior areas and exploit the tribals. The alienation of tribal land is an on going process.

Suggestions

After the formation of new state like all other people, the tribal population of Uttarakhand is also expecting a more regionally oriented and humane approach to their development. In the light of the above discussion on the problems faced by the tribal population in the way of their development, a few suggestions are made to mitigate the intensity of tribal problems and accelerate the process of development in the tribal areas of Uttarakhand:

1. There are about 18 Government departments engaged in implementing different schemes for tribal upliftment and development. However, these departments do not work in consultation with one another while implementing tribal welfare schemes, resulting in overlapping and duplication of efforts. This lack of cooperation and coordination results in wastage of efforts as well as of scarce resources. There is a need to establish a single line of command, organic integration of programmes in the field and effective delegation of powers to the project authorities.

2. There is a serious problem of under-utilization and misutilisation of funds available for various developmental schemes or programmes for the welfare and development of tribal population. The state government, which is required to the administrative expenditure of different projects, could not release grants many a times and generally, it is not released in time. The result is the diversion of funds available for development purpose towards meeting the requirements of administrative machinery. Therefore the State Government must release the administrative grants to avoid the diversion of developmental funds to administrative and other purposes.

3. Labour intensive and income generating schemes - small scale, cottage and handicraft industries - should be started and encouraged to divert manpower from agriculture to other occupations. Forest based industries should be specially encouraged.

4. There is an urgent need to wipe out the widespread illiteracy in the tribal areas. For this
purpose massive literacy drive and adult education programmes should be undertaken. Special emphasis should be given to the education of females. Unemployed educated youth can be used for this purpose by giving them proper training and adequate honorarium.

5. Working conditions of existing schools be improved by providing basic infrastructure and facilities. Teachers - having a sympathetic attitude towards tribal problems, having interest in their culture and a working knowledge of tribal dialect - should be appointed in these schools. Priorities should be given to recruitment of teachers from amongst the local tribals.

6. Tribal villages should be adopted by universities and colleges through National Service Scheme (N.S.S.). A clear cut plan of action should be drawn in consultation with villagers and universities and executed by the educated youth to achieve concrete results. This will not only help in the development of the area but will bridge the gap between the tribal, rural and urban communities.

7. Existing medical facilities should be updated by making the Primary Health Centre will equipped with medicines and other necessary facilities. More importance should be given to MCH, nutrition, environmental sanitation and health education along with family welfare programmes. The presence of medical and para-medical staff should be ascertained by tackling the problem of absenteeism more effectively.

8. To save the tribals from the clutches of moneylenders and middlemen adequate measures should be taken to strengthen the facilities of institutional finance. Loan procedures should be simplified and availability of all categories of loans from a single credit institution should be ensured. Stress should be laid on training the tribals in organizing tribal co-operatives to save them from the vicious circle of poverty and indebtedness.

9. To identify the various problems faced by different tribal groups in the state continuous research in tribal life, culture, their social customs and practices, and problems etc. should be undertaken. For this purpose various research organizations, NGOs and universities etc. should be taken into confidence and encouraged to take up more research in the tribal field and they should be provided financial and other relevant facilities for it.

10. In order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the various developmental and welfare schemes the concurrent evaluation and impact assessment of these schemes is of paramount importance. This evaluation and impact assessment should be entrusted to some autonomous bodies such as universities.

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Right to Information: A Step towards Information Society in India

Virendra. Pal Singh

In a broad sense the content (messages) of all meaningful communication is information. More narrowly (but still loosely), information refers to verifiable and thus reliable factual data about the ‘real world’. This includes opinions as well as reports about the facts of the world. Even more narrowly and precisely, information may be equated with communicated ‘data’ that do (or can) enable discriminations to be made in some domain of reality and thus ‘reduce uncertainty’ for the receiver (Mc Quail 2000:497). The flow and nature of information varies with the form of society. In a primitive society the information is shared equally with the members of the society by informal ways of communication. The flow of information is very smooth and the information is transmitted through interpersonal communication i.e. through the ‘word of mouth’. There are no specialized institutions and communicators in the process of communication. With the development of society, the nature of communication also undergoes through the process of change and gradually society becomes more differentiated and the specialized institutions perform different functions of society. The form of communication is also changed as it is now mediated through some sort of technology for the group of the people through some technical devices. The access of the people to these devices varies to different sections of the society and thus smoothness in the flow of information is disrupted to a great extent. In modern society, first developed in Europe and then spread over to the rest of the world in the form of nation states, the nature and flow of information is relatively smooth as the traditional and modern mass media are well integrated (Pye 1963). In transitional communication system, however, the flow of information is disrupted due to lack of integration among the traditional and modern media of mass communication. The unequal distribution of the information poses different kind of problems in this type of society. In modern society, modern mass media also change with the pace and level of development and gradually new forms and institutions of communication emerge on the scenario.

The contemporary societies, both the developed and underdeveloped are now passing through the processes of change. Globalization is the central driving force behind the major economic, cultural, social and political changes that are affecting virtually all the world’s people today. Globalization is seen as the overall consequences of closely inter-linked processes of change in the areas of technology, economic activity, governance, communication and so on (Giddens 1999). Developments in all these areas are mutually reinforcing or reflexive, so that no clear distinction.
can be drawn between cause and effect. A specific set of the commentators of globalization, called popularly, transformationalists regard contemporary patterns of cross-border flows (of trade, investment, migrants, cultural artifacts, environmental factors, etc.) as without historical precedent. Such flows integrate virtually all countries into a larger global system, and thus bring about major social transformations at all levels (Castles). Thus, the process of globalization is not confined to economic and political concerns of these societies, its impact can also be felt in the field of mass media communication and other social and cultural institutions of the society.

At the conceptual level, there are three different viewpoints about these changes in the form of society, particularly in the west.

First theoretical construct has been to conceptualize these changes in the form of postmodern society (Bauman 1989, 1991; Baudrillard 1988a, 1988b; Vattimo 1992). The postmodern society, which is essentially consumer society, is further unfolded by Vattimo (1992) who sees the mass media as pivotal to the new social order. For him the term ‘postmodern’ has a definite meaning: it refers to a society of ‘generalized communication’, carried through the electronic media. Modernity, according to Vattimo, was ideological in a very important sense. For the characteristic views associated with modernity, including especially the idea of historical progress, helped justify the domination of the West over the rest of the world. Vattimo (1999) sees the advent of postmodernity in a positive vein. The mass media today introduce us to a dizzying variety of images, cultures and voices. They produce a sort of ‘chaos’, as everything becomes visible or ‘transparent’; yet this chaos is itself a potential means of enlightenment. In this newly emerging order we can still sustain the ideal of emancipation. Emancipation today, however, does not consist in having knowledge of reality and conforming to it. Rather, we make our own ‘realities’ in the plural worlds which we invented.

Second set of authors (Castle 1989; Poster 1990) see a break in the form of society and conceptualizes a new form of society, namely, the information society, characterized by the information technologies, the economic worth of communication, the increase in in information occupations, the spread of information networks or simply the obviousness of an explosive growth in signs and signification. Subscribers to the notion of information society quantify some or other of these indicators and then claim (without justification) that these quantifiable elements signal a qualitative transformation- the emergence of an ‘information society’ (Webster 1995:219).

Third set of authors, especially Schillar (1981, 1984, 1989), Habermas (1989) and Giddens (1985, 1987) are altogether agreed on the salient features of information domain. Schillars focus is on the imperatives imposed by capitalism. While Habermas is concerned with the requisites of democratic debate. Anthony Giddens (1985) emphasizes on ways which in which the state especially, and particularly in its military and citizenship dimensions, influences the collection and use of information particularly for surveillance purpose and blocks the free dissemination of the information among the masses.

But the new communication technologies, particularly computer mediated internet is at the heart of the changes taking place in the globalizing world today and transforming every walk of our life. The trends emerging on the scenario indicate a shift in the controlling and surveillance capacity of the weakening nation states and therefore demand free flow of information for the transparency in the governance. The ‘Right to Information’ Act introduced in 2005 in India must be seen in this context. It is, in fact, a tool to facilitate the global governance in which information
of all kinds will be most central driving force or source of productive power as much and material and cultural life will depend more and more on the production, handling and application of information and on the operation of complex networks of communication. The information and communication technology sector appears to have become the chief source of wealth in more economically advanced societies, namely information societies. Thus, ‘Right to Information’ Act must be viewed in this perspective and may be considered as one step forward towards the advent of Information Society in India.

Note: The paper is a revised version of a paper presented at a National Seminar on Right to Information: Problems and Prospects, Department of Mass Communication, Assam University, Silchar and Press Information Bureau, Govt. of India, Guwahati, Assam University, Silchar, May 8, 2007.

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National Workshop for Young Social Scientists
Guwahati, September 8-9, 2007

A two days workshop for Young social scientists was organized by Indian Sociological Society, New Delhi and RGNIYD, Sriperumbudur on 8th and 9th September 2007 at NIRD, NERC, Guwahati. The main theme of the workshop was “Sociology of Social Backwardness in India”. The delegates were welcomed by Prof. Anand Kumar Secretary, Indian Sociological Society, New Delhi. Prof. P. K. B. Nayar President Indian Sociological Society in his presidential address discussed the importance of the workshop for the young social scientists of North eastern region of the country and emphasized on the upgradation of skills and professional competency among the young social scientists of the north east region. Inaugurating the workshop Shri S. T. Sailo Deputy Director General, Prasar Bharti, North Eastern Region, Guwahati emphasized on the role of young social scientists in the development of the region and appealed to come forward for the development of the region. Dr. A. Radhakrishnan Nair Faculty Head, RGNIYD introduced the aims and objectives of the workshop. In his keynote address Prof. M. N. Karna Retired Professor, NEHU discussed the trends of sociological researches in north east India and pointed out on the complexity of the sociological issues in understanding the north eastern societies. The vote of thanks for inaugural session was proposed by Dr. V. P. Singh Reader, Department of Sociology, Assam University, Silchar and Director of the workshop.

The First Symposium of the workshop was on the theme “Social Backwardness of North East India” was chaired by Prof. Anand Kumar (JNU New Delhi). Speaking on the theme Prof. Rajesh Misra (University of Lucknow) pointed out that there are some similarities in the backwardness of the North East and Uttarakhand due to similar topographical and socio-economic conditions in both of the regions. He used the concept of new middle class for the understanding of the problem social backwardness in India as it is growing even among dalits in India. The growth of new middle class in north eastern region needs special attention of social scientists in North Eastern region. However, Dr. V. P. Singh, pointed out that the nature of social backwardness in the north eastern region is very different from the backwardness of the people in the rest of the country. It is because of the specific features of the region which makes it a different social entity. The social backwardness of the north east is because of the lack of the infrastructures and underdeveloped economy of the region rather than the social stigma like untouchability etc. as found in other parts of the country. The whole region presents a challenge to the social scientists as the social reality prevailing in the region is of very complex nature. The existing conceptual tools namely, caste, tribe and class are not applicable for grasping the social reality of the region. The formation of ethnic identity of different social groups in the region can be understood only by applying historical approach for the study of social processes in the region. The symposium was presided over by Professor Anand Kumar (JNU, New Delhi).

First Technical Session of the workshop was on the theme “Marginalisation of Dalit and Tribals in India”. The session was chaired by Prof. Rajesh Misra (Lucknow University) and Dr. G. P. Pandey (Assam University). Five papers were presented in this session by Nisha Nelson, Kranthi Kumar, Vinit Kumar Pandey, Alka Arya and Sachindra Kumar Singh. Second Technical Session of the workshop was on the theme “Social Backwardness among Dalit and Tribal Women” was chaired by Prof. Parvez A. Abbasi (VNSG University, Surat). In this session nine papers were presented by Amar Pal Singh, Anvesh, Sarada P. Das, Pushpam M., Km. Anamika, Phirmi Bodo, Surabh Diwedi and Indu Pandey.

The second day of the workshop began with the second symposium on the theme “Developmental Problems in North East India”. Prof. J. J. Kattakayam chairman of the symposium in his opening
remarks highlighted the issues of conflict among the tribals in general and the north east in particular. Prof. Monirul Hussain (Gauhati University) points out that he does not subscribe to stereotypes of backwardness/forwardness and center/periphery dichotomies in context of northeast. In his view, there are some problems with the notion of the mainstream. Therefore, he prefers the idea of multiple streams as the so-called mainstream is characterized by a number of social problems such as caste violence, gender disparity, dowry etc., which are unacceptable to the people of the north east. The trajectory of ethnic movements and their violent manifestation in north east is highly undesirable for the overall development of the region. Instead, he advocates for multi-cultural approach to understand diversity of the region. Prof. Nikhilesh Kumar (NEHU) focuses on the problems of Hill tribes in the North East India. Development to him is un-spontaneous planned change, which is value loaded. Economists address the issue of development in terms of growth without human elements, which a sociologist seeks to incorporate. The non-economic factors are necessary. He insists that the heterogeneity of the society should have been taken into account. Dr. Chandan Sarmah (Tezpur University) disparates political issues in addressing development issues and looks at it transcending disciplinary boundaries. The term development is value loaded. Despite declaring an understanding of the heterogeneity of the region, development projects are homogenous. North east as a region is profoundly influenced by the perspective of the nation state. Dr. Sunil Kumar Saikia (IIE) provides expresses his concerns about unemployment as a major problem in the region. The major problems according to him are lack of awareness among the people, limited infrastructures in the region, law and order situation. Multiplicity in state policy is also a major cause of the lack of value addition in north east India. Prof. Nikhilesh Kumar chaired the Technical Session III of the workshop. Debi Prasad Halder, M. Kennedy Singh, K. Ibotombi Singh, Kedilezo Kikhi and A. K. Das discussed various issues regarding social backwardness in North East India and a neighbouring state. Technical Session IV of the workshop was chaired by Prof. Rajesh Misra and Dr. Chandan Sarmah. In this session eleven papers were presented by Bidyut Deb Choudhury, Mithun Roy, Aparna Sinha, Kh. Sanjeev Kumar Singh, Mrinalini Sinha, Ganesh Pradhan, Chumbeno Ngulli, C. Devendran, Dadul Bora, Surendra Kumar Upadhyay and Anwar Hussain Laskar.

The valedictory session started with a note from the chairman Prof. P. K. B. Nayar who expressed his happiness on the grand success of the workshop and emphasized on the need of organization of many more such workshops in near future. He also expressed his happiness on the formation of North Eastern Sociological Society (NESS) at this occasion. Delivering the Valedictory Address Prof. N. Upadhyay, Director, NIRD, NERC, Guwahati deliberated on various dimensions of rural development in north east and pointed out that north east is not socially backward but in fact more forward than the so called mainland. He emphasized on the need of more and more involvement of social scientists in studying the diverse aspects of socio-cultural life of north eastern region. In all 30 papers were presented and 72 delegates from different parts of the country participated in the workshop. At the end of the workshop, Dr. V. P. Singh proposed the vote of thanks to the resource persons, delegates, media persons, Indian Sociological Society, New Delhi, RGNIYD, Sripurumbudur, ICSSR, NERC, Shillong, Mrs. Roopa Rani T. S. for acting as anchor of the workshop and Rapporteurs of technical sessions, namely, Mrs. Roopa Rani T. S., Miss. Deepthi, S., Mrs. Sarah Hilaly, Dr. Rabin Deka, Mrs. and all those who helped him in the organization of the workshop.

- Roopa Rani T. S.  
Department of Education  
Assam University, Silchar
Book Review


Information technology has currently been the pulse of the ‘Knowledge based economy’ in developing countries like India. With the emergence of new economy, the working environment in the developing nations has considerably changed a few sectors. Women employment in these new economic sectors is under intense discussion in the academia. Are these new sectors conditioned by gender neutrality? Is there an emerging new identity of women in these new sectors? These questions were attempted to be answered in the 6th International Conference of Women into Computing (WIC) which took place between 14th and 16th July 2005 at University of Greenwich, London, UK.

This book presents a collection of selected papers presented at the conference highlighting the global participation and some of the key issues on gender politics of ICT. The focus is completely on exploring the different ‘gendered ways’, computer and communication technologies are conceptualised, developed, and used both in the private and public spheres. The book has four major sections and the topics covered range from women’s computing education to employment in the ICT industries and the way women create and use computing technologies.

The first two sections concentrate on the theme ‘Gender Politics’, and ‘Exploiting Technology’. The thirds section presents articles on ‘Education: Context and Content’ while the last revolves around the theme of ‘Employment’. The articles under these sections address topics such as feminist approaches to using, teaching and creating ICT, women’s experiences with large scale software applications and with computer mediated communications; gendered software agents, regional and cultural differences in women’s uses of ICT. The argument made by scholars in the articles is relevant to today’s technological debates. Most papers draw experiences of women in their work places and the experiences they encountered while pursuing their education. Topics like ‘persistent under representation’ of women in the IT professions, ‘gendered occupational cultures’ etc are dealt in detail.

The book reflects contemporary progressive political thinking and challenges the stereotypical and deterministic approaches to the development and use of ICT. It demonstrates how individual and collective experiences play an important role in shaping the social perceptions of women and ICT. However, the major drawback of the book was the absence of Indian experience while contextualising the issues and discussions. Most of the contributors were from the developed nations and hence relied on the western experience for their arguments. There was only one paper on Asian context which focussed on Japanese female workers which was not significant to represent the Asian social milieu in general and Indian situation in particular.

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North Eastern Sociological Society (NESS)
Silchar-788011

Objectives
a) To pursue and promote the study of sociology and sociological problems in North East India; b) To disseminate knowledge through lectures, publications and such other means bearing on social and sociological problems in North East India; c) To conduct and publish a journal called North Eastern Sociological Review, not less than one issue per year; d) To publish brochures and books to achieve the above ends; e) To hold conferences, seminars, symposia and workshops or other activities in furtherance of the above objects; f) To associate with other organizations having similar objectives for the achievement of the above objectives.

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There shall be four classes of members:

i) All those persons who were present in the meeting of the formation Committee held on 8th September 2007 at NIRD, NERC, Guwahati shall be the Foundation Member if they have minimum educational qualification (P. G. degree in the relevant subject specify in (ii) and give thier consent in writing to be so to the convenor along with an amount of Rs. 1000/- by M. O./cash/through a demand draft in favour of “Dr. V. P. Singh” or through online transfer in his account no. 10521289143 at SBI, NIT, Silchar.

ii) A person holding a P. G. degree in any of the social sciences (sociology, political science, education, psychology, history, economics, anthropology, social work) or in any applied branch of sociology (like mass communication and jounalism, MBA, Law, rural development etc.) and paying Rs. 1000/- in one sum may be admitted as a life member, provided two third of the members of the Managing Committee uphold his or her application. A person residing abroad (outside of the SAARC countries) will have to pay US$ 150 or equivalent in Indian rupees.

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