Sociology in South Asia. Heritage and Challenges, edited by Partha Mukherji, Jacop Aikara and Chandan Sengupta. Proceedings of the ISA Regional Conference for South Asia, Mumbai, India, March 25-27, 1997, 90 pp.

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As we come to the end of this century, sociology in South Asia faces challenges of going beyond its heritage. What was this heritage? To a large extent this heritage was linked to its place and space as a system of knowledge that could and would analyse the processes of change that were initiated by the elites who took power after the demise of colonialism, who experimented with new forms of representative political systems and who initiated the project of state sponsored economic development.

On one hand, sociologists of South Asia, by and large accepted the contemporary idea of economic development as a motor of all change and on the other, they expressed a concern over its impact on received social patterns, relationships and structures. Research was tailored to understand continuities or appraise emerging conflicts or sometimes even to question some of the aspects that defined state sponsored change. It is in this context that the sociological map was constructed.

In this map, certain concepts got linked together in a format which was considered enduring and fixed. For instance, it was assumed that nation and nationhood can be realised only through nation-state: that change is best when it is state sponsored, that economic development generally implies cultural and social development, that it has to be pursued through uniform and standardised agendas: that macro institutions are best suited to realise this agenda: and that if everyone believes in development, in science and technology and thus in rationality than the countries of South Asia would achieve modernity, be developed and be comparable to other nations and/or nation states of the world.

The book under the review has got together some of South Asia's most prominent sociologists to collectively reflect on these agendas. These papers can be divided into two sets. The first analyse the above mentioned through the frame of their received models. Partha Mukerji examines the history of the concept of nation and its tension with a similiar concept, ethnicity in the context of contemporary developments where ethnicity has confronted nation and nation-state; S.T. Hettige explores the contemporary ethnic confrontations in Shri Lanka and suggests that social and cultural practices of the modernisation project worked to reinforce primordial identities rather than dissolve them as visualised earlier by Shri Lanka's nation-builders: T.K.Oomen has inquired into the future of the crisis ridden state and civil society institutions in contemporary South Asia in conjunction with five dilemmas, all of which have been historically received: Satish Saberwal analyses the problems in building values that sustain political parties (given that the political system and its legitimacy is intrinsic for development) and evaluates the reasons for the relative absence of trust for

constructing large scale political organisations in India.

The second set of papers attempt to think through contemporary processes and through this examination explicitly interrogate received conceptual frames. S.S.R. de Jayatilaka studies gender in context to the structures of inequality in Shri Lanka and asks why sociological knowledge has not questioned the gender dimension nor has read other forms of inequities through a gender perspective: while S. Akbar Zaidi suggests that the experiment of the elite to divest the development role from the state and pass it on to Non-Government Organisations(NGOs) has not been a success; the reasons being that NGOs are donor driven, they are more urban middle class oriented and are not encouraging both participatory and democratic functioning. His solution is to "bring back the state in", in a new from. Lastly M. Asaduzzaman reflects anew on the role of the social scientist and social science in the development process through an examination of development projects in Bangladesh and asks sociologists to take leadership roles in forming both new research agendas and as well as intervene in policy issues.

It is clear from the above that sociologists in South Asia are attempting to move beyond the assumed frame that have set the terms of their discussions and defined their research agendas. To what extent has there been a paradigm shift? In the Introduction to these papers, Partha Mukherji outlines the three issues that characterise the contemporary crisis in sociology. These are (a) the universal applicability of concepts, theories and methodologies, (b) the positive-normative methodological aspects of analysis of complex social systems and (c) problem oriented theoretical research vis-a-vis solution oriented applied research. All these issues are related to the larger question of the role of sociology in the modern world and differentiating sociological concerns in South Asia from those that determine the global and more specific the agendas of the North.

Sociology in South Asia is caught into these questions, maybe even trapped into them unlike some other social sciences which have developed theoretical frames to move out of the received paradigmatic and institutional frames, for example, as is the case, today, of the discipline of history. The paradigm crisis in case of sociology has coincided with a crisis in higher education and of University education. Issues of pedagogy, the learning process, the quality of curriculum, infrastructure, financial autonomy have got entangled with "what to study" and "how to study". These issues simultaneously also ask why we are studying what we are studying.

Given the epistemic nature of the problem, the challenges before sociology in South Asia seem awesome. And paradoxically these are bound and embedded in the very institutions that had encouraged its formation and defined its conceptual map: the institutions of the nation state which had advocated the ideology of development, of macro level agendas, of uniform and standardised practises of policy implementation. In context of shifting boundaries, of institutional decay, of an elite loosing interest in the production and reproduction of knowledge around the "social", can sociologists carve out an agenda for

themselves? These set of papers are one of the many such conference proceedings which will help us to understand and transform this heritage in order to redefine challenges.

ISA REGIONAL CONFERENCES

Sociology in South Asia
Heritage and Challenges

Editors: Partha Mukherji
Jacop Aikara
Chandan Sengupta

Proceedings of the ISA Regional
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INTERNATIONAL SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DE SOCIOLOGIE
ASOCIACIÓN INTERNACIONAL DE SOCIOLOGÍA

PRE-CONGRESS VOLUMES
SOCIAL KNOWLEDGE:
HERITAGE, CHALLENGE, PERSPECTIVES

GENERAL EDITOR: MARÍA-LUZ MORÁN

The Pre-Congress Colloquia are intended to prepare the discussion at the XIVth World Congress of Sociology (1998) on its theme" Social Knowledge, Heritage, Challenges, and Perspectives". The International Sociological Association sponsored, in conjunction with local associations, ten regional colloquia in ten different regions of the world. These volumes are the edited, and sometimes abbreviated, versions of the papers given at these colloquia. In addition, ISA commissioned an eleventh, worldwide volume, of essays written from a feminist perspective. After the volumes were prepared, ISA convened an "integration" colloquium in which the editors of the eleven volumes discussed with each other the findings on a series of major themes. These discussions were filmed and exist in form of four video-cassettes.

The object of this collection of volumes and cassettes is not to present the state of knowlede in a region (or of feminist studies) but the state of social knowledge throughout the world from a regional or feminist perspective. ISA hopes thereby to underline the fact that, however general the propositions we hope to put forth, they often tend to come out differently when the social contexts within which the authors write are different. We hope that these differences (and of course the similarities that we may find despite the different perspectives) may be a starting-point for our collective effort to look at our heritage, at the contemporary challenges that are being made to the heritage, and the possible paths that may be taken by the social sciences in the twenty-first century.

Immanuel Wallerstein
President, ISA.

LIST OF VOLUMES

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FOREWORD

This volume is the outcome of the "South Asian Regional Conference: Future of Sociology in South Asia" held during 25-27 March 1997 at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India. It was one of the series of ten regional conferences organised at the instance of the International Sociological Association as a lead-up to the fourteenth World Congress of Sociology being held at Montreal, Canada in 1998.

The countries that were identified for participating in this regional conference have been those belonging to the SAARC (South Asian Association of Regional Co-operation), viz. Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Srilanka. We are a little disappointed that in spite of our concerted efforts we could not get a paper or a scholar from two of the seven SAARC countries (Maldives and Bhutan) for representation in the conference.

Funds for organising this conference were provided by the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust (Mumbai) and the Sri Ratan Tata Trust (Mumbai). We record our sincere gratitude to both the Tata Trusts for their good will and financial support.

The steering committee for organising this conference decided to have the future of Sociology in South Asia as the central theme of the conference. In other words, the conference was to discuss the challenges that Sociology has to face, the issues that Sociology has to address itself to, the perspective with which Sociology has to view these issues and the thrust areas on which professional activities of Sociologists have to concentrate in South Asia. Under this general theme the steering committee for organising the conference identified the sub-themes for discussion and deliberation in the conference. The main sub-themes of the conference were nation building, institution building, inequality and development. They have been selected as the major concerns of Sociology in South Asia. All the South Asian countries have been engages in a continous process of nation building, institution building and development or modernisation. The issue of inequality, particularly of gender, has been perceived as a critical social context of the above processes in the South Asian societies. This volume contains mainly the papers on the above sub-themes presented in the conference for discussion.

The introductory chapter on the overview of the situation of Sociology in South Asia presents the theoretical context for the discussion of the themes of the conference. The next two chapters by Partha Nath Mukherji of India and S.T. Hettige of Srilanka deal with the process and problems of nation building in essentially multi-ethnic countries of the region. An equally important process of

modernisation is discussed by T.K. Oommen (India) and Satish Saberwal (India) in the fourth and fifth chapters, viz. Institution building. They have brought out the dilemmas faced by the countries of the region in institutionalising structures that are basically rooted in the values of the Western societies. In the sixth chapter S.R. de S. Jayatilaka of Srilanka points out how Sociology in the region has failed to address itself adequately to the issue of inequality, particularly of gender. The last two chapters of the book deal with two issued of development in the South Asian region. S. Akbar Zaidi (Pakistan) presents a critique of the role played by the non-governmental agencies in the programmes of development and concludes that the State in the decentralised, delegatory and democratic form should play the critical role in development in South Asia. M. Asaduzzaman of Bangladesh touches upon the social problems ddddarising out of large scale development projects undertaken in the region and emphasises the role that the social scientists can play in such situations.

The papers presented in this volume and the discussions held during the conference on them show that Sociology has a lot to be concerned with in South Asia. It has a mission for the future and a vision of understanding the particular social processes of nation and state evolution and formation, and building and sustaining of indigenous institutions in the social context of the South Asian region. Sociology needs to be concerned with the process and projects of development in the region so as to help the agencies of development bring about a just society in the region. This realisation should accentuate our quest for a Sociology for South Asia or the future of Sociology in South.

Editors

INTRODUCTION

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Poised at the end of the twentieth century, at a time when the countries of the world, particularly those in the periphery, are experiencing the convulsions and cataclysms of change and transformation, it is significant that we from the different regions of the world, however in a limited way, are engaged in a sharing of our perspectives on the state of sociology and our prognosis for the future of social sciences. Since sociology and the allied social sciences are expected to mirror, capture and comprehend the dynamics through which societies/states are passing, it is not surprising that in contemporary times, the social sciences are under a multiplicity of conflicting pressures to produce more convincing knowledge. Authenticity of the social sciences seems to be in question. The emergence of parallel paradigms is a natural outcome of the prevailing confusion in our grasp of the consequences of structures and processes caught up in the whirlwind of change. The pressures for re-legitimation of sociology and the social sciences is evident and will grow.

The main epistemic questions that become central to our discussion are: What have been the conditions under which the heritage of sociology/social sciences became 'worldwide'? In the rapidly transforming world, how have these initial conditions altered and with what consequences? Do the emergent conditions suggest how sociology/social sciences are likely to continue to be universalizing social sciences? These questions, and others, have been competently addressed at the 'worldwide' level (Wallerstein 1996; Borgatta and Cook 1988; Giddens 1987).

It will be my endeavour to examine these questions and related issues with reference to South Asia. I am aware and painfully conscious of the fact that much of this discourse is in the form of a groundswell of debates that have taken place in sociology in India and that I may be more familiar with current developments in India than in some of my neighbouring countries, particularly Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Pakistan and Nepal have only recently opened up to the social sciences, and hence, it is normal to expect that such a discourse will yet take some time to crystallize. In comparison, Bhutan and Maldives have yet to open their social science accounts. The omissions that our neighbouring academic fraternity

may find in citations, I wish to assure them, are not by design or selection as much as it is on account of non-availability of or inaccessibility to their contributions. Limitations of time, too has been a major factor contributing to this shortcoming. Notwithstanding all these, I hope and expect that much of what will be discussed in this introduction will be perceived as relevant not only for South Asia but lso for most Asian countries, if not the developing world at large.

It is not my intention in this introduction to engage in one more wandering into the expanding terrain of proliferating social science literature in South Asia. With reference to India particularly, periodic assessments have taken place in the hands of the most competent of social scientists (Beteille 1996; Singh 1996; Srinivas 1994; Das 1993; Dhanagare 1993; Srinivas 1987; ICSSR 1986; Oommen and Mukherji 1986; Singh 1983; Mukherjee 1979; Saberwal 1979; ICSSR 1969-79; Srinivas and Panini 1973; Unnithan 1967 and others). The effort is to broadly deal with the South Asian perspective on sociology and social sciences worldwide. The task is too big for the short time span within which it has to be accomplished. I am hoping that this will turn out a modest, even if insufficient, attempt which will trigger off more discussion within South Asia and beyond, bringing Asian scholars closer to each other to understand each others realities more comprehensively. It is a lamentable fact that we still continue to learn about each other more through western prisms than directly. My attempt will be not only to discuss the kind of sociology we have produced, but also raise the question why did so many critical concerns affecting us get ignored or neglected.

That sociology is facing a crisis is generally admitted, at least to no less an extent as the other allied social sciences, with the exception perhaps, in some measure, of economics. The controversies can be broadly marshalled around three themes: (a) the universal applicability or otherwise of concepts, theories and methodologies; (b) the positive-normative methodological aspects of analysis of complex social systems or societies; and (c) problem oriented theoretical research vis-a-vis solution-oriented applied research for policy formulation and implementation. In some sense, these themes converge on the common concern: social science knowledge for what and for whom? It will be naive not to see the nexus between social science knowledge and power in all its complexity - redeeming and emancipating, as well as, constricting and constraining. It requires not much imagination to realise that social science knowledge production gains in vitality under conditions of democratic freedom, which too has its limits and limitations. Finally, it should be obvious that the social scientific credential seeking universality is based in a fundamental sense on the notions of 'truth values' and 'reality' in their immanent,relative and perceptual ramifications. All these, and more, go in seeking for answers to our epistemic problems.

Universal, the contextual and the particular

During the decade of the seventies, there was a growing disenchantment with 'western' sociology and social science accompanied by a pressure for 'indigenization'. The second conference of Asian Social Scientists held in India in 1973 was attended by 14 countries. Amongst them were relatively new entrants to the social sciences, like Bangladesh and Nepal. From among those who had a longer stint in the social sciences, there emerged a new demand for indigenization. It was argued that teaching material was available mostly in foreign languages and competent scholars did not contribute in the vernacular. Imported books carried illustrative and research findings which made little sense to students. Even researches done within the country were reported or published in the foreign languages. Finally, even these researches, whether carried out by native or foreign scholars, followed 'the models and the methodology developed in the West' (Atal 1974, pp.20-21).

The influence of western academia was clear from the country papers. The first university in Nepal (Tribhuvan University) came out of the US AID fund. Prior to this education in Nepal was an extension of Patna University in India (Chaturvedi 1974, p.180). In Sri Lanka social scientists chose 'to pursue their research work in England in preference to any other country in the world'. There was a growing realization, nonetheless, that 'the study of social sciences has been an academic exercise unrelated to the development needs of the country' (Rajalingam 1974 p.239). Fresh from the struggle for liberation, Bangladesh struck an optimistic note, observing 'that there runs a common factor through the social sciences - the unity in the interrelatedness of cultural, social, economic, political and psychological behaviour', further that, 'the social sciences have a peculiar methodology which at once combines "mind and science, the common thread being objectivity" (Qadir 1974, p.94). The Asian social scientists finally came out with a statement which was marked by moderation and cautious optimism. It stated:

> "Efforts should be made to develop new methods and techniques suited for the investigation of different questions and of a variety of peoples... to derive ground-level generalisations, to construct middle-range theories, and to prepare macro profiles of the societies. In doing so, western theories and concepts may also be used. Their validity and applicability will, however, have to be examined in the Asian context..."(Atal 1974, p.21).

Nearly a decade later in 1981, in a similar conference of Asian social scientists held in Bangkok, the problem of indigenization and universalization of social science again finds a strong echo. Gore, as Chairman of the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) declared that he was not against 'the use of the

word indigenization but the limits within which this term can be used with reference to any science must be understood'. He clarified:

> "...problem about the transferability of "western" social science knowledge may be at two different levels. It may be that the prescriptions of western social scientists to the ailments of Asian societies have no relevance because the Asian problems are different. If this is the case then no basic issues arise with regard to the nature of social science knowledge. But if it is asserted that the basic patterns of motivation and behaviour of Indian and Asian peoples are different from the people of the west then questions about the very possibility of anything like social science coming into existence and, in fact, about any meaningful communications taking place between these peoples except at a very elementary level" (Gore 1983, pp.110-111).

Gore was indicating that the discrepancy between the professed universality of theories and concepts and their mismatch with contextual realities was well within the realm of social sciences to resolve.

Actually, Eurocentric (includes U.S.) social sciences were being interrogated for their claims to applicability, appropriateness, adequacy and even relevance to Asian settings of social reality. A radical form of protest manifestation found expression in the demand for indigenization. However, that the concept of indigenization remained unelaborated beyond a point was clear; that social sciences needed to be contextual and native concepts and categories should find incorporation in the unveiling of social reality were considered important. The question that naturally arose was, what then was to be the connection between 'native' and 'universal' concepts? Could any kind of social science be erected purely out of native concepts? It was to this problematique that Gore attempted a general response. However, the most extreme form of reaction, which have few adherents, came in the form of total rejection of sociology by A.K.Saran on three counts: that sociology is premised on western ideology and values, hence incompatible with the Indian ethos; as a worldview it was inferior to the traditional Indian worldview; whether couched in Marxist or positivistic terms, the propositions emanating from them betrayed naturalistic reductionism and evolutionism (Singh 1983, p.85).

That the claim of western social science to be universal remained more or less firmly established between 1945-1970, as suggested by Wallerstein, by and large, appears to be true of the South Asian countries (Wallerstein 1996, p.53). For the new entrants this assessment would take time to register at the perceptual level. Androcentrism, the packaging of a model of development and modernization based on western assumptions of a linear transition from traditional to modern societies either through evolutionary or dialectical paths, undermined considerably

the legitimacy of the western Eurocentric social science paradigms. The structural and cultural realities of non-western societies were viewed through the prism of western social science. In course of time, non-western societies, which initially almost unequivocally welcomed western social science, began viewing it through their own prisms. At the same time the clamour for indigenization had receded. Eurocentricism was also being challenged at the global paradigmatic level.

At least two important views are immediately discernible on this theme. One, advocates a mix of the universal and the contextual. Andre Beteille's observation sums up this position very well:

> "Today, at the close of the 20th century, it is impossible to practice sociology as a serious academic discipline without drawing on the vast reservoir of sociological concepts, methods and theories created by scholars over the last hundred years... Surely there is room for an Indian perspective, or better, several Indian perspectives, but to be viable, they have to address themselves to society and culture everywhere, and not just to Indian society and culture" (Beteille 1996, p.2362).

In fact, implicitly or explicitly, by and large, this is the orientation that informs much of sociology in South Asia that matters. However, an important critical perspective to this comes in the form of practice of 'academic feudalism', whereby knowledge referencing by sociologists tends to take the form of 'patronage' and 'networking', and 'academic communalism', whereby is reflected an increasing tendency to study 'one's own social categories', for example, the study of women by women, dalits by dalits, muslims by muslims', and so on. This becomes restrictive of the universalization of sociology (Oommen 1986, pp.258-260).

The second view highlights a very basic problem that has affected the sui generis growth of sociology in South Asia. The overwhelming influence of theories related to modernization syndromes of mobility, achievement, mobilisation and the like, and our preoccupation with caste and other forms of institutional inequalities have distracted our attention from the study of *secular inequalities* and its perpetuation, namely, the study of poverty. Several generations of European anthropologists and sociologists had constructed caste 'as a polar type in the continuum of the stratificatory systems' eventually creating an intellectual environment in which 'the sociological mind came to equate the caste system firmly with inequalities in Indian society overall' (Saberwal 1979 p.247). This point can be extended to South Asia.

The more central argument that emerges out of the specific instance of omission in sociology of India pointed out by Saberwal relates to a much more serious dimension of the growth of sociology, which I had occasion to comment a

decade and a half ago. Three years later, Oommen voiced the same concern (Oommen 1986, p. 263). If sociology and the social sciences are expected to mirror, capture and comprehend social reality, then sociologists were certainly contributing, but precious little, relative to the challenges that confronted them. No doubt the conceptual scheme of sanskritization, westernisation, secularisation and dominant caste a la M.N. Srinivas heralted a creative Indian engagement with British functionalism. No doubt the competing marxist paradigm a la Ramkrishna Mukherjee in a lesser, but no less significant manner, was providing a valuable alternative perception of agrarian structure as compared to the village studies galore. Yet, it is amazing how sociological imagination in India at the time of its greatest ferment during the nationalist struggle in the forties, could by-pass the agrarian struggles in Bengal and in the then state of Hyderabad? How the interface between the communal and class contradictions did not attract the attention of scholars? The ethno-religious (communal) movement that had led to the 'partition' of a people legitimated by the ethno-Eurocentric concept of nation, had in A.R.Desai presumably its solitary contributor (Desai, 1966). The trauma of partition and the consequences it led to, the processes of adaptation and adjustment, the germination of ethno-religious consciousness and discriminations, etc., were not regarded as vital raw materials for sociology. The linguistic strifes that ripped the country in the sixties, resulting in the much publicised, *The Dangerous Decade*, by Selig Harrison, candidly projecting the ominous portends of further vivisection of an incomprehensible cultural plurality. The insurrectionary movements in the north estern region remained confined to the politician and the military to contend with. While Indian society was going through all these convulsions, upto the seventies, sociology and social anthropology maintained an incredible academic placidity concerned with village, caste, family, kinship, etc. (1) It can be presumed that the same arguments would apply to Pakistan and Sri Lanka in terms of the ethnic strifes that could not be anticipated or engaged with by social science wisdom.

From the late sixties onwards a qualitative change is noticeable, in as much as sociologists/social scientists entered into new areas of enquiry not through promptings of established sociology or through fundings which constructed agendas (Ford Foundation, US AID etc.), but endogenously, through concerns which attracted their commitment for relevant knowledge. One of the first such areas of concern was that of social movements. Mukherjee acknowledges their contribution as 'committed non-conformists', for whom action orientation implied 'the view that social research should have a social function not only in the future but also in the immediate context'. Questions relating to 'what is it', 'how is it', 'what is it not', 'how is it not', 'why', 'what will it be', were directly addressed through painstaking and innovative fieldwork, without seeking direct legitimation through the established functionalist or marxist Eurocentric paradigms. They were neither

anti-functionalists nor anti-marxists, they were non-conformists, who addressed themselves to their tasks by neither accepting nor rejecting prevailing paradigms (Mukherjee 1979, pp.112-113). Incidentally, many of the sociologists were 'indigenous' with Ph.Ds obtained in the Indian universities. With these studies, an environment was generated which drew scholars into areas of social movements, agrarian studies, ethnic studies, labour, cooperatives, education, professions, science and technology, health and medicine, gender, deprived categories such as socially discriminated castes and tribes, ethno-religious (communal) tensions and conflicts and studies in a variety of other areas. The vigour and originality of these studies lay not so much in terms of generating any new set of native concepts, but rather through creative engagement with existing concepts and theories, introducing in certain areas constructive debates, sometimes passionately pursued. The University system, and the state through the ICSSR generally welcomed, encouraged and funded such independent researches. The point, however, that assumes importance is that, since the dawn of the liberalizing, globalizing era, a quantum shift in research is increasingly in evidence, raising doubts and scepticism about the future progression of research.(2)

The issues relating to universality of sociology and the social sciences will not be complete without a discussion on the relative importance of structure and agency and the positions taken on this. This problematique has been described as the dynamic tension between collectivist (structure) and the individualist (action) orientations lying at the heart of the major discourses in sociology. Alexander puts it very elegantly:

> "Sociologists are sociologists because they believe there are patterns to society, structures somehow separate from the actors who compose it. Yet, while all sociologists believe such patterns exist, they often disagree sharply about how such an order is actually produced... It is this tension between freedom and order that provides the intellectual and moral rationale for sociology"(Alexander 1988, pp.84-85)

With the dissolution of what Giddens calls the "orthodox consensus" - naturalism combined with functionalism' (Giddens1987, p.24), the heydays of Parsonian sociology came to a close, giving rise to the " 'multiparadigmatic' character of sociology" (Alexander 1988, p.89; Giddens 1987, pp.29-30). Giddens' summary is succinct:

> "...On the whole it would probably be true to say that the majority of these schools of thought have tended to emphasize subjective aspects of human behaviour. They have reacted against what was seen as an exaggeration of the hold social institutions have over conduct of the individual agent. Such a reaction was by no means universal - structuralist

accounts of the 'decentring of the subject', even in the extreme form postulated by Althusser, have found their adherents. But for the most part a common thread in the variety of competing versions of social theory was a reaction against what was widely regarded as an illegitimate sociological determinism"(Giddens 1987, p.30).

The empowerment of the agency or actor vis-a-vis the structure has found conspicuous articulation in subaltern, gender and dalit studies, related to social movements.

A whole range of studies undertaken within the framework of subaltern historiography inspired by Ranajit Guha, now running into its ninth volume, are primarily an accumulation of studies of tribal revolts and peasant insurrections against the British imperial power, as also other contributions around the central theme of subaltern experience of felt-oppression of the 'non-elite' people. The basic point that is being made is that, the subaltern terrain has an autonomy of its own vis-a-vis the social movements inspired by the national or other macro-level political elites. That 'people' as against 'elites' are not just important objects but live, self-conscious, not-to-be-taken-for-granted subjects who also know how to engage with oppression directly and spontaneously. Subaltern historiography is counterposed against elitist historiography, which is supposed to have neglected or ignored the subaltern as an active agent of protest and change. Theoretically this is regarded as a welcome critique of the overdetermination of rationality in Weber's theory of social action, although Weber himself had cautioned that the subjectivity of the individual actor had to be taken into account (Das 1989, p.311).

Gender and womens' studies have also displayed considerable vitality. Initial leadership to women's studies was provided by eminent scholars like Veena Mazumdar, Devaki Jain, Neera Desai and others. The International Womens' Year gave fillip to a burgeoning literature on feminism and feminist movements. Western feminism and feminist theories extended their influence in the non-western world in the first phase. This was soon discovered to be discordant to the history, culture and ethos of feminist responses to culturally specific forms of patriarchy. A major analytic difference emerged between the white, western, middle-class liberal, feminism and the feminist politics of the women of colour. The former was a singular focus on 'gender as a basis for equal rights', which often took the 'form of definitions of feminity and sexuality in relation to men (specifically white privileged men)' (Mohanty, Russo, Tones 1991, p.11).

While post modernist feminism 'challenged claims of universalism of any sort, including feminism, (Rayaprol 1997, p.37) a feminist standpoint theory sought to develop a sociology for women which "preserves the presence of subjects as knowers and as actors' (Smith 1987, p.36). In this framework, the binary opposition

with the other gender is replaced by the concept of "relations of ruling" which 'focuses our attention on forms of knowledge; organised social institutions and practices; and questions of agency, consciousness and experience' (Mohanty 1991, cited in Rayaprol 1997, p.36).

The recent rise to political power of the dalits is yet another historic phenomenon of change within a democratic framework. The 'objects' of yesteryears have now become empowered 'subjects', through whom far-reaching changes in the structure of power are in evidence. The analysis of dalit social movements have been invoked to explain this phenomenon with the help of social mobility and relative deprivation theory by a host of scholars (Joshi 1987; Issac 1964; Lynch 1974; Silverberg 1968; Sachidanand 1978; Bhatt 1971). It is argued that the dalit situation is more likely to head towards absolute deprivation and consequent alienation in the new liberalised phase into which the Indian state has entered. Corporate dalit consciousness has not yet emerged, but is likely to, if it can overcome their religious differentiations as hindus and budhists. The empowerment of dalit as subject is implicit or explicit in sociological and other literatures (Guru 1993).

By and large, mainstream sociology in South Asia has been structural functional and structural. Once again, it is through M.N.Srinivas and Ramkrishna Mukherjee that this is explicitly stated. Srinivas observes:

> "It is a truism to state that modern societies are extraordinarily complex and diversified but sociologists assume, for purely heuristic reasons, that they are functioning wholes, the parts of which are interrelated, with the result that changes in one segment tend to trigger off changes in some others. But any given moment, the intensity of the relation between any pair of segments is not the same: for instance, changes in the economy might result in changes in gender relations but not in the area of religion. The sociological perspective has been influenced by other disciplines also" (Srinivas, 1994, p.12).

Mukherjee, attempts to accommodate 'objectivism' and 'subjectivism' in his methodological-theoretical scheme. The former, according to him, 'assumes universal laws irrespective of the Ego, for the universe exists without oneself. Therefore, one may only draw inferences on the objective world'. The latter, 'contends that there cannot be any external or objective test of truth, for one appreciates the world by oneself. Therefore, all that one may do is to perceive the objective world and deduce from it' (Mukherjee 1991, p.25). Within the context of a process-structure-process approach which he advocates, this subjectivism `means that deduction being built-in to all encounters and experiences of humans, the appraisal of social reality cannot but begin with the formulation of a social structure' (Mukherjee 1991,p.24).

In the orientation that distinguishes between structure and agency, it is those who are oriented to the latter, would seem to be disinclined towards macro generalisations. Although, this cannot be upheld very strongly. It would be more appropriate perhaps to describe the state of the discipline as Srinivas does that, 'the bulk of the research work done is empirical, and theoretically eclectic (Srinivas 1987, p.138).

The positive and the normative

The methodological controversies of quantitative versus qualitative, of micro versus macro studies, of the social anthropological versus the sociological, have run parallel for quite some time. It is only recently that a pragmatic mix of the two, consistent with the logic of enquiry, which is becoming the preferred mode of research. The tension between the two methodological streams is obvious in the frank allusions the two giants of Indian sociology make about each other's epistemic position, which almost questions their knowledge bases. It is best to represent their views by them. Mukherjee observes:

"...Trained by the British school of social anthropology of the 1940s and 1950s, the 'Brahmins' (academic leaders) among the modernizers were not only empiricists with a bias against the historical and material dimensions of social reality but also devotees of 'field work' conducted intensively and personally. To be sure localized micro-studies are useful bases from which to generate hypotheses for testing, but they do not warrant any generalization about the society as a whole. That calls for the use of deductive and inductive reasoning, the logic of probability, and appropriate statistical tools and techniques to deal with qualitative, quasi-quantitative and fully quantitative data..." (Mukherjee, 1979, p.53).

To this, M.N.Sriunivas gives a hard-hitting reply:

"Soon, a reaction set in a few places against structural-functionalism, in particular, against studies of individual villages, and indeed, against intensive field work itself. The objection to intensive field-work came from several quarters including those who were used to survey research, where low-level assistants did all the legwork leaving the brainwork to the director and a small coterie around him. Survey research with its 'macro' spread, was believed to help politicians and administrators in bringing about planned change. The reliability of the data collected, especially in the big surveys, is only now beginning to be questioned seriously, and in a wider social and cultural context. The devotees of survey research, are understandably, the sharpest critics of intensive field work: "What use is a single village study?, is a question that is frequently asked in India... That the social scientist also has an obligation to advance the understanding of his society, if not of all

societies, is completely ignored in such a view" (Srinivas 1987, p.187).

While there are elements of truth in each of these criticisms, the point that seems to get diluted is that methodology does not just mean tools and techniques of data collection whether of the intensive participant observation variety of fieldwork or of the production-line oriented survey method variety. Much depends upon the problematique of a given research. If the emphasis is on capturing, 'meanings', 'sentiments', 'emotions', 'symbolisms' and the like, I wonder how this can be achieved through large-scale macro surveys, except of the social attitudinal varieties, which have their definite limits. If on the other hand, the problem relates to assessing or measuring social changes, say with respect to changes in commensal practices, I wonder how a micro-village-study will be enlightening.

It is only when the village as unit or universe of study can be theoretically and methodologically justified, that its relevance assumes its due importance. Take, for example, the situation in large parts of a state (province) in India where entire rural areas are fractured by heavily armed conflicts between the upper castes and the deprived castes with the use of fairly sophisticated armaments on each side. Can single village studies fit into such a problem? Can valid interpretations or inferences be drawn either by village studies or macro-surveys? Can these even be conducted? What about the problems of social and national integration in Kashmir, in north-eastern India, in Jaffna, in Karachi or in Sindh? Can these be studied by either of these two methods? These are macro-problems requiring a logically consistent methodology, the first logical requirement of which is to decide what is the 'universe' which will encompass the problematique. The concept of 'universe' too need not necessarily be a spatial concept. Method(s) and methodology should not be confounded as one and the same.

Whatever may be the controversies relating to survey and intensive fieldwork, the fact remains that none of the premiere university departments, to the best of my knowledge, have a proper quantitative research methods course taught to students even at the higher levels.(3)

Further, it is also true that much of the quantitatively oriented research in the social sciences have found little currency in teaching. A very important reason for this is that such researches have taken place in research institutions rather than by faculties in the teaching departments, who are themselves not trained in the quantitative methods. As a consequence much of mainstream quantitatively oriented American sociology too goes unnoticed in India. All this is unfortunate as it does not permit a whole realm of social science knowledge to enter the cognitive frame of researchers, thereby limiting choices from which a logic of enquiry could be best constructed.

By and large, to whichever orientation one may belong, the positivistic,

interpretative types, or those who advocate quantitative methods and yet do not regard themselves as positivists, there is no illusion of a value-neutrality to the definition of objectivity. It has been observed that sociology is regarded as a moral rather than a natural science and that sociologists need 'to treat values as facts, as part of his data, whether he is studying his own society or some other society, or both' (Beteille 1996,p.2365). Mukherjee, who is an advocate of the inductive-inferential approach for the 'appraisal of social reality', and who believes that even 'the conventional statistical and other tools evolved in the context of researches in physical and biological sciences may prove inadequate to rigorous social research', steers clear of both the value-neutralists of the functionalist-positivist variety and the 'staunch value acceptors' who are the 'dogmatists' and 'doctrinaires', positing a 'value-accommodation' approach to social science methodology (Mukherjee 1991, pp.26,36). He links the appraisal of social reality with the realization of the 'cardinal valuation of humankind' (Mukherjee 1991: p.26) 'applicable to all humans, namely, survival, security, prosperity and progress'(Mukherjee 1991, p.13).

Theoretical versus applied research

The question: 'of what use social science?' is one that applies in the public mind as primarily pertaining to the non-economic social sciences. The advent of the community development programme via the Ford Foundation from 1951-1970 made sociology popular with the Indian Government and opened up its scope as an applied social science. Oommen clearly subscribes to the sociologists' involvement in such social policy formulation and involvement. He considers unfair characterising them as being enticed by the official patronage of the state (Oommen 1986, pp,260-261, also Oommen 1983; Dhanagare 1993, p.22).

However, the basic question raised is with regard to the role the sociologist is expected to play in his/her applied status. One would find a certain convergence of views in what Gore sums up in his observations to South Asian sociologists (Srinivas and Panini 1973, p.198; Dhanagare 1993, pp.22-23). Gore observes:

> "...if the development of social science is to be judged by how far it contributes to the social development process they would need to participate also in the determination of the goals toward which social development process is itself to be oriented.... If knowledge does not provide the criteria for judging which ends are desirable that knowledge cannot be very useful in the choice of means either..." (Gore, 1983, p.115).

If Oommen is referring to the ordinary run-of-the-mill sociology degree holders for whom these government jobs are an occupation for their bread and butter

livelihood, I do not think there will be any quarrel on that. But if it relates to professional sociologists who lend the expertise of their disciplines, then their value-neutral or purely instrumental role becomes questionable.(4)

Of late, the issue of theory versus application in the social sciences has acquired a somewhat critical dimension at a worldwide level. The views expressed by Borgatta, which seem to be the pattern also in South Asia, should cause us considerable concern:

> "The process of fostering development of sociological areas is not, of course, entirely controlled by sociologists. Funding agencies allocate most of the resources that support research, and these often target funds with specific expectations... In a global sense, sociology will need to adapt to the structural demands of funding agencies if it is to remain viable in some major aspects of the research enterprise. The era of the individual scholar as the research entrepreneur has more of an element of romanticism attached to it than is appropriate in the real world of research" (Borgatta, 1988, pp.15-16).

Borgatta suggests that sociology should be engaged in application of knowledge which it has produced, to authenticate it through demonstration. One way of engaging in such exercise is to test hypotheses, globally stated, through policy implementations.

However innocent this may appear, for developing countries, this development is a matter of great concern. With resources diminishing for higher education in social sciences research, with universities now being asked to find out resources upto 25 per cent of recurring maintenance costs from their own incomes, with government (University Grants Commission) clearly advocating industry-and-market-friendly approach to resource mobilization, we are certainly facing a critical situation. While funding for problem-oriented theoretical research is shrinking, resources are becoming easily available for evaluation studies and consultancies. More often than not, the design of enquiry and the tools to be used are pre-packaged by the clients. The data so collected, the analysis done and the recommendations made are not available for research publications and hence restricted from public discourse. The fate of the recommendations are often not known even to the evaluators/consultants. No reasons have to be given by the clients as to why some of the recommendations have not been pursued. The consultant, in effect, is consigned to serving as a handmaiden of the client. On their part, the consultants tend to take a smug attitude, having given their recommendations, their task was now over. This is the normal pattern and exceptions only prove it.

On the one hand, we are in an era in which evaluation projects have started being 'tendered' like turn-key projects in construction industry. Consultancies are

going abegging with large amounts of money, seeking authentication of 'their' designs through respectable scholars in prestigious institutions. On the other hand, in the unfortunate situation in which the resources of the state for research is in a disarray, international funding of research now search out institutions and competent scholars, attract them to their agendas of research with sumptuous grants. Research designs compatible with the objectives of the funding organisations are presented by scholars. Generally the scope of such research is also 'international' with built-in country perspectives. This paves the way for 'international' interventions in the policies, more particularly, of the developing countries of the world. There is a separation of the 'clients' and the 'servers' much in the Gorean sense. In this portrayal I am merely projecting a modal pattern around which we have few other more acceptable patterns. This scenario is an outcome of sharing of common experiences in Executive/Governing Board meetings of some leading national research and training organisations of India.

At a time when the universities and research institutes are constrained to mobilise their own resources they have to succumb to the offers for evaluation and consultancy which the market is only too eager to offer. The realities of the land do not permit downsizing the universities/institutes to avoid this impasse.

There are several implications of such a scenario. First, scholars are getting distracted into evaluations and consultancies to the detriment of theoretically oriented research and high quality teaching. Second, research agendas are getting externally constructed by the market as well as by global funding agencies with their own agendas of research. Finally, the institutions of research and teaching are left with little option for their survival, and for providing for future contingencies.

As a consequence, basic research is at a serious discount even as the accelerated pace of change demands the most urgent and serious research attention. Teaching is getting neglected, as a result the quality of human resource generation is bound to be affected, leading to possible alienation of the student community who well understand whether they are getting their due or not.

How do we face this dilemma? It is necessary to impress upon the state that for a nation-state to become stronger it is crucial not only to allow free space for knowledge production but also support research strongly so that this free space is not monopolised by external sources of funding with research agendas tailored more to their purposes than to those of the peripheral nation-states. This is, in fact, one of the subtly most fundamental ways in which the erosion of the peripheral nation-states has already started taking place. Unless this dangerous trend is swiftly checkmated, neo-colonial forms of interventions in myraid guises will entrench our societies and economies. Second, the evaluations, more particularly, and consultancies should be turned to advantage in a manner such that they are utilised additionally to the advantage of critical research questions in those

particular areas. Third, institutions for national social science research funding should be established where they don't exist, and where they do, they need to be strengthened. Such institutions should, through a process of dialogue and discussion between national scholars set national priorities of research (Gore 1983, p.117). It is imperative that each society, each region and the world make their own assessments about how globalization in its inevitable sweep is going to affect the respective peoples. Fourth, we should not underestimate the power of knowledge. Therefore, what kinds of knowledge get produced is crucial to the global patterns of dominance that are emerging. Finally, at the international level, it is the United Nations which should provide the major source of research funding on global issues. Like at the national level, discussion and dialogue amongst scholars of all nations should provide the basis of fixing priorities for research concerns of the U.N. This will make for greater confidence on outcomes of knowledge produced around the world on issues of common concern for member nation-states. Let us face it, primarily the nation-states at the centre are interested in research of peripheral nation-states (or powerful nation-states) only in so far as it is perceived to be in their own national interests. Knowledge for the sake of knowledge is now getting jeopardised.

Heritage, What will it be? What should it be?

What is? What will it be? What should it be? are questions inextricably interlinked. These questions and their treatment implicitly or explicitly have found expression in my discussion.

With the introduction of sociology and anthropology as academic disciplines soon after the First World War, its further establishment during the inter-War period under colonial dispensation and its steady spread after the Second World War with the added influence of American Parsonian structural functionalism, there is no denying that sociology and social and cultural anthropology in South Asia was heavily imbued with the spirit of dominant western sociology. Paradoxically, however, it was during the nationalist phase of colonial rule that sociology and anthropology also questioned the premises of evolutionary reductionism (Singh 1983, p.78), emphasised the positive role of tradition and the relevance of marxist framework (Mukherji 1958) and even suggested (Mukherjee) that western theories and concepts were unsuited for explaining Indian social reality (Singh 1983, p.78).

The development of half a decade of sociology and social anthropology sinceSouth Asia was liberated from colonial rule, has witnessed a contextually creative engagement with the classical heritage and contemporary contribution of western Sociology and social and cultural anthropology. It would not be very far from truth to say that South Asian social reality has been viewed through structural-

functionalist, marxist, `modernist', 'post modernist', `structuralist', `feminist', `hermeneutic' eyes, name the school/orientation, it is unlikely that it has not found some adherents or inspireds. It has largely, though not entirely, been a one-way traffic. The legitimation of scholarship has generally come via the west. Perhaps there is nothing inherently wrong in this. But it leads one to ask: why is it that non-western scholars' contributions have generally not amounted to orientations which have had an `universal' appeal of theory? It is largely in the non-western world that Eurocentric concepts and theories have been found to be inadequate, yet it is in the Eurocentres that parallel paradigms emerge again and again through crises perceived in their own societies - whether it be through gender or ethnicity or else. Then these again become available to the non-western world for another round of looking at their own realities, until perhaps the next disenchantment sets in. Knowledge production, in this manner gets hegemonised implicitly or explicitly by the Eurocentres.

To return to our three epistemic questions, it is a fact that sociology owes its origin and development to the European, and subsequently U.S., west. It is stated, 'Sociology, like so many other things, is a European invention... It provided self-understanding of the triumphant modernity and gave intellectual bearings to experience of rapid and fundamental transition toward the entirely new economic, political and cultural order' (Nedelmann and Sztompka 1993, p.1). The main substantive area of sociology, it is stated, is about 'institutions and modes of life brought into being by "modernity" - the massive set of social changes emanating first of all from Europe (and which today have become global in scope) creating modern social institutions' (Giddens 1987:p.25). Wallerstein locates the origin of social sciences in a historical rather than a Eurocentric perspective:

> "...Social science is an enterprise of the modern world. Its roots lie in the attempt, full-blown since the sixteenth century, and part and parcel of the construction of our modern world, to develop systematic, secular knowledge about reality that is somehow validated empirically" (Wallerstein 1996, p.2).

Wallerstein's perspective on the social sciences is clearly more universal and hence historically kept open. While Nedelmann and Sztompka as well as Giddens tie up the sociological project with 'triumphant modernity', with its sets of 'institutions and modes of life', Wallerstein is judiciously content merely to identify its origin, its 'construction' in the modern world, which is historically correct. Further, and most important, he relates the scope of the social sciences to the development of 'systematic, secular knowledge about reality' which has a scientific legitimating aspect of 'validation'. Sociology and social sciences therefore are not about 'modernity' but about the 'modern world' (which is a historical reality) in an

endless elongated time span. It follows from Wallerstein's logic that basic theoretical presumptions about modernity itself and its origin can be questioned. As I see it, it is in this sense, more than any other, that he has 'opened' the social sciences, as does Ramkrishna Mukherjee. It is from this position that he can say:

> "....One can challenge the accuracy of the picture of what happened, within Europe and in the world as a whole in the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries. One can certainly challenge the plausibility of the presumed cultural antecedents of what happened in this period. One can implant the story of the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries in a longer duration, from several centuries longer to tens of thousands of years. If one does that, one is usually arguing that the European "achievements" of the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries thereby seem less remarkable, or more like a cyclical variant, or less like achievements that can be credited primarily to Europe" (Wallerstein 1996, p.4).

In fact, in the South Asian context modernity has been debated within the framework of the Gandhian critique of the industrialism of the west, of tradition and modernity as misplaced polarities (J.R.Gusfield), of modernity of tradition and traditionalization of modernity (Y.Singh), of the very importance of tradition itself (D.P.Mukherji) and so forth. In short, the historical conditions under which the social sciences and sociology got constructed no longer remain the same for the modern world. It is therefore expected that the social sciences and sociology will generate more and more of such powerful knowledge as will enable us to comprehend the implications the so called 'triumphant' march of Eurocentric modernism has for most peoples of the globe, as they affect their livelihood and lifeways, ecology, environment, and the concentrations of wealth and power in a fast shrinking media - controlled, media constructed rank consumerist world. Is South Asian social science adequately responding to the challenges of Eurocentric modernity? It is my view, that it is less than adequate at the turn of the century. We are still prone, by and large, to operate with received concepts and theories with the help of which we enter into our social realities. There is less of entering into concepts and theories through the primacy of our substantive concerns. Western sociology and social science are still quite firmly anchored in their complex social realities, generating new paradigms and handing them down to the rest of the world. However, they have hardly been able to recognize anything from the rest of the world as significant to world sociology/social science. An exception perhaps could be the field of ecology (Vandana Shiva). The answer to this lies principally, as I have stated earlier, in the inadequate and eroding academic institutional infrastructures and in the hegemonic influence of knowledge production centres which with their dazzle lead to paradigmatic blindings. So strong is the hegemonic influence that our courses and curriculum in the social sciences are woefully

inadequate in imparting the classic and contemporary sources of knowledge generated in our own societies by indigenous scholars. Further, many substantive areas of research remain almost unattended.

At the level of research, rigorous painstaking, academically committed research is on the decline for reasons I need not repeat. The fact is, sociology and the social sciences are lagging far behind in generating social 'scientific' knowledge about the processes of conflict, structure and change in South Asian societies. Half-baked knowledge, tempered with mismatched borrowed Eurocentric concepts are far from helping appraise our overly complex social realities. In the absence of production of authentic knowledge, the knowledge space gets increasingly mis-appropriated by various political interests, who then fill up the vacuum with their own formulations. It is not the politicians who are so much at fault as the academics who are at a default. The forces and factors in the sociology of knowledge production is too complex to be treated seriously in this short exercise.

How do we then view the prospects of social sciences in South Asia in the next century? The problems of nation-building with which in greater or lesser measure all the South Asian countries are beset, are likely to create compelling circumstances for scholarship to respond to the complex set of contradictions both endogenous and exogenous. Since the problems cannot be addressed through stereotyped diciplinary frames, this will, quite likely, compel the formulation of problems to freely cross disciplinary boundaries and work out innovative, relevant, logics of enquiry. Given the complex plurality of South Asian countries, with their rich and variegated cultures, and the multiplicity of contradictions that have spawned numerous problems, it is to be expected that knowledge production in the social sciences will be broadly within the framework of a non-deterministic dialectic in which the analysis of contradictions will acquire centrality. The complex plurality is again conducive to an approach, which in the absence of a better term, I would prefer to call, in the words of Merton, 'disciplined electicism' (Mukherji 1986, pp.190-91). This in essence requires an openness of mind regarding the efficiency of parallel paradigms, none of which need be rejected a priori nor espoused as though in it lay the essence of wisdom from which all social science puzzles could be solved. It involves a process of ever-transcending paradigmatic boundaries, rather than their rejection for ever-newer alternatives or holding on to one at all costs. In this process, disciplinary boundaries will naturally get transcended. The process of ever-transcending paradigms means ever-encompassing levels of abstractions, not through piece-meal, patchwork knitting but moving towards an organic dialectically designed embroidery. If the South Asian encounters to its nation-building challenges spawn a social science knowledge that effectively demonstrates to the world how such a complex plurality can cohere, it would make to the world a lasting contribution.

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Notes

1. In the early sixties when T.K.Oommen and myself (without knowing each other) had elected to work for our Ph.D. on the same gramdan (literally, village gift) sarvodaya (literally, welfare-or-all) movements inspired by Gandhian ideology at widely different places, both of us were subject to well-meaning, condescending, good humoured banter by some of our masters in Indian Sociology. Quite clearly we were doing something interesting, but was it sociology was the question.

2. Several young faculty in Jawaharlal Nehru University, a premier university in India bemoan that problem-oriented, field work based rigorous research is on decline.

3. The Tata Institute of Social Sciences where a regular diploma is offered in Research Methodology, is an exception. Here, its traditional positivistic approach is undergoing change in favour of a balanced mix between quantitative and qualitative methods.

4. This point got strongly underscored in the debate that took place in the South Asian Regional Conference of Sociology in Mumbai. A number of case studies of development projects which were formulated by planner economists and handed over to applied sociologists for successful implementation were presented. Inevitably, the drawbacks of implementation were attributed to the limitations of the sociologists. This is precisely the point that was conveyed by Gore, as indicated earlier.

CHAPTER 1
NATION-STATE REFORMULATED: INTERROGATING RECEIVED WISDOM(1)

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Introduction

At the turn of the century when we are poised to assess the rich heritage of Sociology and the Social Sciences, it is appropriate to confront one of the most troublesome set of concepts causing universal disquiet and unease, viz, ethinicity, nation, nationalism, nationality and the nation-state. Perhaps no other field in the social sciences is beset with so much ambiguity, controversy and hence, so little clarity. The concepts and theories are amongst the most politically pregnant and volatile, having serious consequences for peoples, their cultures, their lives and well-being and cumulatively, for the world. Presently, the world, particularly the post-colonial countries, are ridden with the political consequences of this conceptual ambiguity. The level of confusion has reached a point where even the social science literati and political leaders are not yet clear about the political identity of the people with whom they identify in the emergent world political system.

Problematique

"Nation" remains one of the most puzzling and tendentious items in the political 'lexicon', observes Charles Tilly (1975, p.6). Notwithstanding the truth of this statement, definitions of *nation* can be broadly categorised into, (a) those which conceptually regard the nation as *independent* of the state, and (b) those which regard it as *congruent* with the state.

The first set of views appear to attach a certain degree of *voluntariness* and strong *normativeness* to the concept. Illustratively, Essien-Udon holds the view that ultimately what matters is that there just has to be a `body of people who feel they are a nation' (cited in Oommen 1997, p.22; 1962, p.104). Or, a similar echo which holds that it is sufficient that `a significant number of people in a community consider themselves to form a nation or behave as if they formed one' (cited in

Oommen 1997, p.22 ; Seton-Watson 1977, p.5). Or, the description of a nation ` as a self-differentiating ethnic group' which needed no `tangible' characteristic of its existence or non-existence (cited in Oommen 1997, p. 21-22 ; Connor 1994, p. 40-43). Oommen himself defines nation more exclusively as `a *territorial* entity to which the people have an *emotional* attachment and in which they have invested a *moral* meaning: it is a *homeland* - ancestral or adopted ... It is the *fusion of territory and language* which makes a nation; a nation is a community in communication in its homeland' (1997, p.3, italics added). For him, quite clearly, the nation exists independent of the state and he approvingly endorses the view that `states can exist without a nation or with several nations... nations can be coterminous with the population of one state or be included together with other nations within one state or be divided between several states' (cited in Oommen 1997, p.18 ; Seton-Watson 1977, p.1).

Several questions arise: (i) Can the identification and definition of *nation* be as arbitrary and normative as to be left to the subjective feeling of collective self-consciousness of a group ? (ii) Is the nation and *emic* identification or an *etic* construct of the scientist ? (iii) How many cultures and peoples in the world have any equivalence of the Anglo-Saxon western concept of nation in their own languages to be able to self-consciously feel that they constitute nation ? (iv) How does one empirically identify the *territorial homeland* of a people ? What if the settled national population don't accept "settler-ethnics"' who have adopted the new homeland ? They do not constitute a nation according Oommen. (2)

The concept of the *state-independent nation* does not appeal as a powerful analytical tool. In the burgeoning body of literature in this field no clear distinction between the ethnic group, ethnicity, nation etc. is visible. For example, what is *ethnie* to Smith, is *nation* to Oommen. (3) But Oommen appropriates the concept by eliminating territoriality from it. The *nation* for Connors, Seton-Watson, Essien-Udom and the like is practically indistinguishable from the *politically self-conscious ethnic community* of Brass, which for him is *ethnicity (* Connors, 1994; Seton-Watson 1962; Essien-Udom 1962; Brass 1991).

Each of these concepts pale into each other in different hands so much so that one is set wondering as to whether or not the single-most important consideration that lies behind endowing cultural groups with nation and nationalism, is the manifest or latent anxiety that the steam-rolling nation-state in its homogenising operation will crush their identities. But contemporary history bears testimony to the fact that the modern nation-state has in fact facilitated the proliferation of ever-new cultural groups rather than stifled them. The critical variable that needs to be addressed here, it seems to me, is to the *form* of the modern nation-state, whether this is *democratic* or *totalitarian* or *fascist*. It is this variable, more than any other,

to my mind, which relates to the absence or presence of homogenising threats. It should be clear that 'defining a nation by its members' consciousness of belonging to it is tautological and provides only an aposteriori guide to what a nation is' (Hobsbawm 1990, p.7-8). One of the most serious limitations of an ethnicity - oriented definition of nation is that it precludes other structural bases of nation formation, like class, gender, "secular" interest groups and so on. Man/woman does not survive by ethno-culture alone. Ethno-based conceptualisations of nation may carry within it the potential seeds of fascist ideology. In an age in which large shifts of population have taken place all over the world, very few, if any, territories today remain ethnically homogeneous in any absolute fixed sense of the term. Therefore, majoritarian ethno-nations could become prone to intolerance of minority ethnic groups leading to their subjugative existence. The culturally 'emancipated', can turn, perpetrator of the same oppression from which it had emancipated itself.(4)

The other set of formulations on nation are paradigmatically different as the background assumptions are different. It argues that the nation-state is a product of recent history marked by the process of industrialisation and the development of capitalist production, on the one hand, and a series of wars culminating in the two World Wars, the League of Nations, and United Nations, on the other (Gellner 1983).

Sources of Anxiety

One of the principal sources of anxiety in the first orientation, to my mind is presumably embedded in the dangers perceived in homogenising, assimilationist and melting-pot formulations associated with industrialising modern nation-states. Both Marxist and capitalist versions seem to converge here. Marx and Engels regarded the modern nation as a historical phenomenon that had " to be located in a precise historical period of the ascendance of the bourgeoisie as a hegemonic class, which at the same time [was] the period of consolidation of the capitalist mode of production" (Nimni 1985, p.62). Gellner too predicted that mature industrialisation, involving increased social mobility, a standard high culture facilitated by a uniform mode of communication, will result in the homogenisation of the society. In such a dynamic, most of the folk-cultures will opt for the high culture. Those which will not, would be considered as "counter-entropic"' and would either remain a problem, or could develop a parallel high culture out of the folk-culture and form an autonomous state (1983, p.. 61).

Such propositions are problematic for the culturally plural states like those of South Asia. The counter reaction to this kind of perceived threat of homogenisation of the modern industrialising nation-state, has led almost to the denial of this socio-political entity by the protagonists of the first orientation. At the same time,

emergent nation-states are going ahead with their nation-building project. South Asian countries have experienced one partition and one secession, even so they are confronted with serious ethnic strifes which can only be ignored at the cost of far-reaching consequences.

This unease and anxiety affected our national leadership since the time of our anti-colonial nationalist struggles. Living in an era devastated by two World Wars, which bared the ugly side of western nationalism, neither Tagore nor Gandhi wished "their society to be caught in a situation where the idea of the Indian nation could supersede that of the Indian civilisation, and where the actual ways of life of Indians would be assessed solely in terms of the needs of an imaginary nation-state called India" (Nandy 1994, p.3).

Notwithstanding these anxieties the fact is that the civilisational base of the Indian nation of Gandhi and Tagore's perceptions gave way to two nations, one based on *religious-ethno-nationalism* and the other, on a more broad-based *civic-secular nationalism*. Pre-colonial Indian sub-continent was characterised by a multiplicity of kingdoms and chiefdoms with ever-changing political boundaries over time. Post-colonial sub-continent in its historical evolution presented its new configuration of states. The difference between the pre-and post-colonial political configurations of the sub-continent lay in a transition from the fluid monarchical-feudal-patriarchal political entities to the more stable modern nation-state, now part of the international "system of states acknowledging, and to some extent guaranteeing, each other's existence" (Tilly 1975 p. 45).

It is important to describe very briefly the constellation of social and political forces that made up the Indian National Movement (INM), if only to understand the secular content of civic nationalism that provided the basis for independent India. Desai in his seminal contribution identifies five phases in the historic evolution of the INM. These five phases of the Indian national movement indicate that class and ethnic mobilisations provided the civic-secular content unique to the freedom struggle of independent India (Desai 1976).

Nation-state reformulated

No matter how many varieties of attributes by which ethnic group/ethnicity has been defined, *'cultural commonality,* differentiating one group/category from another, emerges as the attribute common to all definitions, making it *the* distinguishing feature of an ethnic group/category... the objective cultural markers for such commonality could be *any* cultural attribute(s), singly or in combination' (Mukherji 1994, p. 23). I now propose the following theoretical framework:

1. The logic of identification of an ethnic group lies in the internalisations of

cultural attributes and/or values, by its members, since birth or through long socialisation. The cultural attributes so internalised are available through ancestry or history - real, imagined or invented - for delineation as boundary markers for ethnic categories/groups (categories refer here to statistical aggregates, whilst groups, to members within it formed by a sense of consciousness of kind). These factors of *ascription* and/or *long socialisation* can be regarded as the least common denominators of the phenomenon of ethnic groups. Thus we are born into a language, race, caste, even region and into religion (or converted). Eriksen quite pertinently observes "only in so far as *cultural differences* are *perceived* as being important, and are made *socially relevant*, do social relationships have an ethnic element" (Eriksen 1993, p. 12).

2. The politicisation of an ethnic group/category leads to its ethnicisation and ethnicity can become the basis for mobilisation of ethnic movements, such movements can be broadly categorised as (a) those which target their change objectives within the framework of the nation-state, as opposed to those, (b) which seek to establish a new nation consistent with a sovereign state.

3. It will be clear that in this conceptual scheme, nationalism can exist prior to the establishment of a nation-state, whilst 'a people' constitutes a nation only when it becomes congruent with a sovereign state. This view does not subscribe to the theoretical position that ethnicity is the sole basis of a nation if it is culturally 'homogeneous' enough to make interest/corporate group demands for its members, even when its objective is not sovereignty. There are three fallacies associated with this view. It does not recognise that (a) within the same so-called culturally homogeneous ethnic group (in a polyethnic society), there are strong possibilities that it will be further culturally differentiated, such that members of the group will have multiple intersecting ethnic identities, each of which having the potential of weakening the existing ethnicity in favour of another; (b) the ethnic group is additionally, in all likelihood, structurally differentiated in terms of class inequalities and exploitation, which again could generate contradictions undermining the apparent cultural integration of the group; and finally, (c) non-ethnic factors are relevant or critical to the concept of the nation. Sterling examples are that of inter-ethnic differentiation of religious and caste ethnicities in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, the ethnic-class differentiations of class and ethnicity in Bihar and Gorkhaland in West Bengal.

4. When the basis (for mobilisation) for contestation of the nationalism of the existing state is ethnic, the resulting phenomenon is ethno-nationalism. This is not to say that this is the *only* form of nationalism that contests the nationalism of an *existing* nation-state, nor is it the case that ethno-nationalism provides the ideological basis for *every* sovereign state. *Civic (non-ethnic) nationalism* can be

distinguished from ethno-nationalism.(5) For example, as observed earlier, whilst religious ethno-nationalism provided the foundation of the state of Pakistan, civic nationalism provided the spirit of the Indian Constitution.

5. Ethnic and ethno-nationalist movements are grounded more firmly in cultural particularistic values, whilst class and civic (non-ethnic) nationalist movements are, generally speaking, cultural-universalistic. However, members of no ethnic movement, however 'parochial' are wholly particularistic in their orientation, nor is it the fact that members of 'secular' organisations or movements are wholly universalistic. *Every member of ethnic or 'secular' group is a complex of particularistic and universalistic values, in different ratios.*

6. The other domains can broadly be identified as: class, power, gender and eco-environmental. Embedded in each of these domains are structures of asymmetrical or competing relationships, both social (as in the case of ethnic, class, power, and gender), and as between the social and the physical (as in the case of the eco-environmental domain).

7. Contradictions can be antagonistic or non-antagonistic. The presence of contradictions whether antagonistic or not, does not ipso facto give rise to social conflicts. However, the fact of social conflict can inevitably be related to the contradictions which give rise to it.

8. The type of social movement - whether ethnic, class, gender, eco-environmental, or one arising out of sheer oppression - can be identified by the locus of its principal/primary contradiction in their respective domains. Conflicting/competing *interests* associated with the conflict, facilitate the location and identification of contradictions.

9. Given that a social system can be defined in terms of interrelated and interpenetrating structures of asymmetries of the domains, assuming that the 'whole' social system is greater than the sum of its domains and their structures of asymmetries, we can attempt to describe a social system as a constellation of contradictions characterising the social system. It follows, that a social movement arising out of primary contradiction(s) in any one (or more) of the domains, will necessarily have *interfaces* with other contradictions within the same or other domains. Thus an ethnic movement may have a class/power/gender interface, whilst a class movement may have ethnic/power/gender interface and so on. (Example: Naxalite movement, Naxalbari peasant revolt, Bhojpur movement, Gorkhaland movement, Ayodhya phenomenon).

10. Primary contradictions are never deterministically fixed to any given domain. Therefore, social movements arising out of primary contradiction in any one domain, may be overtaken at a later stage, by a contradiction within the same or a different domain, which then becomes primary, changing the character of the

movement, or giving rise to a different one. Thus, an ethno-religious movement can be overtaken by an ethno-caste movement, and vice versa, when they are in opposition with each other. It is also possible for oppositions to reach political accommodation (as the recent occurrences in Uttar Pradesh would seem to suggest). This is the theoretical articulation of a non-deterministic dialectic.

11. It follows that the study of social movements as case or category isolates will have limited yield in terms of explanation or understanding, unless an attempt is made to *relate* different varieties of movements within the overall macro perspective of the nation-state and its construction. Thus the study of ethnic movements in isolation from other movements is likely to prove inadequate for the study of ethnic movements themselves.

12. In this perspective, state formation and nation-building are two analytically separate processes, with different historicities. The formation of a state does not, ipso facto, necessarily mean the establishment of a crystallised nation-state. It does mean, more often than not, the beginning of a *crystallising nation-state.*The process of transition from a *crystallising to a crystallised nation-state* is the task of nation-state building. *The nation-state covers the whole range of non-linear, zig-zag stages through which the crystallising nation-state attempts to crystallise as a nation-state.*

13. This period, of the process of crystallisation of the nation-state is generally characterised by internal strifes and conflicts, sometimes fierce and violent and at other times non-violent, leading to accommodations, adjustments, new syntheses or ruptures. *Social movements and conflicts, ethnic and non-ethnic can be regarded as the solid building-blocks of a strong and crystallised nation-state.*

14. The processes and conditions leading to the crystallisation of a pluri-ethnic nation-state is marked by an overwhelming majority of its people, representing different cultural identities, with competing and conflicting interests and values, internalizing an evolved, shared set of values, which then provide the legitimate basis for its major societal institutions - economic, political and social.

15. The maturing of a crystallised nation-state does not signal the end of contradictions and conflicts. It only means the nation-state is much less vulnerable to dismemberment and disintegration. *The ultimate loyalty of the people to its state, in an affective-emotional-cultural sense, is strongly internalised.*

16. A nation-state once having been institutionally crystallised, need not remain settled for all times. Social changes can be generated through endogenous and/or exogenous sources, introducing new contradictions, unsettling the erstwhile legitimacy of its institutions and institutional mechanisms. *In this sense, nation-state building is not a one-shot affair, it is a continuous process.*

17. Conceptually, the 'state' is the discrete 'structure' relative to the 'nation',

which is a 'cultural' variable. When the state finds its congruence with the nation, or, nationalism finds its congruence with the state, we have a crystallising nation-state. For the developing countries at the "periphery" with a colonial legacy, the state-centred nationalist project is a structural imperative for it to survive and resist the exploitation from the institutionalised nation-states at the "*core*", and that of the trans-national formations which have their locus of power at the 'centres' of economic dominance.

18. Just as the state-centred nationalist project can crystallise into a nation-state, ethno-nationalist project too can culminate into a sovereign state. Ethno-nationalisms which do not culminate into sovereign states, could very well constitute stages in ethnic incorporation and legitimation in the dialectic of state-centred nationalist projects.

Nation-state : South Asian Concern

The South Asian states with varying political systems, are among the late entrants into the institutionalised international system of sovereign states which has evolved historically since the seventeenth century. They are crystallising nation-states each with their own project of crystallisation *for* their nation-states. They are in one sense or the other, engaged in the *task* of nation-state building.

We have observed in our paradigm that the task of nation-building is not confined to the management of ethnic aspirations and competing ethnicities, it includes no less, constant accmmodations of class, gender, eco-environmental and projects related to the shaping and sharing of power, and more. None of these domains stand in isolation from the others. Ethnicity and ethno-nationalism are hardly restricted to preserving just *cultural symbolic traditions* of a group under real or imagined threat, it generally appears in combination with the *instrumental* aspects related to material and other (non-cultural symbolic) deprivations as Oommen has suggested. Every crystallising nation-state has its own configuration of contradictions with which it has to engage.

Given India's unique complexity of culture and structure it would be surprising if it has an easy passage into becoming a crystallised nation-state. There are many simultaneous contestations of ethnicity and ethno-nationalism, of class interests, of gender issues, over eco-environmental dangers, of sheer concerns of state and non-state forms of repression that are seeking their resolutions. We are experiencing secessionist insurgency movements (Kashmir and the North-East), movements related to development and displacement, farmers' movements, scheduled castes and tribal movements, backward caste movements, gender movements now for parity in power sharing, eco-environmental movements which

stand vigil on degradation of nature, and so on. India has experienced the process of ethno-nationalisms stabilising as incorporated ethnicities resulting in structural elaboration of the socio-political system.

Through social movements and conflicts the Indian nation-state is going through a continuous process of *societal differentiations and integrations*. Democracy in India is more than the sum total of its democratic institutions, its vitality lies in allowing for the *constant creation of democratic space*.

I would hazard observing, Pakistan has failed to negotiate with Bengali linguistic ethno-nationalism that resulted in Bangladesh, but its process of ethnic incorporation of the Baluchis and Pathans seems to be moving in the direction of the process of integration (Phadnis 1990, p.175-90). The recent trend towards evolution of the democratic institutions is a healthy signal of social transformation which is likely to facilitate the class, gender, eco-environmental and other contradictions to find their place in the task of nation-state building.

Sri Lanka is beset with the challenge of ethno-nationalism. Its historicity clearly suggests how material and political factors have combined to sharpen the ethno-nationalistic contradictions. It remains to be seen how the dialectics of the ethnic opposition will work itself out (Phadnis 1990, p.190-206).

In passing, the Indian experience is of some value. No matter how severe has been the threat perception of ethno-nationalism, whether this has been the past history of insurrections in the North East or the current problem in Kashmir, India has not sought a solution through ethnic swamping of these areas by other ethnic groups to offset demographic advantages of ethno-nationalist aspirations. Secondly, the attempt has always been to extend the democratic institutions to facilitate the sharing of power by the alienated and aggrieved groups. The third important strategy of state craft has been to address to the economic development of these regions through the democratic process. Finally, cultural articulations of their distinctiveness have been allowed fuller expression and national recognition through a variety of symbolic and substantive channels.

I have observed elsewhere that *'in the Indian context ethnic identity and Indian national identity are not necessarily mutually antagonistic or exclusive, the former is often a necessary condition for the latter'* (1994, p.48).

The term Indian civilisation has become a narrower concept in the present times. It is more appropriate to speak of a *South Asian civilisation* of which we all are sharers. It sounds reasonable to suggest that not only for India, but for all the South Asian countries, South Asian civilisation perhaps would form a firmer basis for their nation-states. This could provide a new perspective which could open up and enable the natural channels of intercommunication and cooperation between the peoples of SAARC countries, as co-sharers of a common civilisation, to take place unhindered with mutual respect for each other's sovereignty. A millennia-

deep civilisation is an immense repository of cultural resources from which competing and conflicting values can draw their symbolic inspirations, play out their contradictions within the broad paradigm of unity of opposites.

Notes

(1) The last Programme Committee meeting of the International Sociological Association witnessed yet another round of inconclusive debate on the inefficiency of the Anglo-Saxon (American) concepts and the urgent need to replace these by *indigenous* ones. While, the Latin American sociologists from Peru argued forcefully on this, Piotr Sztompka expressed the incredibility of such a proposition which would put to nought a century old heritage. I suggested that we could regard concepts to be in *motion* (just like societies). If a given conceptual-theoretical framework constructed out of a given historical situation lacked a goodness-off-fit with reference to a different historical situation, then, consistent with the logic of history and philosophy of science, it was necessary to try and alter it such that in the reformulated form it satisfies the explanatory, causal or *verstehenian* conditions of both the situations. In this way, we could move towards greater universalization of concepts and theories. Failing this, scope for an alternate framework with paradigmatic implications would open up.

(2) According to Oommen, "...to become nationals in a territory into which a group immigrates is not simply a matter of that group's choice, but also its acceptance by the earlier inhabitants" Oommen 1997, p. 20).

(3) *Ethnie* as defined by Smith has six characteristics : collective name, a common myth of descent, a shared history, a distinctive shared culture, an association with a specific territory, a sense of solidarity. Oommen regards the six characteristics as actually making the *nation*, and only when the attribute `territory' is removed from it does it become an *ethnie*. On this basis of re-appropriation of the concept *ethnie*, he elaborates a theory, in which a person or group oscillates between a nation and an ethnie depending upon whether territorially the person/group is in or out of its ancestral or adopted homeland (Oommen, 1997, p. 20).

(4) Hobsbawm refers to this as the "dangerous element" incorporated in the late nineteenth century democratisation of politics which "implied (and imply) the break up of all large pluri-ethnic and pluri-lingual states and, since humanity is not in fact divided into neatly separable pieces of homogenous territory, the forcible homogenisation of ethnic-linguistic nation-states. The methods for achieving this have, since 1915, ranged from mass population transfers to genocide" (Hobsbawm, 1996, pp. 270 - 271).

(5) I came across an almost identical conceptual distinction made by Jack Snyder : "*Ethnic* nationality is based on the consciousness of a shared identity within a group, rooted in a

shared culture and a belief in common ancestry. *Civic* nationality, by contrast, is inclusive within a territory. Membership in the national group is generally open to everyone who is born or permanently resident within the national territory" (Snyder 1993, p. 7).

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CHAPTER 2
PSEUDO-MODERNIZATION AND ITS IMPACT ON THE PROCESS OF NATION-BUILDING IN SRI LANKA

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When modernization paradigm emerged as a dominant conceptual model in sociology in the 1950's, it made significant impact on the social and political institutions in South Asia. Modernization was conceptualized as a wide-ranging process encompassing economic, social, political and cultural domains. It was hoped that, once exposed to forces of modernization, people in these countries would merge into broadly unified nation-states, largely similar to those that emerged in many Western countries after Second World War. However, the expected social transition did not materialize. Why?

Alternative theoretical paradigms have sought to answer the above question (Alavi and Shanin 1982). The present paper, however is not concerned directly with the above question or the possible answers to it. Rather it is primarily concerned with the nature of the changes that have taken place in Sri Lanka and their implications for the formation and perpetuation of social and cultural identities in the country in order to focus on the question as to why the post-colonial Sri Lankan state found it difficult to hold together its constituent parts.

Colonialism, Elite Formation and the Subversion of the Process of Modernization in Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka a highly stratified colonial elite structure provided the backdrop of anti-colonist movement. The anti-colonial, nationalist movement which emerged as a significant social force in the late 19th century was linked to the majority Sinhalese Buddhist community. It failed to develop into a truly national movement that cut across ethnic and religious boundaries as ethnic identities determined the political competitions. On the other hand, there were influential and active national leaders who clearly transcended ethnic and religious boundaries. Although they were the products of colonial English education, their appreciation of the value and significance of native languages, national heritage and culture was clearly evident (Wickramasuriya,1979). They became highly critical of the colonial educational

practice which tended to alienate native youths from their own language, history, culture and even physical environment.

Anti-colonial, nationalist thinking which reflected in the nationalist movement as well as in the writings of nationalist leaders had a decisive influence on the policies and programmes implemented after decolonization. Yet, many of these policies and programmes often did not give expression to the substantive ideas held by some of the more enlightened national leaders. Being subjected to pressures of popular politics within a newly established, democratic political framework, political leaders competing for power tended to advocate policies which were not necessarily in keeping with the high ideals of some of the earlier nationalist leaders. These policies, in effect have acted as barriers to the emergence of a modern nation-state transcending primordial identities and divisions. In fact the potential modernizing forces like modern education, mass media, political participation and new technologies through extension services, have been "used" in these countries to reinforce rather than to neutralize traditional identities and primordial loyalties. How did this happen?

Even though the new economic opportunities created by the Portuguese and the Dutch administrations in the 16th and 17th centuries facilitated the emergence of new elites and occupational groups in the coastal areas of the country under their control (Kotalawala,1978), it was during the British period that far reaching social structural changes were effected by both direct state intervention as well as forces of change that were set in motion by colonial policies. The long established pre-capitalist system of production relations, characterized by a largely caste-based service tenure system known as *rajakariya* (King's service) had to give way to highly commercialized production relations in large parts of the economy. Consequently, land and labour became marketable commodities which could now be sold and bought in the market.

The emergence of modern professions such as law and medicine provided opportunities for upward social mobility for those who had the means to secure the necessary training abroad. The expansion of the state bureaucracy with its legislative, judicial and executive branches since the late 19th century resulted in the creation of a host of prestigious, influential and lucrative positions which could, in turn be filled by those with the necessary credentials. The rapid expansion of state services such as education and health in the first half of the present century created many lower level positions in the state services. These positions became highly attractive to youths belonging to lower social strata. The sole objective of many of these youths was to escape from their socially inferior backgrounds. Education naturally became the primary means of achieving this objective.

During the early years of the British administration, formal education was polarized between elementary instruction in the vernacular and fee levying

secondary school education provided in the English medium. Later, most schools, both state as well as private, began to provide instruction in the vernacular (Sinhala and Tamil) while a few schools continued to provide instruction in the English medium (Fernando 1979). Yet, the polarization of the "educated" population into two groups, one, urban English-educated and the other, mostly rural vernacular-educated continued unabated. This bifurcation tended to follow broad social class divisions; while affluent parents in general could send their children to urban schools where English was the medium of instruction, the most the ordinary rural parents could do was to give their children a vernacular education in rural schools. So, the dream of early nationalist leaders like Ponnambalam Arunachalam to provide the native youths with a bilingual education was shattered by the policies that were implemented by policy makers, both before and after independence.

With the introduction of universal free education in the early 1940s, the ranks of the vernacular educated rural youth in the country swelled rapidly. The rapid expansion of the population of lower age cohorts at least since the late 1940's also made a significant contribution to this trend. On the other hand, English continued to be the official language as well as the medium of instruction in the universities for nearly a decade since independence. Consequently, access to higher positions in the state bureaucracy as well as modern professions was restricted to those with an English education. On the other hand, the rapid expansion of education gave birth to a vocal, rural intellegentia representing the interests of the rural population, in particular, of rural youth aspiring for higher social positions. They, in turn began to use the newly created democratic space to articulate their grievances and mobilize popular support against the dominance of the privileged, westernized elite which hitherto monopolized higher positions in the state bureaucracy and modern professions. The rise of the centre-left coalition of the MEP in the early 1950's and its landslide electoral triumph in 1956 was largely a reflection of the growing ideological dominance of the new, nationalist intelligentia associated with the majority Sinhala Buddhist rural population.

Expansion of education in Sri Lanka over the last 50 years has been phenomenal. While the literacy rate has reached nearly 90%, the proportion of the population with a secondary education is also substantial. Yet, the state policies adopted over the last several decades coupled with other factors have led to the segregation of the young population in the country on ethno-linguistic grounds preventing them from forming a broad national identity.

Media Participation and Cultural identity

Modernization theorists identified increased media participation as an important

factor of modernization. While literacy enables ordinary people to read printed material such as newspapers, it also makes them more receptive to messages emanating from extension services and so on. On the other hand, availability of national level radio, telecommunication and other electronic communication services could potentially integrate an otherwise dispersed and segregated population. The expansion of mass media has been an important aspect of the process of social and cultural change in Sri Lanka in the recent past. Yet, given the expansion of mono-lingual education described earlier, and the continuing spatial segregation of ethnic communities in many parts of the country, modern mass media such as radio, film and the newspapers have not played a significant part in forging a national identity that transcends ethno-linguistic boundaries. Perhaps, their role in reinforcing ethnic identities has been far more significant than their integrative influence.

Industrialization and Urbanization

Social structural changes resulting from the process of industrialisation and urbanisation are important dimensions of modernization. However, not many ex-colonial, Third World countries have undergone a process of rapid urban industrialization. Contrary to the expectations of the nationalist political elites who succeeded colonial administrations in those countries, Sri Lanka has failed to emerge as "modern nation states" through a process of rapid economic growth and modernization.

On the political front, mobilization of masses by national and local leaders by and large tended to follow ethno-linguistic divisions and this made the competition for power and resources to appear as one between ethnic groups as well. When the issues of political reform were being discussed in the 1920's, representation on ethnic and regional lines as against territorial representation emerged as the most favoured option, particular from the point of view of minorities (Greenstreet 1982). Many representatives of the latter appeared to have felt that, in a centralized, territorially based representative system of government, minorities would be placed in a disadvantageous position with respect to sharing of power and resources. Such perceptions continued to reinforce ethnic identities in the country and decisively influenced the process of political mobilization ever since.

Another important factor which contributed to ethnic cleavages has been the growing significance of the state in the national economy, particularly since the late 1950's. This pattern continued till 1977 when the economy was freed from the tight grip of the state through a package of liberal economic policies involving the privatization of public enterprises, etc. Prior to liberalization, the central administration exercised considerable control over the allocation of productive

resources and public goods. Since the corporate, private sector played a much less significant part in the national economy, most people had to depend almost entirely on state institutions for various needs. This was particularly significant for youths aspiring for social mobility as their life chances depended heavily on state policies on education and employment.

In the absence of rapid economic growth at a time when population was rapidly expanding, state could hardly satisfy the rising aspirations of youths. While this naturally led to the disappointment of many youth, many of those who were adversely affected perceived state policies as unjust and even discriminatory. On the other hand, the allocation of scarce resources and public goods by a highly politicized state bureaucracy was bound to lead to corruption, favoritism and abuse. This practice alienated many youths who failed to reach their desired goals.

As mentioned earlier, the rapid expansion of free education in the country gave rise to a large mass of rural youths with aspirations for social mobility. However, owing to the lack of employment opportunities, more and more of them joined the ranks of the unemployed. The growing competition for the few opportunities available often favoured those who were politically and socially connected to powerful people, leading to the marginalization of the others. Persisting regional disparities in terms of social infrastructure such as educational facilities added another dimension to the sense of deprivation among marginalized groups. The view that an urban elite continued to dominate the politio-economic establishment gained wide acceptance among politically articulate rural youths who have been socialized into believing that they are the legistimate custodians of the "motherland". From here, it was only a small step to argue that the urban (Westernized) elite had no legitimate claim over state power. Hence, the primary objective of rural youth movements to capture state power.

The political posture of the JVP, radical Sinhalese youth movement, represents an interesting blend of interest group politics with identity politics. (1) While the former is a reflection of its radical leftist orientation which is critical for the mobilization of the underprivileged, the latter is a product of the growing tension between ethnic groups within a centralized national polity. Rural Sinhalese youths, who were socialized under the direct influence of a "nationalized" education system, socialist politics and a stagnant national economy, tended to feel threatened by "external" forces including those that threaten the territorial integrity of the Sri Lankan state.

On the other hand, the underprivileged youths, belonging to ethnic minorities were also socialized under the direct influence of nationalist forces. Given the disadvantageous position their elite political leadership occupied in the national political arena, both the leaders as well as their youthful followers tended to articulate their grievances in terms of their minority status. Certain policies that

were adopted by the political centre after independence in order to pacify the nationalist forces in the South and later to contain the growing restlessness among disadvantaged rural Sinhalese youths, were perceived by the educated minority youths as signs of racial discrimination. At a time when the centralized state was the dominant influence on the life chances of the swabhasha- educated youths, policy measures taken by the state tended to be perceived as critical in terms of their likely impact on the life chances of diverse interest groups. With the increasing significance of the nationalist discourse and the rising ethnic tension in the country, ethnic identities of many people tended to get hardened. Such groups, in turn tended to get drawn into liberation movements which promised to promote and safeguard their interests within a separate state.

Thus, the forcess of modernisation as they evolved in Sri Lanka seemed to have reinforced the pre-existing primordial identities with education playing a critical role in cultural divisions. All this has contributed to the process of a pseudo-modernisation in Sri Lankan context.

Note

(1) JVP, or the People's Liberation Front, emerged in the late 1960's as a distinctly rural, Sinhalese youth movement in Southern Sri Lanka. If sought to challenge all other established political parties with various ideological positions.

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CHAPTER 3
INSTITUTION BUILDING IN SOUTH ASIA: DILEMMAS AND EXPERIENCE

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Implied in the very phrasing of the theme of this paper that we are *not* referring to institutions such as family, marriage, caste or similar other institutions which gradually evolve over a period of time. That is, we are talking about institutions of state and civil society which are to be built - to be deliberately inducted and sustained.

South Asian societies have many things to boast of as compared with ex-colonial states elsewhere - democratic states, independent judiciary, vibrant press etc. And yet, the crisis of institutions looms large in all of them and hence I shall focus on the dilemmas of Institution Building.

The space we are referring to is the Indian Civilizational Region. The temporal context is provided by the emergence of national states as successor states to a colonial state after the biggest and one of the longest anti-colonial struggles in history. In the colonial era anti-state mobilization was a legitimate collective enterprise, to attack state-related institutions was an act of heroism. However, there was no consensus about the nature of the anti-colonial movement.

The macro-holists believed that the anti-colonial collective action enveloped the entire population. The central thrust of this collective action was that everybody wanted to be emancipated from the subjecthood of the colonial state to the citizenship of the national state. In this view, the specific deprivations of particular collectivities as motive force for participation was relegated to the background. In contrast, the micro-nominalists emphasized precisely the specific interests of particular collectivities - the peasantry, industrial workers, women, youth, Muslims, Sikhs and the like. In this rendition, there was nothing like an anti-colonial struggle informing it of collective orientation enveloping the entire population. Each of the constituent elements plumbed for their benefits and improvements which in turn called for the creation of appropriate institutional mechanisms so as to effectively bargain with the colonial state (Oommen 1985).

If the macro-holists were `mobilisationists' determined to demolish the colonial state lock, stock and barrel, the micro-nominalists were `institutionalists' who

bargained for wresting their rights, and entitlements from the colonial state. This contestation, posed the original dilemma of institution building for South Asian States. I suggest that this tension re-surfaced in South Asian states after the initial short-lived euphoria about national states. The `nationalist' expectancy namely that the state will succeed in keeping the wide variety of primordial collectivisms under suspended animation to build the `nation' did not come through. Some became vociferous critics and others acute partisans of the state. In this process the possibility of building a set of institutions which have legitimacy in the eyes of *all* got eroded.

The second dilemma which borders on ambivalence may be situated in the evolution of South Asian civilizational consciousness. The anti-imperialist struggle was not simply a political mobilization. It was as much a castigation of the Western civilization. For example, in India Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Anand Math*, (1) Maithili Saran Gupta's *Bharat Bharati* (2) and M.K.Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj*, (3) sacrilized indigenous values and institutions and demonised most of the British institutions and values. And yet, the values and institutions sought to be inculcated and institutionalized through Indian Constitution at their core are modern, indeed western.

The third dilemma is to be located in the time-orientation enunciated by the national states. For South Asian states the cut-off periods of history vary, in spite of their common civilizational history. The cut-off point of history depends on which religious collectivity constitutes their dominant population. In this sense `national' reconstruction is neither a new beginning nor a new revolution but the re-conquest and recovery of an appropriate past. In India and Nepal the date of re-conquest begins some 3500-5000 years ago - the time of Aryan advent (Oommen 1990, pp. 17-33). For Srilanka it is as far back as 3rd century B.C. For Bhutan 7 century A.D. and for Burma 11 Century A.D. That is, when the dominant variety of Buddhism became the `national' religion. For Pakistan and to a certain extent for Bangladesh the cut-off point of history is more recent, the medieval period, when Muslim rule was firmly established in the sub-continent (Weiss 1986; Chakravarty and Narain 1986). This nostalgia for the past does not sit well with the agenda for the future namely building institutions for the running of a modern state. Most of the new institutions are western in content even if they have indigenous parallels.

The fourth dilemma that the South Asian states face in institution building is the dilemma of displacement versus accretion. In the West the central tendency was to displace the pre-modern institutions with the advent of modern ones. In South Asia the tendency is to retain the old, at least partly, and add the new ones to the existing stock. This means two sets of institutions - the old and the new - tend to co-exist and compete for space and resources. A viable solution could have been selective invocation of the relevant institutions depending on the context. But often

this did not happen. For example, certain kinds of dispute processing could have been more efficiently done by indigenous institutions and certain diseases could be better treated by non-allopathic systems of medicine. Instead of developing this kind of *institutional pluralism,* class and locality were allowed free play tending to reinforce these competing institutions - modern institutions for the well off and urban dwellers, traditional institutions for the rural poor. Thus instead of building *sectoral specific* institution the policy tended to cater to *client particularity* eroding the equalitarian orientations and public accessibility expected of institutions of democratic polities.

Fifthly, the process of institutional differentiation followed a different trajectory in South Asia. In the West it was characterized by gradual autonomization of different institutional complexes the state and church, the state and market and the state and civil society. But in South Asia this trajectory is different. When the first revolt occurred some 25 centuries ago between the Brahmin priests and Ksahtriya princes it did not eventuate in the bifurcation between the spiritual and the temporal realms. But alternate modes of life and new visions of the world emerged - Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism became alternate and totalistic visions of life.

This tendency and quality seem to partake South Asian institutions to this day. In turn, this means that institutional boundaries are often fuzzy, crossing the boundaries are not always taken to be inappropriate, division of labour between institutions not always neat and tidy. This can absorb a lot of role-conflicts *within* institutions but it also fosters inefficiency and non-accountability. Further, fuzzy boundaries can foster institutional expansionism leading to conflicts between institutions. The current judicial activism in some of the South Asian polities is a manifestation of this.

The distinct orientations of institutions and movements are often ignored or not understood in South Asia. Most state-sponsored institutional innovations are labelled as movements! For example, the launching and building of cooperative organisations, family planning and community development programmes and local self-government institutions are all called `movements'. This labelling by the state is not innocent but highly functional in acquiring the requisite legitimacy for these programmes and institutions. Movements are people's ventures, participatory in its tenor. But to the extent the purpose is not simply to create awareness and further conscientization but also to achieve targets, the labelling and treating of these ventures as if they are movements is not functional. Further, when they part-take their real character i.e. act as institutions they are believed to be and cognized as degenerated entities and enterprises. In this process not only that institutions do not achieve their accredited purposes but also get stigmatised. Institutions, organisations, bureaucracies are all disparaged and disvalued.

In contrast, movements are put on a high pedestal. Consequently, institutional entrepreneurs are dismissed as organization men, mere bureaucrats. Successful institutional entrepreneurs do project their enterprises as movements; they became charismatic personalities. But this poses new problems. With their exit institutions faced succession crisis often leading to the demise of the institution. Further charismatic leaders not infrequently have taken calamitous policy decision and nobody could question them. This eroded legitimacy of institutions.

Finally, the nature of South Asian society itself poses a dilemma in the process of institution building. To say that South Asian societies are complex societies is an understatement. I suggest that these are four-in-one societies, i.e. four analytically distinct elements are intertwined in their making. First, like all other societies, they are stratified: Class, gender, age and such other differences exist in them. But most of them are also culturally heterogeneous societies. Heterogeneity need not necessarily bring about intergroup inequality, but often it does. To complicate matters, South Asian societies are also hierarchal thanks to the institutionalized inequality brought about by the caste system. These three features are not mutually exclusive and often additive. But there is a fourth feature which can co-exist along with any of the three listed : South Asian societies are *plural* in the sense in which J.S.Furnivall used the term (Furnivall 1948). A plural society is one in which the internality of some of the segments is questioned: Mohajirins and Ahmedias in Pakistan, Muslims and Christians in India, Chakma Buddhists in Bangladesh are such examples. To build institution in such a society is an extremely intricate enterprise because we are referring to those institutions which are expected to be arbiters of justice and promoters of equality. The hierarchal and plural character of South Asian societies pose intractable problems in this context.

I suggest that if we view these dilemmas in conjunction we will get some enlightenment about the crisis of institution building in South Asia. With this general expose' of the dilemmas of institution building let us look at the experience of the largest and the most complex of South Asian polities, namely India. I shall attempt to do this with reference to three institutional complexes - state, civil society and the market. (4)

Broadly speaking, there were two competing models available for emulation when India attained political freedom. One model was that of the capitalist democracies of the West. In the West a binary distinction was postulated - the state and the rest of the elements in society - in the beginning. The crytallization of differentiation between market and civil society occurred in the context of the ongoing process of democratization in Western societies. Gradually civil society acquired the requisite autonomy and striking power to challenge the erring state and market. Thus in the liberal democracies of the West a balance between the

institutions of these three vital elements gradually emerged.

The trajectory of social transformation was entirely different in the post-colonial democratic and in socialist states, whose polities were essentially state-centric. In the case of the socialist states the party-state has fused the three institutions into one. The demise of the socialist state was substantially aided by the challenge posed by civil society. In ex-colonial democratic states such as India the process of autonomization of the different spheres began with the challenge posed by the civil society to the state.

Broadly speaking there were two competing models available for emulation when India attained political freedom. One model was that of the capitalist democracies of the West. These democracies had evolved gradually based on the principle of separation between the state, market and civil society. The underlying assumptions of this separation were the following. First, the state is an agency of coercion and is motivated by power. Therefore, the process of acquiring and exercising power should be well-defined and checked through legal mechanism. Second, economic activity is motivated by material incentives, and is to be regulated by the market mechanism in terms of free exchange. Third, civil society is the space for the free voluntary activity for the citizens, between the state and market, the zone in which a variety of political actions could be initiated to moderate the potential authoritarianism of the state and the likely rapacity of the market. In the West, state, market and civil society emerged successively and each of these spheres acquired a certain level of autonomy.

In contrast to the separation principle of capitalist democracies the socialist societies functioned on the institutional principle of fusion of the state, market and civil society. Here, the party-state monopolised all powers and regulated the market and civil society. From the command economy of the socialist state the market disappeared and civil society was absorbed by the state. The conjoint activities of the one-party system and its numerous front organizations came to be christened as people's democracy.

Independent India opted for what came to be referred to as the `third way' that is, combining political democracy, one of the distinctive features of capitalist states, with a planned economy, the hallmark of the socialist states. This was indeed a challenging experiment in that the best of both the models were attempted to be fused. However, it was the planned economy and the associated state-centrism which assumed saliency in the first quarter century of independent India. The state intended to promote economic development with an accent on distributive justice and also initiated a series of measures to introduce and institutionalize participative democracy in the context of planned development. The process of institution building was conditioned by this ideological slant. The state in India wanted to retain its centrality not only in initiating planned economic

development but also in launching and sustaining the civil society. In doing so it attempted to fuse state, market and civil society.

It may be noted here that the vibrancy of civil society is occasioned by the aberrations of the Indian state of which four are particularly gruesome. First, the declaration of internal emergency during 1975-76. Second, the manner in which operation Blue Star was conducted in 1984 to flush out Sikh militants from the Golden Temple. Third, the failure to bring to book expeditiously those who indulged in anti-Sikh riots in 1984. Fourth, the failure to prevent the dismantling of the Muslim shrine, Babri Masjid, in 1990. On the other hand, it should also be kept in mind that these instances are caused by and/or are instances of the virulence of the institutions of the civil society itself. That is, state authoritarianism and the violence of the civil society are two sides of the same coin. On the other hand, a democratic civil society and a democratic state reciprocally reinforces each other.

It is far from my intention to suggest that institutions of civil society emerged in India only quarter of a century after India attained political freedom. In fact, the Indian `national' state and India's civil society are twins, if by the latter one denotes a separate space of activity independent of the former. I shall illustrate this point invoking the example of Self- Employed Women's Association (SEWA).

The origin of SEWA, a non-governmental organization functioning in Ahmedabad (Gujarat) can be traced to the Textile Labour Association (TLA) which was affiliated to the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC). The INTUC functions as the labour front of Indian National Congress (INC) which has been the most dominant political party in India until recently. A women's wing of TLA was started in 1954 and by 1968 it had initiated a wide range of training programmes to augment the income of working women drawn from the lowest economic stratum. The women's wing of TLA became SEWA in 1971, the first self-employed women's organisation in India. SEWA formally broke off from TLA in 1980 when it differed from the latter's position with regard to the anti-reservation struggle. The anti-reservation struggle was a political action initiated by the upper castes/urban middle classes opposing the extension of the policy of protective discrimination to the Other Backward Classes (OBCs), that is, those who are ritually clean but socio-economically backward. While TLA supported it, SEWA opposed it, thereby expressing solidarity with the OBCs (Sreenivasan, 1992).

The specific problems of lower class self-employed women are low and unequal wages (as compared with those of men), unstipulated working hours, declining share in the work force, informalization and the like. To solve several of these problems it was necessary to seek support from the state be it in the form of passing appropriate legislations or creation of adequate infrastructural facilities. However, to achieve these objectives it was necessary to organize, conscientize and involve women in appropriate institutions. But the agenda of SEWA is gender-

specific as it confronts the men's world, which in turn had two contexts - the public and the private. In the public context harassment by police and extortion of exorbitant rates of interest by money lenders are important. In the private context the problem is to create favourable conditions in the family so that women can gain control over the income they generate. This is in turn leads to the focusing of attention on harassment of women resorted to by their male kin to extort their income (Sreenivasan 1992).

A few very interesting points emerge from the analysis of SEWA. First, the liberal understanding that civil society occupies the space between the state and the family is not necessarily correct; family can also be part of the theatre of civil society. This is turn obliterates the distinction between the private and the public. The private can remain private only if the inhabitants of that space perceive that agencies which are functioning in that ambit are just and fair to all the elements within it. Therefore, to negotiate the private realm institutions of civil society are necessary.

Second, it is wrong to characterize the state or the civil society as monoliths and their functioning as pro-or anti-to each other. To do so is to write off their democratic potentials and responses. For instance, SEWA seeks and often gets help and cooperation from the higher echelons of the state and its institutions. On the other hand, SEWA is at loggerheads with the lower level officials of the state from whom it seeks protection through intervention of senior officials.

Third, the enemies of civil society are not always external, they could as well be from within. This manifests itself in two different ways in the case of SEWA.SEWA and its parent body TLA took opposite positions in the context of struggles in Gujarat by the OBCs to wrest a better deal from the government. This led to the parting of ways between the two. The other internal enemy of SEWA was the male kin of the employed women in that they were stumbling blocks in achieving one of its crucial objectives, namely, increasing women's control over the income they generate.

We have seen that SEWA is not necessarily and always anti-state. In contrast, the movement for civil liberties was/is explicitly anti-state; it emerged as a response to the authoritarianism of the Indian state during 1976-77. That is why I referred to the vibrancy civil society attained in India by mid-1970s. And yet, civil rights, to be meaningful in the Indian context, ought to be viewed comprehensively so as to include economic rights given the precarious economic condition in which a substantial section of the Indian populace live (Dhagamvar, 1989). This in turn means two things. First, struggle for civil rights include fights not only against the state but also against employers (individuals and firms) who are likely to deny the economic rights of their employees. Second, several vulnerable sections in Indian society such as women, children, lower castes, tribes, and so on, became prime

players in the struggle. Admittedly, their deprivation is not confined to the economic or political contexts but emanates from the cultural context as well.

However, an analysis of the membership of the people's Union for civil Liberties (PUCL) demonstrates that it was the urban middle class which initiated the struggle in India whose primary concern is with political rights. But given the structure of deprivation faced by the poor and marginalized, those who are mobilized into collective actions are mainly drawn from the lower class, the lower castes, tribes, the rural poor and women. This results in a division of labour between the initiators of collective action and the collective actors, the urban middle class confines itself mainly to verbal articulations, publications and speeches, investigative reports regarding `atrocities' committed by the `terrorist' state. In contrast the majority of those who participate in public protests, demonstrations and meetings are the victims of state and private agencies. This calls for a clear distinction between state violence on the one hand and the violence emanating from the civil society on the other. While the latter should be detected, controlled and punished, the former is not to be tolerated at all from a responsible and democratic state. Admittedly then, the human rights struggles in India are clearly actions undertaken within the ambit of civil society even when their objective is economic. They empower the tribes, the oppressed castes, the rural poor, women and several other similar categories. The kind of institutions to be built in this context should have the resources to mediate between the state and the felt needs of the people.

As we have seen civil society tried to assert its autonomy although feebly, in independent India right from the beginning. But the story of the market is almost the reverse. The Bombay Plan of 1944 conceived by a few Indian industrialists wanted state intervention in planning, financing and in managing industrial development. Thus even before independence the economic nationalism of the big bourgeoisie in India promoted state intervention. However, two points may be noted here. One is that the all-India bourgeoisie was seeking protection from its foreign colonial counterpart through the state as the presence of the latter would continue even after the political withdrawal of the colonial power. The other point is that the small bourgeoisie of different linguistic regions (nations) also wanted protection from the Indian state against the all-India big bourgeoise. This is an important dimension of conflicts between `little nationalism' and great nationalism' in India (Guha 1979).

That is, the national state which succeeded colonial state invariably started with adequate legitimacy as an agent of economic intervention and development. Understandably, the Indian state had initiated a series of measures to achieve this objective. The two earliest measures were the instituting of the Planning Commission in March 1950 and the passing of the industries (Development and Regulation) Act of 1950. The first was an instrument to initiate the process of

long-term economic development and the second was intended to curb monopolistic tendencies and to avoid wastes emanating from undesirable competitions between private indusrtial houses.

The state in India was an active actor in the affairs of the Indian economy from 1947 till 1990. The announced aim of this involvement was to bring about economic development and distributive justice. But neither of these goals have been achieved. According to the Economic Survey of 1994-95 the rate of return from the public sector enterprises remains a measly 3 per cent. The restrictions put on the private companies did not also produce the intended results as licensing favoured the big business houses. On the other hand, in spite of the emphasis on distributive justice, not only did the disparity between the rich and the poor increase, but even the absolute proportion of the population below the poverty line increased. These developments justified the liberalization of the economy, thereby conceding autonomy to the market. That is, while the institutions of civil society wrested their autonomy from the state, autonomy was invested on the institutions of market by the state.

The implications of the progressive reduction in state-centrism and autonmization of civil society and market are to be noted. First, the state is increasingly compelled to share its sovereignty not only with other spheres within the domestic polity but also is constrained to undergo an erosion of its sovereignty vis-a-vis the Breton Woods Institutions. This is evident from the success with which the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and such other agencies can impose their conditionalities on the Indian state. Second, while the market in India has achieved a certain degree to autonomy vis-a-vis the state, the Indian market's autonomy is substantially eroded by the global market. Third, civil society has to fight its battle at two fronts - the state and the market - both formidable adversaries.

What general lessons can be drawn from these analyses? In the West a binary distinction was postulated - the state and the rest of the elements in society - in the beginning. In fact, the economy (market) was considered to be the principal element in the civil society. When state domination got eroded in the West, it was the market which gained autonomy first. This autonomization of the market facilitated substantial accumulation of wealth by the national bourgeoisie.

The crytallization of differentiation between market and civil society occurred in the context of the ongoing process of democratization in Western societies. Gradually, civil society acquired the requisite autonomy and striking power to challenge the erring state and market. Thus, in the liberal democracies of the West a balance between the institutions of these three vital elements gradually emerged.

The trajectory of social transformation was entirely different in the post-colonial democratic and in socialist states, whose polities were essentially state-centric. In

the case of the socialist states the party-state has fused the three institutions into one. The demise of the socialist state was substantially aided by the challenge posed by civil society. In ex-colonial democratic states such as India the process of autonomization of the different spheres began with the challenge posed by the civil society to the state. In these polities civil society itself was perceived as an entity distinct from that of the market, the linkage of the latter with the state being clear and loud. While the autonomization of the civil society was partially inspired by the Western model the trajectory of this process was different. The last sphere to acquire autonomy is the market and its autonomization is occurring under conditions of globalization. In turn, the autonomy gained by the three different spheres is also getting curbed. The worst affected in terms of the erosion of autonomy indeed is the market, followed by the state, with civil society being the least affected. Admittedly, the process of institution building in each of these sectors is affected by these largest forces.

Notes

(1) Anand Math was first published in 1882 in Bengali. The first English translation appeared in 1904. The Central characters in the novel are Hindus who constitute into bandit gange and plunder for altrustic purposes, the `national' cause. It is essentially an invocation to the Hindu psyche to restorethe ancient glory of India which was essentially Hindu in character (Chatterji, 1904)

(2) Bharat Bharati published in 1912 (in Hindi) was instrumental for the mobilisation of peasentry against the Brtish, especially in the Hindi belt. The book was couched esentially in imageries and idioms glorifying the Hindu past.

(3) *Hindi Swaraj* was first published in 1908 and it was not only an analysis of why the British enslaved India but was also an indictment of Western civilization and a plea for restructuring Indian society based on its ancient wisdom contained in Hindu Texts (Gandhi, 1908).

(4)This section borrows heavily from my Kalinga Lectures 1996, a shortened version of which was published in Oommen 1996, pp.191- 202.

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CHAPTER 4
POLITICAL PARTIES AND SOCIETAL VALUES (1)

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Perspective

How we think of institutions is - or has to be - one element in how we think of the West. To be sure, all societies, always, have had "institutions" in the sense of relatively stable, continuing relationships engaged in recurring activities: without them there would be no society. The pre-colonial Indian repertoire of institutions is familiar enough: family, village, caste order, bazaar, trading firm, kingship and its apparatus of government, *madarsa*, temple, pilgrimage, and so forth. When we think of "institution building", however, it is seldom directed at strengthening this repertoire. The concern is with institutions whose idea, if not their specific form, comes from the West.

This essay explores the values needed for sustaining political parties, as one kind of institution, in the domain of democratic politics. The notes assembled here began as scribbles in early 1996, as part of my continuing attempt to interpret my environment for myself. Political institutions have been central to my interests since the early 1980s: first in trying to understand what I see as the crisis in contemporary Indian society, and then in my attempt at considering the historical experiences - over the very long term - of three major civilizations, European, Indian, and now the Chinese.

Concepts

Politics, especially that concerning a society's core institutions and structures of governance, is a matter of the greatest importance in a large scale society. How these mechanisms are run is critical, for this sets the terms, as it were, for the conduct of all kinds of other activities - industry, scholarship, sports, or whatever. This politics deals with the instruments of power in the most general sense, just as the Reserve Bank deals with the instruments of money in the most general sense. This politics is, or can be, a society's prime mechanism for managing, bringing order to, its own present and future.

At the heart of political democracy lies political competition. At the national level in India, only a very *large* operation can be a credible political competitor. Such an effort *may* spring even from transient emotions or stimuli; but only a large political organization can *sustain* an enterprise of this order.

We may distinguish between three principal forms of political organization which can participate in a large-scale polity:

1. A *movement* is sustained by a collective purpose, a shared vision, a charismatic leadership - or some combination thereof. The members' levels of commitment and participation, and therefore their morale, are high. As between collective goals and personal interests, a movement thrives on subordinating the latter to the former. Movements are intrinsically episodic, however, being necessarily long on enthusiasm, and short on structure.

2. In order to participate in, and to manage, a society's everyday political affairs, a political movement would have to turn itself into a durable political party. It has to *routinize* its activities, and it does so by acquiring a *bureaucratic structure* (2) a party secretariat with officials, committees, possibly internal elections, and so forth; though this routinization - like everything else - can be leavened with a continuing, renewing, sense of shared vision and purpose.

3. A political party which controls a government, and therefore power, always runs the risk of turning into a *mafia*: that is, into an organization devoted principally to its members' personal gains, in ways which are illegitimate and clandestine - not open, legitimate, and law-governed. This risk can be reduced only if the society - or its political class - knows how to catch those using their control over power in clandestine ways and to mete them deterrent punishment. A people puts up with kleptocracy at its own peril.

Creating and maintaining an organization, and especially a bureaucratic structure, and mounting campaigns on a national scale, require massive resources: resources by way of personal time, of ideas and vision, of public commitment, but also a great deal of money.

The relative weight of these resources may vary from one organization to another. That is to say, the more an organization can command of voluntary time and commitment, the less it would need money, and *vice versa*. Building a national political party in a country as large and diverse as ours is a task of awesome proportions.

In multi-party political settings, a political party is a *voluntary association*, not a command organization like an army or a corporation (which would ordinarily command powerful sanctions for controlling its members). The party's bureaucratic structure - whose members may well be salaried - can be only a very small fraction of a party's strength. The party has to be able to secure the support of large

numbers outside this structure.

The orderly functioning of voluntary associations - and therefore of large scale political parties - assumes the prior availability of a sense (a) of mutual relatedness, and (b) of realistic mutual trust - both in considerable measure. I say "realistic" mutual trust in order to stress that the objects of such trust have to be *trustworthy* (see below): failing this, the feelings of trust will sour. Trust has to be a two-way street, and it has to be backed by norms which are widely seen to be binding. If this is granted, two propositions may be advanced:

A. The greater the sense of mutual relatedness, the less the energy - and resources - which need go into infighting within organizations - and control thereof.

B. The greater the sense of realistic mutual trust, the more easily can an organization raise and use resources collectively.

The matter of trust needs comment, and I shall do so at the levels of interpersonal relations, of a large organization, and of a large-scale industrial society successively.

1. For A to trust B, B has to be trustworthy, and vice versa. That is to say, A and B have to play the game by rules that both understand, and both have to know that the other will abide by them. (There is an assumption here, of course, that both A and B do share one set of rules for the game! The assumption cannot always be taken for granted.)

2. For the working of a large-scale voluntary association or political party, it is necessary for this sense of mutual trust to be *generalized*: working on a large scale, on a voluntary basis, has to rest on the qualities of *generalized trust* and *generalized trustworthiness*. That is to say, (nearly) every member of the party has to be trustworthy so that most members may be able to take it for granted that they can trust each other. We shall return to the question of trust.

3. A key theme in the history of recent centuries is that of the enlargement of scales of activities - commerce, manufacture, urban centres, travel - and of the range of possible relationships. This enlargement of scales is a defining element of the industrial society; and its other aspect is the vastly increased magnitudes of *interdependence*, commonly between persons and groups who may have no face-to-face contact whatever. In embarking on a journey by rail or air, the passenger reposes an enormous level of trust in all those who manage railways or airways; in buying a medicine, likewise in its manufacturer. An industrial society can function effectively, then, if it has mastered the skills of creating generalized trust - and trustworthiness - as values. Hence the importance of "standards", of quality certification, and the like. Implicit in all this is a sensitivity to general norms - and to rule of law.

The importance of *control*: All societies - especially large and complex societies - are crucially dependent on their devices for social control. This is vital, for trust

and trustworthiness can endure only if failures of trust elicit a condign response. The State has to be a central agency for underwriting these values in the larger social space.

Since the State commands vast agencies of (legitimate) force, law courts, and administrative power, it is a key instrument for social control. For that instrument to function responsibly, those who govern the State must themselves be accountable to the imperatives of social control. That is to say, their style and reputation must be such that they can be entrusted with power.

I quite realize that terms such as "control" and "social control" have been taboo in respectable Indian social and political thought in recent decades. We need to consider the heavy price we pay for this taboo. An extended discussion has appeared elsewhere(Saberwal 1996).

India: Twentieth Century Politics

If we look back on our experience with politics and political parties over the twentieth century, we can find only two mobilizational formulae which have clicked nationally:

1. *The National Movement* .There has been only one case: Indian National Congress. During the colonial period, its leadership controlled little by way of distributable material resources. The sense of humiliation at being subjugated was a major fact of life on which the national movement, from the late nineteenth century on, played to secure allegiance. With colonial power gone, the formula cannot be repeated; and, at least since the mid-70s, as the Congress continued as the principal party of government, it began to acquire the marks of a mafia.

2. *Religious identities*: Muslim League, Bhartiya Janata Party (and its associates). Their effectivenss has rested on digging up, and activating, the debris of history: that of symbols in the great religious traditions; and of past patterns of hurt, anxiety, and animosity, arising in myriad conquests, struggles, and domination in centuries past. The catch in this strategy is that it is inescapably divisive - and hostile to its "others". It corrodes the sense of mutual trust and relatedness, especially in relations with groups which it defines as "others"; it corrodes the preconditions of a vigorous democratic polity.

Other formulae have been tried, and these too may be seen in two groups.

A) At the regional level, other elements have been effective: a more or less revolutionary ideology, as with the *communist* parties in Kerala, West Bengal, and Tripura; *caste* and tribal identities; regional identities, reaching out to a linguistic community, sometimes through a religious tradition (Akali Dal) or a film star's following (Telegu Desam initially).

B) Then there are the coalitions. Janata Party in the wake of the Emergency

(1977-79), National Front in the mid-80s, and currently the United Front (1996-), have tried to build coalitions out of disparate, smaller constituents. Their rise to power has been swift; as swift the disintegration of the two earlier efforts. National level coalitions, of such diverse constituents, have possessed neither firm structure nor ideological glue. These were not, these could not be, stable. The lesson seems to be that a short-term issue may enable you to win one election - or at least to form a government; but you need a durable structure to stay the political course over time.

In sum, India has had serious difficulties in creating durable national political parties, properly so called, if we set aside the Congress as a special case. Why?

Underlying difficulties

We noted earlier some prerequisites for the viability of large scale political parties: a sense of mutual relatedness, and that of mutual trust, indeed of generalized mutual trust. In India, historically, this sense of relatedness and trust used to be concentrated within the family and *jati* - where the effective sanctions for internal control over members were located. It has been seen as a pattern of *small-scale morality* (Furer-Haimendorf 1967, pp.117, 225) in this setting, the lines of trust would be relatively short, compared with situations where conditions of open-ended trust have come to be realized more adequately. It will be noted that, in recent decades, under pressure from the growing scales of economic activity, mass media, personal and social mobility, and the like, this small-scale morality - and its underlying sanctions - have also been giving way.

Now for a quality like "trust" in society, it is a question not of "yes" or "no" but of "more" or "less". A measure of trust is involved every time you step out of your house or order tea in a shop. It is simply that the *more of trust* that can realistically be taken for granted, the *lower the costs* of overcoming mistrust in any activity.

What happens where the lines of trust are short? One possible response is the following: in dealing with an unknown person A, B feels the need for an intermediary who knows A, or one who knows someone who knows A. To establish a mutual relationship, A and B need mutual trust, but are unable to generate it bilaterally; they need an intermediary X who provides them mutual reassurance, who is able to guarantee their mutual good faith, as it were. X may be related to the two parties separately, through such relationships as kinship, long friendship, clientship, and so forth. This shortness of the lines of trust may account for what Morrison sees as an aspect of Indian society: the widespread need "in innumerable interactions in Indian life [for] intermediaries..., particularly when the initiator is the socially inferior party" (Morrison 1972, p. 327). Every society uses intermediaries

in some measure; the question is: how much?

To return to the enlargement of social scales: Independent India has had a lush profusion of all manner of associations, institutions, and arenas in which to act. Many of these are conceived formally in the Western mode but, whatever their charters, these have tended to suffer from two sets of weaknesses. On one side, these institutions - even the most hallowed ones, such as the Indian National Congress - have only a shallow grounding in Indian history, myth, psychology, and so forth: inescapably, since their models came from the West. On the other, their personnel necessarily come from within Indian society. The more "rooted" they are in the soil, as it were, the greater their engagement with the smaller scale moralities - call them "codes" - which, as we have noted earlier, used to prevail by and large.

You get a multiplicity of these codes in these institutions, then, which spells anomic conditions: not a condition in which mutual trust can be expected to blossom easily. Linguistic cleavages - especially those around English - are one aspect of this situation. Agencies for fostering codes that would hold over wide social spans have failed to emerge - or be effective.

The "Congress", at least since the mid-70s, has survived not as an effective political organization but as a forum of personal control by the Leader. This needed enormous resources - secured by virtue of control over the apparatus of state, and the favours that could be shown. Much of this was necessarily clandestine. Its collections were in the suitcase and similar modes. A good many suitcases went into private closets.

The question, then, is: how to build an alternate form of political organization? One that is open, breeds generalized trust, raises funds transparently, and therefore would be durable?

Conclusion

I have argued that the quality of generalized trust is crucial for constructing large political organizations, which are necessarily voluntary associations. A similar argument could be mounted for institutions more generally. I have also suggested that "effective rule of law" may help advance this quality of generalized trust, though it would take a great deal more too. This kind of advocacy can seem wholly quixotic in contemporary India. At a time when mistrust is all too common - even within a family or a village - to speak of "generalized trust" may seem to bespeak a loss of contact with reality; similarly, to speak of "effective rule of law", context-free rules, and the like in a society racked by hierarchy and segmentation.

These are serious objections which must be taken seriously; and it is necessary to agree on some ground rules. In any situation, the viability of a specific proposal

has to be judged not only absolutely, against some general ideas of viability, but also relatively, in relation to what alternatives are available.

One advantage of locating "trust" as a key value is this: even if people have difficulty in trusting their immediate kin, neighbours, and so forth, there is a widespread awareness of the importance of trust in social existence. It has ready equivalents in Hindi/ Urdu/ Punjabi - *itbar*, *vishwas* - and presumably in the other languages too. It may be possible, it seems to me, to pick this elementary kind of value, place it in a larger context - for example, by stressing the link between trust and trustworthiness - and lift it to the level of making it a general expectation. We should not jump into this (or anything else!) precipitately; but if the basic idea seems reasonable and necessary, we could search for ways to promulgate it.

Similarly with effective rule of law, context-free rules, etc. in a context of hierarchy and segmentation. What we have to do, it seems to me, is to establish clear points of reference - even if pursuing them means that we have to take collective U-turns, socially speaking. If general rules are inescapably important for our future, we have no option but to learn our way to procedures whereby we can get around, or override, this hierarchy and segmentation.

We must recognize that, at the end of this twentieth century, it is only societies which learn the skills requisite for restructuring themselves consciously, repeatedly, that will retain the autonomy requisite even for making such an attempt at all. The others will become banana republics, large or small. Societies *can* learn the skills requisite for restructuring themselves. The most spectacular example, here, is contemporary Europe. Within this century, its internal antagonisms and conflicts provided occasions for two World Wars. That was barely two generations ago. Currently, the continent is in process of *political* unification into a federal structure. The various national entities are dovetailing parts of their sovereignty with institutions of federal Europe. The scope of this reconstruction is comprehensive, not limited to the "market": it includes education, human rights, animal husbandry, and a great deal else.

On one side, this reconstruction relies on the legal tradition; all Europe is inheritor of the same, Roman legal tradition. Confidence in the capacity of that legal tradition to mediate between national and federal laws and institutions in the future has been an important element in enabling Europeans to trust each other - despite their all too recent history. On the other side, this reconstruction is scarcely an act of God. This seemingly dramatic change of course for Europe is in fact the *slow* culmination of initiatives taken, and persisted in, by visionaries like Jean Monnet over the decades - since the second War, and indeed much before then.

To sum up, then, the important thing, I would submit, is to think about directions we ought to take, regardless of how quixotic these may seem. If our direction, and goals, are picked strategically, and pursued relentlessly, what may seem

impossible at one point begins to look only difficult soon thereafter.

Notes

(1) Much in this essay is owed to Raju Damle, Mushirul Hasan, Bishnu Mohapatra, and Sunanda Sen. The argument was shaped through a discussion at a workshop on "Rethinking Institutions: Democratic politics in post-colonial India", Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University , New Delhi, March 22-23,1996. A variation on this will appear in Seminar issue on "Rethinking Institutions" (in press).

(2) "Structure" refers in this note to a bureacratic apparatus: "Organisation" , to more varied political forms.

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CHAPTER 5
GENDER AND INEQUALITY IN SRI LANKAN SOCIETY: A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE (1)

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Introduction

The sociological approach to the study of inequality takes into account the difference between inequalities inherent in the nature of human beings and those which are evident in their conditions of existence. Inequalities inherent from nature are of no interest to sociologists. But differences in life chances and life styles among people which result from different positions they occupy in society, is the area of interest to sociologists (Beteille1972).

Thus the concern in this paper is, firstly, to bring gender into the main stream Sri Lankan sociological studies on inequalities where it has been neglected. Secondly, perhaps more importantly, to understand how, gender differences act as an independent dimension which can also cut across other dimensions such as class, caste, and ethnicity in determining one's life chances and one's status in Sri Lankan society.

Earlier studies on Sri Lankan society by sociologists and anthropologists did attempt to explain and interpret social inequalities evident in society. Their studies however, concentrated mainly on aspects of caste, kinship and land ownership. Passing remarks on gender relations in these studies never evolved into serious discussions (Ryan 1953; Pieris 1956; Leach 1961; Yalman 1967; Obeyesekere 1967).

Similarly, recent studies on social inequalities have also neglected the aspect of gender as their main concerns have been on factors such as income, occupations, ethnicity, landownership, correct political connections and caste (Hettige 1984, 1995; Perera 1985; Gunasinghe ,1966). However,some scholars have been able to break this tradition and to bring gender into focus. De Zoysa in her study of a village in the Mahaweli Settlement area, analyses the relationship between gender divisions, gender ideology, power and resistance among different class groups of settlers (De Zoysa 1995). Perera tried to understand the manner in which female sexuality and gender roles were socially and culturally constructed

in Sinhala society by looking at the restrictive sexual scripts that are imposed on women (Perera 1985).

Feminist Critique of Sociology and Stratification Studies

One of the basic feminist critique on sociology is that, sociology is a male-dominated discipline and as such it has important implications for its theories, methods, research and teaching (Abbot and Wallace ,1990).

In the 1960s and 1970s, women sociologists became more and more concerned with the way sociologists interpreted the world. They felt that sociologists' interpretations were only from the perspective of men, where women were ignored and marginalised. Therefore they argued that existing theories and explanations could be challenged. Abbot and Wallace go on to say that sociology also played a key role in maintaining women's subordination and exploited position .

Feminist critique of sociology could be summarized as :

1. Sociological research has been mainly concerned with men and theories are for men.
2. Research findings are generalized for the whole population through male samples.
3. Women's issues and concerns are often considered unimportant and thus ignored in analysis.
4. When women are included in research the situation is distorted.
5. Gender is seldom used as an important variable in interpretations (Abbot and Wallace 1990).

However, there is some change. Sociologists can no longer ignore, distort or marginalise gender divisions in their studies, as Giddens says:

"There is a basic problem of theory, which hardly figures at all in orthodox traditions of sociology, but which can no longer be ignored. This is the problem of how we are to incorporate a satisfactory understanding of gender within sociological analysis" (Giddens 1989 p.703).

Gender and Stratification

Although feminists have been challenging and questioning male bias in sociology since the 1960s, it took much more time than that for the question of gender to be addressed directly in stratification studies. It was only in 1984 that a seminar on gender and stratification took place in the University of East Anglia. The papers presented at the seminar, later came out as a publication titled "Gender and Stratification" .This has clearly demonstrated the importance of gender in stratification studies.

Thus stratification studies were for many years 'gender blind'. But as Giddens says:

"Yet gender itself is one of the most profound examples of stratification. There are no societies in which men do not, in some aspects of social life have more wealth, status and influence than women"(Giddens 1989, p.230).

Then the relevant question would be :"why did 'gender blindness' operate in stratification studies"?. In answering the above question it is worth quoting from Parkin:

"Female status certainly carries many disadvantages compared with that of males in various areas of social life including employment opportunities, property ownership, income, and so on. However, these inequalities associated with sex differences are not usefully thought of as components of stratification. This is because for the great majority of women the allocation of social and economic rewards is determined primarily by the position of their families and, in particular, that of the male head. Although women today share certain status attributes in common, simply by virtue of their sex, their claims over resources are not primarily determined by their own occupations but, more commonly, by that of their fathers or husbands. And if the wives and daughters of unskilled labourers have somethings in common with the wives and daughters of wealthy landowners, there can be no doubt that the differences in their overall situations are far more striking and significant. Only if the disabilities attaching to female status were felt to be so great as to override differences of a class kind would it be realistic to regard sex as an important dimension of stratification" (Parkin 1971, pp. 14-15).

Therefore, it is not that gender inequalities are not visible in the society, but they are not seen as a significant factor to be considered, because women's position is determined by that of their husbands or fathers. Parking, in a way accepts gender inequalities, but conveniently ignores it. This is because he interprets such inequalities through a male or patriarchal ideology where male supremacy is endorsed.

The omission of gender is not only seen in Sri Lankan sociological and anthropological studies, it is also reflected in the university curriculum at both undergraduate and postgraduate studies. However, a Masters Degree programme on Women's Studies was launched in 1991 by the Faculty of Graduate Studies in the University of Colombo. Although this is a major development, a need still exists, to bring a gender perspective into the courses offered at the university. As an initial step towards this goal, an optional course on 'Gender and Development' will be offered to undergraduates specializing in Sociology at the University of Colombo, in 1998.

Until recent times, sociologists viewed that class inequalities largely determined

gender stratification. Although, this idea was debated and discussed in the 1980s in the west, it is still important for Sri Lankan studies. Therefore, I wish to outline this debate briefly in the following paragraphs.

The critiques on stratification studies challenged the use of household as the unit of stratification as it dealt inadequately with households which did not have an adult male or where the wife eamed more than the husband or where husbands did not work at all. They argued against the idea of taking the class of the man to determine the position of other members in the household unit. Goldthrope (1983) made a strong attempt to justify the conventional position by arguing that women's paid work had very little significance in determining the class position of women and it was determined by the male adult in the household (Goldthrope, 1983). Sylvia Walby also raises questions on later criticisms made by others on Goldthrope's work .Walby says:

"The questions at centre of conventional stratification theory have not been criticized and replaced; rather women have simply been added on to existing concerns. Gender inequality is not examined in its own right in these analyses, despite claims that women are being put back in. While these critiques are necessary revisions, they are not sufficient. An adequate attempt at a theory of stratification must also attempt to explain gender inequality and changes in its form and degree. Stratification theory should be seeking to specify and explain the changing nature of relations and inequality between men and women as well as that between conventionally defined classes" (Walby,1986,p.30).

Thus, Walby in her discussion takes inequality between men and women as a key feature of contemporary society and gives attention to issues of gender relations and gender politics. She argues that women do not constitute a class, but nevertheless have some features of their social situation which are common to all women.

The discussion that follows attempts, briefly, to explore and interpret the gender relations in spheres of education, employment and violence to understand inequality in Sri Lankan society. Therefore, the attempt would be as Walby says, not to argue whether or not the woman's class position is determined by her husband or by her own employment or whether the household is a proper unit of study, as it would not take us to our task of analysing gender inequalities. Therefore, the task would be to explain the gender relations in the above mentioned three areas and to argue that gender should be considered as a separate dimension in the study of inequality as it cannot be always explained through other divisions such as class, caste and ethnicity.

Education

Gender disparities in access to general education have almost been eliminated due to educational policies introduced in the 1940s free education in state institutionns at all levels, primary, secondary and tertiary, providing scholarships and bursaries and establishing schools around the country (Jayaweera ,1995a). Therefore the disparities in the literacy rate is more between sectors rather than men and women. It is being noted that the drop out rate of boys at secondary level is higher than girls as boys opt out for employment. Therefore, poverty is the main reason for non-schooling and dropping out of the school system and not gender.

Gender disparities and inequalities tend to occur not at the stage of entering the school system but at the stage of selecting the stream of study to pursue at the secondary and tertiary levels of education and at the time of entering the labour market. Gender seems to be an influencing factor in the choice of curriculum offering in the senior secondary grades and in the university. A higher percentage of girls are in the arts stream 75% in 1985 and 68.7% in 1993 and a relatively lower percentage in the science stream 46.2% in 1985 and 45.5% in 1993 (Jayaweera1995a).Gender stereotyping is further demonstrated in vocational and technical training which is a sub-sector in the educational system. Although the enrollment in vocational and technical institutes has increased among women, the skills they obtain from these institutes are limited to those occupations which are socially determined as 'feminine' work (Jayaweera ,1995b). Once again the determining factor for receiving a certain skill remains independent to one's own wish or abilities, but molded by external factors - the society and the culture.

Jayaweera examining the impact of education on women for the period since the UN Decade for women says that there is no positive linear relationship between the educational levels of women and their employment status. As this is an important aspect of gender inequalities it would be discussed in the following section.

Employment

With regard to employment status of women, Jayaweera says, during the last few years women had access to new employment opportunities, but they were mostly in the garment industry which reinforced gender subordination and inequality. She says that women concentrate largely in peasant and plantation agriculture, traditional feminine and modern assembly line industries, teaching, nursing and in domestic services (Jayaweera 1995b). Gender role stereotypes in the school and vocational training programmes confine women to a narrow range of skills which invariably restricts employment opportunities.

Women unlike men are also constrained in their economic participation as they are still seen as the home-maker and because the unequal gender division of labour within the household still exists. This limits their participation in the labour market. Similar to Weber's analysis of class, gender relations act as a social closure to exclude women from certain occupations which would bring better financial rewards and prestige. Therefore, one could argue that gender acts as an important factor in determining the social status in Sri Lankan society.

Violence

Gender based violence is on the increase. Newspapers daily report on rape, incest, assaults and killings of women and all other forms of harassments in work place, public places, transport and home. Child prostitution and trafficking in women is a major social problem in the country. Violence against women is not confined to a particular group- class, caste, ethnic, urban or rural sectors, but all women are vulnerable.

Gender based violence is violence directed against women by men. Since men consider themselves as superior, dominant and more powerful than women, they make use of their superior power against women. Studies on rape and other types of sexual harassments have revealed that it is not just a fact of sexual desires but it is a form of demonstrating superiority and power. Domestic violence is a reflection of the unequal power relations between the man and the woman in the household. The unequal power relations is a result of the unequal access to resources within the household. Thus gender based violence is a result of gender inequalities and therefore could not be explained through other divisions in the society.

Conclusion

Gender which was neglected or marginalized in the traditional sociological analysis is gradually being discussed and examined. However, still gender is not included in the main stream Sri Lankan Sociological studies on inequality. Gender inequalities are evident in the areas of education, employment and violence. Such inequalities cannot be explained fully by other social divisions such as class, caste, ethnicity and political power, although at times they can override gender. Further research is needed in the main stream studies to establish the fact that gender differences cannot be explained by other sociological concepts such as class, caste, ethnicity, and political power. Thus, this is a task for sociologists studying Sri Lankan society, for the future.

Note

(1) A revised paper presented at the South Asian Conference on "The 20th Century Heritage of Sociology/Social Sciences and the Future of Sociology in South Asia", held during 25-27 March 1997 at Mumbai, India. I wish to thank Sasanka Perera, dept. of Sociology, University of Colombo, for his valuable comments.

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CHAPTER 6
NGO FAILURE AND THE NEED TO BRING BACK THE STATE

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The phenomenal rise in the number and influence of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) worldwide over the last two decades, has given rise to the emergence of a new development `paradigm'.(1) Along with the public and the private sectors, an NGO sector has established itself on an equal, if not greater, footing in the delivery of economic and social development. Today, NGOs are considered to be a far better conduit for the distribution of multilateral and bilateral aid, for the dissemination of new ideas and concepts with regard to social and economic development, and as a means to foster participation and democracy in order to improve `civil society'. This `New Policy Agenda' (Edwards and Hulme, 1996), has shifted the onus of sustainable development on to non-governmental organisations, which are increasingly seen as a panacea for all the ills that afflict underdeveloped countries. NGOs are expected to address and resolve issues which range from those that affect the environment, gender inequality, sustainable development, law, political emancipation and participation, and almost every other shortcoming that is supposed to convey some meaning to the term `underdeveloped.'

Issues or areas that the private or state sector cannot address, are automatically expected to be undertaken by NGOs. The fact that the NGO `movement' has failed to do so is now increasingly recognized by observers and analysts of the process. (2) The reasons for this failure are numerous, perhaps also based on the high and unfair expectations from NGOs after all else had seem to have failed. In this paper, we examine the nature of the failure of the NGO movement following its explosive rise, and suggest that by simply rejecting all things statal, donor agencies targeted NGOs to disseminate their funds. In many ways, NGOs are a creation of funding agencies, possibly a major explanation for their failure. This paper argues, that it is now time to bring the state back in, into development and politics, but with the need to redefine and rebuild a new form for the state.

The State vs NGOs

The principle justification and driving force behind the new found Conventional Wisdom regarding the emphasis on the NGO sector is state failure. It is surmised that the state and the public sector have not been able to deliver development to the presumed beneficiaries, and non-state institutions, essentially the private sector and NGOs, must then step in and fill the void. Interestingly, much of the literature in defence of and propagating the NGO sector/alternate as a form of development agency, emphasises only state failure, which is supposed to be rectified by NGO interventions. NGOs, however, are seldom seen as a means to correct market failure. It is this contrast between the state and its organisations and NGOs, and in the manner in which they conduct development, that underlies the justification for increasing dependence on NGOs as conduits for development delivery.

The general caricature of the state as a result of its failure to deliver development, is that "it relies on bureaucratic mechanisms and seeks enforced compliance with government decisions, made by experts according to technical principles and criteria following policy objectives set by top officials" (Uphoff 1993, p.610). Moreover, government agencies come up with `paternalistic pronouncements and policies' which discourage participation and self-help (Uphoff 1993).

NGO Failure and the End of the Myth

Probably the most damning criticism that has been made of NGOs, is that their entire existence, and not merely dependence, is on donor money, almost always from abroad. In fact, a number of observers of the NGO phenomenon have argued that the NGO explosion in recent years, is entirely donor driven, and the `spending spree' launched by donors gave birth to literally thousands of NGOs in a matter of two or three years (Edwards and Hulme 1995; Edwards and Hulme 1996; Bratton 1989, Fowler 1991).

The extent of donor dependence varies: NGOs in Sierra Leone and the Gambia, for example, are said to be almost entirely dependent on external resources, "and are more vulnerable to changes in the external environment and more vulnerable to external control" (Hudock 1995, p.659). The same situation is said to exist in Kenya, where it is believed that NGOs receive more than 90 per cent of their operational and capital expenses from abroad (Bratton 1989). Even the success stories of the NGO sector in South Asia like the Working Women's Forum, BRAC, and other high profile NGOs, have been able to expand due to major inputs from European and Canadian aid giving agencies, and from the World Bank. Edwards and Hulme have argued that the availability "of large scale funding

for NGO provision has fueled the rapid growth to well-known NGOs such as BRAC, particularly in South Asia"(Edwards and Hulme 1996, p.963).

A number of authors have expressed alarm at the probable erosion of legitimacy of NGOs as a consequence of taking money from donors (Dichter 1996; Edwards and Hulme 1996; Najam 1996; Edwards and Hulme 1995; Brett 1993; Fowlers 1991; Bratton 1989). They feel that it may not be possible to have an independent outlook or `mission' if they rely on donor funds. Because of their dependence on this money, their accountability gets shifted `upwards', rather than where it ought to be, `down below' at the grassroots. The example of Sarvodaya, an established and respected large NGO in Sri Lanka shows how even large well established and respected NGOs have to suffer the consequences of donor conditionality. Jehan Perera of Sarvodaya, claims that the movement was `destroyed' on account of donor interference. He argues that "what started out as a partnership based on dialogue (with donors) became a sub-contractship based on commands and sanctions" and that `NGOs must recognise that when they work with donors, they enter into a power relationship in which they are the subordinate' (Perera1995i, p.877). Alan Fowler substantiates the claims made by Perera, when citing other experiences he argues that, "donor agencies often impose onerous reporting burdens on NGOs in order to satisfy obligations to their own tax-payers... [and] fulfilling donor demand dictates NGO orientations ... Time and again one hears NGOs complain that too much of their time is taken up responding to and managing their donor instead of servicing their clients" (Fowler 1991, pp.70-1).

Beyond finance and donor dependence and even puppetisation, there are other serious problems and concerns about how NGOs have functioned in the past. Many of the assumptions about what NGOs do, and especially in the *manner* that they do development contrasted with the way the state functions as highlighted in an earlier section, are found to be significantly wanting.

Although NGOs are expected to democratise civil society (see below) and that is why they are the preferred route for funds from Western donors for doing development, the NGOs own, supposedly participatory and democratic functioning, has been questioned in almost every study. A top-down manner of delivery, much in the way government functions, is common in NGOs (Fowler 1991). Not only is the concept of participation often misunderstood, it is also misused and participation `very often means nothing more than allowing the local community to "agree with what we (i.e.the NGO) already intend to do" (Najam 1996, p.346). The `partnership' then `becomes merely a sham ritual of choosing local functionaries and allowing the already chosen objectives to be restated in the local vernacular. The purpose becomes no more than a "feel-good" exercise for both the local community and the NGO' (Najam1996, p.346).

Replicability and sustainability, two critical criteria which define the success of

NGO projects, have also not been fulfilled in many cases. The first, because very specific conditions may result in the success of one particular project which cannot be transported elsewhere, and the second, because of dependence on foreign funds. The success of a project in one region or country often depends upon the quality and leadership of the NGO, on the responsiveness of locals and local conditions, and a host of other factors. If the initial conditions required for successful projects are changed, then replicability may not be a matter of course. The claim that NGOs are more cost-effective than the public sector has also been questioned by a number of studies. Edwards and Hulme, while acknowledging that a handful of NGOs have had cost advantages compared to alternative sectors, show that "NGOs are not, however, automatically more cost-effective than other sectors" and argue that "there is no empirical study that demonstrates a general case that NGO provision is "cheaper" than public provision" (Edwards and Hulme,1996, p.963). Kaimowitz (1993) and Wiggins and Cromwell (1995) show that in the case of agricultural technology and seeds, the state sector is far cheaper than NGOs (Kaimowitz1993; Wiggins and Cromwell1995).

NGOs even fail by their own very special criterion, that they work for, and reach, the poorest of the poor (Edwards and Hulme, 1995; Edwards and Hulme 1996; Vivian 1994). In the case of Bangladesh, for example, Edwards and Hulme quote other studies stating that "even take together, the largest NGOs in Bangladesh (including the Grameen Bank) reach less than 20% of landless households in the country" (Edwards and Hulme 1996p.963-4). In the case of Zimbabwe, the situation is more extreme: even "a very generous estimate would put the percentage of Zimbabwe's population reached by NGO income generating projects (by far the most common type of NGO activity) at less than one per cent" (Vivian 1994, p.184).

The political and politicisation impact of NGOs has also been noted by observers, where the recent spate of donor funded NGOs that have emerged, are recognised to be far less political and more middle class than those of the 1970s and early 1980s. This middle class professional wave that has now taken over NGOs, has transformed these organisations with well publicised marches and media focused protests into organisations that have even surpassed the `politics of symbolism' which they used to embody, to a `politics of rituals' (Sethi, 1993). These new organisations are now involved in "organising and participating in seminars and workshops, holding press conferences, preparing audio-visuals and films, etc." (Sethi, 1993, p.78). Samad (1993), caricaturing NGOs in Pakistan and elsewhere, comments that: `expensive conferences are arranged all over the world on NGOs. Young men and women who look good and talk good are now seen in five star lobbies talking participation with donors. Lengthy consulting reports at highly inflated rates are prepared for NGOs by NGOs. The upper class has shown

its alacrity yet again. They are taking full advantage of the new and generous opportunity being offered by the NGO'. The `easy money' syndrome has resulted in transforming the NGO movement to the extent that a self censorship has penetrated the NGO sector, where in order not to create too many political waves, NGOs avoid and keep out of political issues and controversy, toning down their criticism of governments and donors.

A Return to the State?

This paper contends that the hype regarding NGO as an alternate development paradigm has been grossly exaggerated. Some NGOs have certainly been able to address issues and targets in a manner they had originally set out to do, and are considered success stories. However, given the very large number of NGOs that have emerged on the scene, the success cases are too few to offer options, solutions, or any sort of credible alternative. Moreover, it is just the handful of success stories which are continuously cited, without many more NGOs joining their ranks. In South Asia for example, one usually hears primarily of BRAC, the Grameen Bank, Proshika, and Gonoshtru Kendra in Bangladesh; SEWA, WWF, SPARC, and the Chipko movement in India; Sarvodaya, and SANASA in Sri Lanka; and the AKRSP and OPP in Pakistan, more or less complete the entire set. This region collectively has many tens of thousands of NGOs active in different specialization's. The fact that one does not hear of even a few hundred success stories, cannot be due to insufficient or poor public relations on the part of NGOs. If the successful cases are indeed so few, to announce that an NGO-led, third sector, New Policy Agenda or new development paradigm has established itself is, to say the least, a bit premature.

Either that, or the paradigm is itself flawed. If the emergence of the NGO sector has been on account of, and as a reaction to, state failure, then to simply assume that NGOs will do what the state should have done, is mere wishful thinking. It seems that the anti-state lobby, wanting to get away from funding through the public sector, saw the presence of NGOs as a way out. This anti-state thinking has been taken to extreme lengths: in the Rural Water Supply Sector in Pakistan, for example, under World Bank directive, public sector schemes are being forced upon presumed beneficiaries, even where community organisations did not exist, or when they are unable or unwilling to take on the responsibility of managing and operating these schemes, all in the name of `participation' and community control (Zaidi 1996). Due to the serious weaknesses in the way of NGOs have operated, it is quite possible that the `model' itself has inherent faults which cannot, for the moment, be rectified by fine tuning of any sort. In fact, we argue, that while some NGOs have worked well in some areas, in some projects, with certain

specialisation and expertise, they can go only so far forward. They do not represent an alternative to the state and the public sector, and at best are providers of a minimal amount of `band aid social welfare'. The only alternative to state failure is the state.

The problem of advocating a renewed role of the state, is the perception of the state, which is considered to be corrupt, inefficient, dictatorial, parasitic and inflexible. This, indeed, is the truth. However, the form and nature of the state has been changing at a very fast pace in recent years. Acknowledging the failure of the `old state', and because there is no real alternative to the state in the provision of most social and public goods, state reform in most underdeveloped countries is gaining prominence. In this process, NGOs, advocacy groups, political parties, and even multilateral and bilateral aid agencies, have played an important role. The focus for the new form has been one where participation, in a larger democratic context, with delegated and decentralised structures, has been emphasised. While the `new state' is still untried and tested in most countries and its application in the real world still very recent, it is possible that it may address issues of underdevelopment in a more productive manner than either the old state, the market, and especially NGOs. This, in fact, must be the `New Policy Agenda' to be pursued by all with stakes in development. Although prone to many pitfalls, the state is at least *accountable* to its citizens, unlike NGOs, who have very little accountability and responsibility to any one but their donors. All the qualities attributed to NGOs before the experience turned sour, are also inherent in the process of building the new form of the state. The experience from the NGO movement over the last two decades may help in avoiding the mistakes of the past. That, it seems, may possibly be the most substantial and long term contribution made to development by NGOs.(3)

Conclusions

This paper has argued, based on a literature survey, that NGOs are a creation of donor funding, and are critically dependent on foreign moneys for their survival and existence. It is extremely improbable that NGOs would have existed as a phenomenon at the scale at which we currently observe, if their had been no donor money. This has resulted in NGOs essentially pursuing policies and priorities determined by purse-strings, rather than by what may be more preferable. The hype and myth created around NGOs has been exaggerated, and is false, and NGOs, at best offer a band aid option. They do not form part of any successful alternative paradigm, and the qualities which are supposed to be imbued in NGOs—participation, community orientation, democratic functioning, flexibility, innovativeness, cost-effectiveness, replicability, sustainability—are lacking. While

a handful of NGOs will certainly improve the quality of life of a few project beneficiaries, their reach will continue to be restricted to, at best, the `project area'.

Because of their limited scope and reach, NGOs are no alternative, of any sort, to the state, and cannot represent an alternative to state failure. The only alternative to state failure, which is indeed endemic, is not privatisation, the market, or any new or alternate paradigm, but the state itself. (Would there have been a need for NGOs if the state was more efficient? Evidence from the United States shows, that in fact, NGOs "seem to last only as long as state and market institutions are inadequate. Once the performance of public and private institutions improves, they replace collective action..." (Uphoff 1993, p.618). A different form of state, based on a different equation with `civil society', which is decentralised, delegatory and democratic, may perhaps be the only alternative to state failure itself. Reform of the state is a political task, unlike working in the NGO sector, and requires political action based upon political priorities and preferences. If the NGO sector is to gain its lost credibility, it must evaluate itself and join this process for change.

Notes

(1) By the term `non-governmental organisation', we mean those national, private, nonprofit organisations which are involved in developmental work in underdeveloped countries and are not membership organisations; this term excludes Northern NGOs

(2) It is important to evaluate the *nature* of the NGO sector as a whole, rather than look at a few successful or failed NGO projects. Moreover, as Kaimowwitz argues, " when dealing with as heterogeneous and complex a phenomena as the NGOs, one is forced to make generalizations that may not apply to each individual case and to present general tendencies more schematically than they occur in practice" (Kaimowitz, 1993 ,p.1139).

(3) While advocating a return to the state, especially of a new form, we do recognise the real possibility of another state failure as well. However, this should not deter those involved in development whether from an academic disposition or those involved as implementors, to work towards a better state form based on the experience of development practices over the last fifty years.

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CHAPTER 7
THE CHALLENGES OF DEVELOPMENT AND THE ROLE OF THE SOCIAL SCIENTIST

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Introduction

The purpose of the paper is to discuss the relevance of sociological analysis of the development processes and selected projects in Bangladesh context. Bangladesh, with a population of more than 120 million is one of the most populous countries of the world. Till recently, the population has also grown rather fast at rates of around 2.5% per annum i.e., doubling every 30 years or so. While most of the people, around 80% or so, still live in the villages, the rate of urbanization is rather fast leading to urban congestion, growth of shanties and pollution.

By the usual development indicators, Bangladesh is one of the poorest countries of the world with a per capita income of only US $ 220 (UNDP, 1996). The economy is dependent to a large extent on the agricultural sector, not so much directly, as at present no more than 34-35% of GDP is contributed by agriculture, but because much of the rest of the economy, manufacturing industries, services and exports depend on the agricultural output, their processing or servicing. The manufacturing industries account for a small, no more than 10-12% of the GDP. Among these, the industry of ready-made garments is unique in that it is the only major industry which is not dependent on agriculture either as a source of raw materials or as its major customer. It is probably also unique in the sense that it has the potentials of changing many of the social norms in a conservative society such as that in Bangladesh because it is dependent largely on the employment of women. Poverty coexists with income inequality, a major reason of which is the inequality of access to assets and resources. One particular aspect of social inequality is that of gender. Women are less literate, and more prone to economic, social and other forms of exploitation and vulnerability. While people suffer from many types of hardship, the nature also inflicts pain from time to time. Floods ravage the country with almost clock-wise regularity while cyclones along the coast some time take heavy toll of human lives and property.(1)

Challenges of development in Bangladesh are thus many and rather complex. Their resolution calls for not simply sound economic management but a considerable ingenuity in social engineering. These include among others the development of transport infrastructure, preparedness against natural hazards, checking population growth and fostering gender-equity. There certainly are many others. But these are sufficient to make the general point that in all such cases the non-economist social scientist's role in analysing the pertinent issues become paramount as a guide towards development practice. The discussion that follows draws on four case studies.

Case study 1: The Jamuna Multi-Purpose Bridge

The Jamuna Multi-Purpose Bridge Project (JMBP) has been designed and is now under construction to establish a strategic link between the eastern and western parts to integrate the country and promote inter-regional trade, economic and social development. If envisages a quick movement of goods and passenger traffic by road and rail by means of a 5 km long and 18.5 metre wide bridge.

The construction of the JMB along with the approach roads involves the acquisition of more than 2700 ha of land on both sides of the river affecting more than 41 thousand people directly and a similar number indirectly. The total number of affected households are about 12-13 thousand. However, there had been attempts from the very beginning to minimise the dislocation by not simply making good the losses but taking up comprehensive resettlement and rehabilitation plan for the project-affected persons (PAPs).

The essence of the resettlement plan is provide not only a "liberal" cash compensation for loss of land and/or structure to legal land owners but also to facilitate a search for equivalent land for purchase and resettlement. Furthermore, those who have not lost but have otherwise been adversely affected are to be resettled, if they so desire, in particular areas. This applies to the very poor ones.

All these need very complex and time consuming social interactions among several groups of actors. There is the government armed with a land acquisition act and represented for operational purposes by the Deputy Commissioners in the districts who actually serve notice and acquire the land and hand it over to the JMB authority. The JMB authority in turn is required to interact continuously with the PAPs so that the latter may be compensated for their losses and resettled and/or rehabilitated before the land can actually be transferred to the former for construction work. Further there are all sorts of social dynamics set in motion among the PAPs. The JMB is like any other bureaucratic and hierarchical development agency that is so typical in the South Asian subcontinent.

What the above portrays is that a situation conventionally thought of basically

as an economic investment decision is also a social investment decision. It means keeping intact as far as possible the community framework and providing a redressal mechanism against the social (and of course, economic) dislocation that has taken place due to a large infrastructure development project. Social mobilization through publicity campaigns, participatory management of the identification of PAPs, the extent and nature of loss, the search for suitable land, interface with government officials through the intermediation of external change agents and similar other activities are now part and parcel of the development project. Thus, this requires that both the economist and non-economist social scientists work together. Conventional cost-benefit criteria of project evaluation is no longer enough.

Case Study 2: The Flood Control Structures

Bangladesh is regularly ravaged by flood. Two of the most devastating floods visited the country in 1987 and 1988, in which more or less 60% of the country was inundated for several weeks. The floods and wrecked a large part of the infrastructure and the economy by destroying assets and crops and shutting down factories. For the last fifty years, the major public response to floods has revealed that the economic and social impact of such an engineering approach to flood control has been at best mixed and at worst disastrous. In many cases there had been some spectacular changes. The embankments by reducing or eliminating flood risk have altered land use pattern with increased agricultural (mainly rice) production. But not all have benefitted. The wetlands have dried up or become shallower or smaller in size. On the other hand, the embankments have also cotributed to the migration of fish between the rivers and the wetland/flood plain. The result has been a very substantial loss in fish habitat, fish production and as a result the decline of the traditional fishing communities. This resulted in tensions between farmers at higher level of land and those at lower level, between those outside embankment and inside, the decline of whole groups of boatmen and craftsmen constructing boats. The problems merit sociological analysis of the social and economic process prior to the embankment and during the post-embankment situation to understand how far these were part of existing autonomous processes and how much is of project-impact. Unless one understands the nature of the processes and their working, it would become very difficult to design future projects of similar nature which requre social remedial actions to minimise social dislocation, tension and discord. Again the economist and non-economist social scientists will have to really work hand in glove to make similar projects successful and beneficial to the society at large rather than to only specific groups as has happened so far.

Case 3: Changes in Reproductive Behaviour

As mentioned earlier, Bangladesh is a densely populated country. The population size in the country is also large. A major direct reason for the dense and high population has been a high level of fertility. While this has been falling over time, apparently there has been a rather sharp decline over the eighties such that the overall annual inter-censal rate of growth of population fell below 2%. Indeed, according to one estimate the total fertility rate may have fallen from about 7 births to slightly more than 4 while other less dramatic estimates would show the change to be from about 5.3 to 4.2 or so which also is substantial.

There are controversies over the extent of fertility decline although very few would deny the direction of change. What is more contentious is the factors and their relative importance that may have given rise to such a fertility decline. The conventional argument is that reproductive motives and changes are influenced heavily by social norms and practices. Social scientists, particularly sociologists, must therefore find out what has happened in terms of changes in social norms, behaviour and values and how far these are transitory or permanent in their effect, in any, on fertility behaviour. This should then indicate to the policy-maker as to how far social factors may or may not be important and therefore what social forces must be strengthened and which one weakened to make the decline in fertility rate a permanent feature of Bangladesh society. Such sociological analyses do not, on the other hand, deny the importance of the analysis of economic changes as in many cases, it is the latter which initiates the process of an over-all behavioural change (Mahmud1994).(2)

Caste Study 4: Women as Industrial Labourers

Women constitute a small proportion of the total labour force, at least in the formal urban manufacturing sectors. Nearly 76% of them are concentrated in the textile, apparel and leather industries. Such concentration is related to the growth of the Ready Made Garments (RMG) manufacturing and exports.(3)

It may be noted that, in a tradition-bound society like Bangladesh, acceptance of an outside employment by women in a men's world has itself been a major social change. The nature and direction of such a change need to be examined. Some analyses by economists exist in the areas of exports, division of labour, wages and so on. But the issues related to the social factors that led to the growth of women's participation in the specific sector of employment, women's empowerment and its impact on their families, relationships with husbands and some such issues have remained least researched. In order to examine these issues, the inputs from sociologists are essential.

Conclusions

The four case studies discussed in the paper are diverse in nature. In each case, issues mainly of social nature have been raised. These issues which are in many cases crucial for better design, formulation and implementation of the development process or project remain as yet poorly or little analysed and understood. The policy -makers can make use of these analyses to make these projects more socially relevant. Economists have been castigated by many for much of the observed ineffectiveness of the development initiatives of their socially undesirable effects because of their failure to take into account the various social factors and processes at work while proposing development projects. Yet, given the fact that these social processes or factors have remained little analysed, indicate that the criticism or at least much of it is misdirected. There is an urgent need to focus on the development initiatives in countries like Bangladesh more sharply from sociological perspectives.

Notes

(1) Every alternate year or so a quarter of the country goes under water for a considerable length of time.Two of the most severe floods in recent memory occurred in 1987 and 1988.

(2) See for example Mahmud (1994) who has tried to find out whether institutional interventions for increasing women's income and employment have any role in shaping their reproductive behaviour. Her findings are generally in the affirmative. Moreover, there is a spill-over effect even among women who are not directly involved in the income-raising programmes. While such findings do not necessarily reject assertions made by Cleland *et.al(n.d).*, the fact remains that no clear and generalised empirical analysis so far has clearly spelt out the relative roles of social and other factors in determining the observed reproductive behaviour.

(3) For a brief but illuminating discussion on the RMG industry and the policy environment that fostered it see World Bank, 1994, pp.76-81.

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