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: FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK :

“Aureole”, an academic journal published by Barasat Government College, first found voice in 2009 thanks to the enthusiasm and dedication of the teachers. Three consecutive editions followed with a gap in 2012 due to unavoidable circumstances. The journal was back on track in 2013 incorporating a new look and containing articles on diverse subjects.

Originally meant to publish articles on science, social science and humanities in one volume, the present editorial board felt that it was becoming too unwieldy and decided to have two separate volumes-one for science and the other for social science and humanities - thus giving greater space to articles from different fields of study. This particular volume is therefore devoted to social science and humanities, while interdisciplinary topics have been placed in either this or the science volume depending on their predominant area of interest.

Being a peer-reviewed journal which has received favorable reviews, we hope the articles will be of high merit and academic interest for scholars. In order to make the journal richer, articles are also invited from the larger field of academia outside Barasat Government College. We request readers to give it wide publicity to further enhance the merit of the journal.

Our heartfelt gratitude to the Honourable members of the advisory board and all the scholarly referees for their invaluable support and feedback without which this journal could not have taken shape. We also thank all those who have contributed towards the fruition of this project. Despite our best efforts there may still be some mistakes which have been inadvertently overlooked. While taking responsibility for them we do hope to improve and thus value any constructive suggestions that may come our way.

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Passive Woman: A Well-Nurtured Myth

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Abstract

It is a well-nurtured myth that, women, due to their very biological nature, are destined to play a passive role in case of love and sexuality when men, for the same reason, take the active part. Such a projection suppresses the reality with the excuse of 'unnatural exception' and goes to that extreme of the moral dictum that it is unethical for a woman either to express her sexual desire or to take an active role in courtship. However, there is no biological fact which can lead us to the ethical 'ought'. The so called 'biological facts' are often cultural creations. Such cultural creations, to a great extent, are the products of class divided society which maintains two antagonistic moral standards – indulgence for men and repression for women. A classless society provides each and every individual with the autonomy to satisfy his or her urge for true sex love in a responsible and dignified way.

Key words : Women, Patriarchy, Passivity, Social conspiracy, Class-division

The expression or repression of women's sexuality according to social or religious codes of conduct, as we see, has been treated as the basic denominator for judging their character. Amrita, the teenage girl of an affluent and elite Bengali family of 1930s did not want to be an *upajachika*, i.e. to take the active role in developing her courtship with a guy into marriage. Maitreyee Devi, in her world famous novel *Na Hanyate*, supplemented the term with another word and that is, '*svairini*' which designates a woman who acts according to her desires. A woman with noble character can never be a *svairini*. Such women are ultimately punished in various ways with various excuses. *Surpananakha*, being a *svairini*, lost her nose and ears. So, women, in case of *Prajapatya*, *Asur* and even in case of *Rakhshas Bibaha* are seen to keep themselves mum. In case of *Gaandharba Bibaha*, she used to enjoy some kind of relative autonomy. But her active role was confined merely within helping her possible shooter. Another popular instance claiming women's autonomy in choosing her partner was the practice of *Virjasulka* where a woman from a ruling or affluent class used to marry that person who could prove his worth through some tough competition on mental and physical strength. However, in such cases too, women, in most of the cases, acted as a puppet of patriarchal whim. Did *Draupadi* reject *Karna* at her own will? Or was her 'own' will, i.e. not to marry a lower caste chariot driver's son, actually her own? Can we completely reject the claim that her 'power' to 'desire' was contaminated by the values of patriarchal caste divided Society? To chase a man or to propose to him is often projected as a shameful act for a woman with noble character. Character, in case of woman, is always associated with the question of how successfully she follows the social, moral and religious dictums in expression and repression of her sexuality.

However, in some cases, we see our society to be permissible to some extent to the free expression of desire of a woman. *Apsaras*, the main duty of whom was to satisfy the male gods, are not blamed for becoming an *upajachika* or a *svairini*. It seems that society of gods used to

maintain such permissible attitude with a view to use them as mere instruments for satisfying all kinds of erotic desires. A sex worker in contemporary society is often treated as merely such an instrument when, being raped, she demands justice from the law. Opposite to these *Apsaras* are the women from holy origin who are indulged to some extent to propose or chase their men. They are not morally blamed for being *upajachicas* or a *svairinis* in the negative sense of those terms. The great representative of this group is Radha, or Sriradhika, as mentioned with love and respect! Sexual freedom, in a dignified or undignified way, as we see, can be enjoyed mainly by the women of supernatural world! However, such freedom was determined by the will and purpose of one or some holy male! So, ultimately we are back to our previous position.

The satisfaction of a woman, as projected by the religious and moral codes, is entirely confined within narrow domestic realm of house hold, child bearing and child rearing activities. However, here too, they are projected as passive instruments for satisfying male need! About the question of a woman's desire or satisfaction society maintains a contradictory attitude. Sometimes, as we see, it tries to reject the very existence of them and sometimes it tries to suppress those desires by taking various measures. Intellectual pleasure seems to be the monopoly of men. An intellectual woman is an exception and it is taken for granted that she has rejected her 'feminine characteristics' in her pursuit for higher intellectual world – the men's world! *Amrita* wanted to be *Maitreyee* who was the representative of the class of women whose thirst for knowledge led her to reject the ingredients for material pleasure. It was true that *Maitreyee* went through a married life with her husband *Jajnavalkya* and satisfied the third *purusartha* i.e. *Kama* before the germination of her apathy to the materialistic pleasure. However, in most of the cases, what we observe is that, society shows an antagonistic attitude to those women who possess both – a sound brain and an intense sexuality. These two, in case of women in the main stream life, was not allowed to go hand in hand! Men could not resist themselves from their attraction, on the other hand, the individuality, personality, power of free thinking of such women often challenged the privileged social position of the male folk. So patriarchy was not ready to accommodate them in 'peaceful' individual households. On the contrary, it used them as social property. So those gifted women were forced to be *Janapakalyani*-s in India or *Hetaerae* in Athens. There were many other names of such women depending on historical phase and geographical territory, but the root cause behind their appearance was the same. Opposite to these *bazari* women, there are *Gharelu aurats* [Housewives and virgins] who were generally discouraged either to think or to act freely. They were not considered as persons but merely as women. Different terms in different languages were used to designate these mere women but none of those terms recognised the dignity of a woman as a person. Euripides used the term '*oikurema*' to designate women. The term means a thing [neuter gender to run households].^[1] However, society began to praise such a woman as a real lady, *frowa* or *fraw-mistress* since she confined herself within the 'glorified' wall of households. *Antahpurica*, *Angana*, *Duhita*, *Asurjampasya* are some of the terms which attest this contention. However, the term 'lady' got a slightly different dimension in the later years of enlightenment in Europe. Education and social grooming, by and by, became a necessary condition for being a lady. But still then, the Victorian concept that the real place of a woman is in the home and the outside world is awaiting for men was popular and taken for granted. The emergence of the Bengali term *Bhadramahila* as the synonym of the term 'Lady' was also associated with such patriarchal value sense.

A very popular argument for women's confinement in household as a passive instrument for child bearing and childrearing is that, women are naturally entrusted with that duty and since men play the active role in conception, only the male orgasm and ejaculation is necessary for conception. From the latter contention, which may also be an issue to be debated, society jumps to the conclusion that it is the male desire which is necessary for the survival of the species. ^[2] So, social norms and codes are always ready to indulge the male folk in fulfilling their sexual desire and at the same time projects women as a passive instrument for the fulfilment of that purpose. But, if women are biologically determined to perform the duties of childrearing and if they, due to their very biological foundation, are sexually passive, why does the society feel the necessity to preach to them to perform the 'duty' of childrearing, or why does it take different measures like clitoridectomy [removing the clitoris] and sewing up the vagina as a symbolic denial of their sexuality? In case of women's sexuality, it is due to, as Goode Claims, "a widespread fear that sexuality of women is somehow dangerous and must be controlled." ^[3] It is a biological fact that the fertility of a man lasts until the end of his life and a woman loses this capacity at the time of menopause. Women, for a certain period of life [child birth or menstruation] remain very vulnerable. It is also a fact that sexual relationship between man and woman gives rise to various problems such as, unwanted pregnancy, infanticide, prostitution, venereal diseases etc. the main victim of which are not the men but the women. But these facts cannot provide any sound reason for restricting their sexual activity. Moreover, it has been biologically proved that men are genetically more vulnerable than women. ^[4] If our social conducts were entirely determined by biological facts, then a girl child would be more desirable than a boy and male infanticide would outnumber female infanticide because, a girl child bears more probability to preserve her ancestor's gene than a boy child! Furthermore, it is almost impossible to trace out which trait is biological and which is cultural in human society. What we see now is that biology is not the key reason for restricting women's sexuality. Let us find out those other reasons behind the dictum that the sexuality of a woman should be controlled by social and moral codes of conduct.

It is a general trend to see women as the root cause of almost all the problems originated from man woman relationship. So they should be controlled. Sometimes in a sophisticated way, either by religion and moral codes, or by the propaganda of manmade 'biological truths' and sometimes, by brute practical measures. But such problems are related to the far greater social issues. The root of discriminating treatment towards women can ultimately be traced in the maladies of the class-divided society. So, for the proper understanding of those problems, a proper understanding of the development of human society seems imperative.

The collectivist [not in the sense to reject the importance of individual] theory of Marx and Engels shows that Society is divided into conflicting classes. The base of this conflict is the fact of ownership and non-ownership of the means of production. Family and household is the institution which has a reciprocal relationship with private property and it is the origination of private property which is the main cause of women's subordination. Before the appearance of private property there was no such thing as we consider now as family. It was the period of promiscuous intercourse. The first stage of familial development is the consanguine family where cross-generation mutual sex was prohibited. The second stage was *Punaluan* family where mutual sex between brothers and sisters was prohibited. Then emerged the pairing family where one man would cohabit with one

woman but the old communistic life or matrilineal clan system still existed. However, at this stage we see a degeneration of women's position. The prohibition of marriage among blood relations results in crisis of woman getting a husband and this situation results in marriage by abduction and marriage by purchase. Engels shows that group marriage is the characteristic of savage age, pairing family is the characteristic of barbarism and monogamy is the characteristic of civilization. Gradual increase of knowledge regarding domestication and animal breeding, as Engels shows, became a source of surplus wealth. With this, the technique of cultivation highlighted the necessity of human labour force. The prisoners of war would be engaged in production and thus slavery was started. The defeat of women, too, started in this period. Women occupied free and highly respected position in savagery and at the lowest and middle stage of barbarism since in these stages of primitive agriculture they played the principle role in production. The advanced process of cultivation required heavy equipments and the handling of these equipments, naturally, needed physical strength. Consequently the means of production gradually went into the hands of the male folk and such overthrow of the mother right, as Engels comments, is "the world- historic defeat of the female sex".^[5] The consequences of such 'defeat' are as follows :

1. The predominant position in production passed to men from women.
2. Men had the predominant position in society as well as in family.
3. The division of labour confines women within the narrow boundary of household works. Childbearing and childrearing are no longer considered to be the public work. They are now the private works of the private family.
4. The introduction of modern monogamous family which demands monogamy only from women, not from men with a view to maintain strict patrilineage of the property owning society.
5. The introduction of monogamous family, in spite of its exploitative nature, we see, carries the foetus of the concept of personal sex-love which had no existence in group marriages.

The eminent Marxist thinker August Bebel shows that the much discussed and favourite topic of patriarchy, that is, 'the physical and mental inferiority of women to men' is not any natural fact but the result of a social conspiracy which made them overburdened with the multiple monotonous tasks of the private household and thus shattered their physical and mental development.^[6] A nasty patriarchal stand point is reflected in the sexual life of the males in ancient Athens as expressed by *Demosthenis*: We marry for legal heirs and loyal house-keepers, keep concubines for daily service and go to the brothels for fun.^[7]

It is the medieval period, as Bebel claims, which introduced us with the concept of personal sex love between a man and a woman but it had a very little link with legalized social marriages. Adultery was the way for developing such love story and, here too, as we see in most of the cases, society maintains discriminating measures for man and woman. Since a man represents the economically dominant class, his act of adultery is indulged by the society when the same act on the part of a woman, a member of the dominated class, invites punishment! Moreover, the necessity for the woman's consent which is one of the primary conditions of true sex love was still an unheard of concept.

The demand for personal love took a revolutionary role in the bourgeoisie society. However, the Marxists show that such demand for freedom of love is often turned into sexual anarchism.

Moreover, the institution marriage, being sugar coated by the concept of personal love, in bourgeoisie society, lacks the true characteristics of free love in the truest sense of the term. In true and free personal sex-love there should be no interest other than the natural attraction between the partners which may result in procreation. However, procreation should not be taken as the primary condition but as a natural outcome of marriage. The attraction between two partners, here, is not identical with blind eroticism! Such a love can be developed only in a classless society where women are directly related to social production and where marriage and household are not any orphanage or last resort for women!

A true classless society never indulges in antagonistic moral standards for its people. The term 'people' includes both men and women. Here, household duties are no longer any private issue which would make the working women the victim of double exploitation in the capitalist society; rather it is focused as a serious public issue and society accepts the responsibility to solve the problems related to it. The issues like prostitution, birth control, abortion or sexual problems are neither kept aside with the excuse of civility nor are they catered as pornographic dish. For the physical and psychological betterment of the people, they get no more or no less importance than any other subjects of scientific investigation. Childbirth, the natural outcome of sex love, is considered to be an important responsibility of the society. In this case, the primary factor is the security of the mother and the child; the marital status of the mother is an unimportant issue. The economic and social assurances in life not only make people free from the anxieties associated with his/her existence but also inject into him/her a sense of responsibility for himself/herself and for the entire society as well. The terms like *Upajachika* or *svairini*, bearing patriarchal legacy, by and by will be obsolete. A truly responsible lady will achieve the fullest autonomy to propose her man without losing her social security and dignity.

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“Mind” as viewed in Peircian Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

In my paper “Mind” as viewed in Peircian Philosophy, I have tried to show very briefly how the concept of mind is related to Charles Sanders Peirce, the great American Pragmatist’s philosophy. His theory of continuity (Synechism), the three universal categories and the nature of the universe gives us an idea of the concept of mind in Peircian Philosophy. In this regard, I have highlighted over the point in what sense Peirce can be considered as objective Idealist. Though Peirce considered himself to be an objective idealist still, I think he is not an idealist in the strict sense of the term. He no doubt admits that reality cannot be the thing existing independently of all relations to the mind but still he admits the mind – independent reality. Peirce thinks that there are real things whose characters are entirely independent of our opinions about them. However, when Peirce talks about the reality which has relations to mind, the mind is understood as the mind of the ultimate community of inquirers who will reach final agreement in the long run. So, there are both idealistic and realistic tendencies in Peircian Philosophy. Hence his idealism is a very unique type of idealism. I thus conclude that he is an idealist from epistemological point of view but a metaphysical realist with respect to the status or origin of the final object i.e Reality.

Introduction :

Charles Sanders Peirce, the great American pragmatist is famous for his theory of evolution and pragmatism. Though influenced by British empiricism, rationalism and Kantianism and logic of science, Peirce constructed his own revolutionary philosophy, in which fallibilism replaces scepticism and pragmatism replaces positivism.

Though Peirce’s work was not mainly on Philosophy of Mind still I in this paper will try to show how Peirce viewed the concept of mind and how it is related to his philosophy. I think, his theories of continuity (synechism), the three universal categories and the nature of the universe come together in such a way that we can understand the importance of the concept of mind in Peircian philosophy.

Peirce’s theory of categories & their relations with mind :

Peirce says, mind is a real character of the universe. It is our consciousness that takes part in and constructs meanings out of what confronts us at firstness, secondness and thirdness (phenomenological categories). In this sense, we are all interpreters of mind, the evolution of which is coincident with the evolution of the universe itself. In other words, all finite minds that ‘for the purposes of enquiring into reasoning’, are important may be characterised as conscious interpretive agents. In order to understand his view let us see what Peirce actually meant by the categories of firstness, secondness, and thirdness and also that of continuity and how they are related to mind .

Peirce holds that Phenomenology or rather Phaneroscopy is the description of the phaneron, and by 'phaneron' is meant the collective total of all that is present to mind, quite regardless of whether it corresponds to any real thing or not.

Now Peirce believes that there are three modes of being – these are firstness, secondness and thirdness.

The first category or firstness is the category of quality. Every phenomena has a felt presence, a qualitative aspect for example, the mode of being a redness, before anything in the universe was yet red, is nevertheless a positive qualitative possibility. It is such a phenomenon which has no relation to any other phenomena. Since there is absence of any relation with other phenomena, it can be said that the qualitative character of phenomena does not have any specific, identifiable character. The moment characterization occurs, reference to something else i.e. second is necessary. He uses the word 'secondness' to show that it is something other. Thus, Peirce introduces the 'second category' or secondness. The need to arrive at the secondness can be seen by noticing that whenever the first is related to the second there is degree of opposition in contrast between the two relata. Secondness is illustrated each moment when we encounter resistances to our will and when we discriminate among things. This second category of elements of phenomena comprises the actual facts. Peirce says, the idea of second is predominant in the idea of causation and of statistical force. Secondness is predominant, for the real is that insists upon forcing its way to recognition as something other than mind's creation.

But first and second categories are not intelligible by themselves because intelligibility requires mediation, a relation of one thing to another by means of a third. Peirce states, 'third' is the conception of mediation whereby the first and the second are brought into relation. Thirdness is neither firstness nor secondness. Peirce characterises thirdness as that aspect of phenomena which is both thought and law. He states 'the third category of elements of phenomena consists of what we call laws when we contemplate them from the outside only but which when we see both sides of the shields, we call thoughts'. Thoughts are neither qualities nor facts. They are not qualities because they can be produced and grow while a quality is eternal, independent of time and of any realization. Nor is it a fact because thought according to Peirce is general. It is general in the sense, it refers not merely to those which happen to exist but also to all possible things. Thus an important aspect of thirdness is generality.

Generalization and Peirce's theory of synechism :

Generalization involves reference to what can be identified in more than one instance. The repeatable aspects of phenomena makes it possible to characterize things. Thirdness is thus the hypothetical element which has the form 'If such and such facts take place then others will in all cases take place too. Thirdness is thus the category of law. According to Peirce, laws are real, operative and reliable because these are not mere regularity. Laws of nature are something more than mere observed regularities in the past. It is through repeated observations that we can make prediction in the future. Thus, Peirce maintains that the operation of a law is equivalent to a tendency for certain process to develop not only in a regular manner but in a continuous way. Thus, Peirce holds that the best established laws of nature involve continuity. Whenever

phenomena separated in space and time appear to be regularly connected there are definitely some continuous process intervening between them. Here, we find the obvious justification of what he calls the principle of synechism. Peirce defines 'synechism' to be that 'tendency of philosophical thought which insists upon the idea of continuity as of prime importance in philosophy and in particular upon the necessity of hypothesis involving true continuity'. According to Peirce, 'true generality is in fact nothing but a rudimentary form of true continuity and continuity is nothing but perfect generality of a law of relationship'. [6.103,C.P]

Peirce holds that the term 'synechism' in terms of mental activity is not limited to any particular individuals. Thus, his conception of mind is broader than the range of data limited to private or subjective conscious process. The discussion of synechism, specially the law of mind is a discussion of the fundamental structure of the cosmos.

In his essay 'Some consequences of Four Incapacities' Peirce made explicit connections between thought and the nature of the self or mind. He says, human life is a train of thought. At any given moment we attend to only a small fraction of the many things in our mind. The occurrence of any new experience or cognition is never in isolation. Rather, it is an event occupying time and always involves continuity.

Thus, here Peirce endorses some sort of objectivity and not subjectivity. Moreover, when Peirce talks about 'secondness' there is the actuality, real presence. Peirce says in 'secondness' there is 'double consciousness' – on the one hand the 'ego' which is simply the expected idea suddenly broken off and on the other hand, the non-ego which is the strange intruder in his abrupt entrance. The duality or opposition seems to build an objectivity into the very conception of the effects a real thing has upon us or for us.

Peirce : an idealist or realist ?

Here, comes the question, is it right to hold Peirce then to be a realist? Is he admitting the existence of any mind-independent reality? It is not so much easy to give a specific answer to this question because in this regard we find a very unique view of Peirce.

Peirce considers himself to be an 'objective idealist'. He says, 'the one intelligible theory of the universe is that of objective idealism, that matter is effete mind, inveterate habits becoming physical laws'. [C.P. 6.24] The possible interchange of mind and matter is in fact discussed by Peirce. He proposes that the view of the continuity between the characteristics of mind and matter, one could hold the hypothesis is so far as it attributes to mind the properties of extension and attributes to matter a low grade of feeling. [C.P. 2777]

Now, question is in what sense Peirce is an objective Idealist? Peirce's idealism can be better understood if we highlight on this quotation – 'I hold that truth's independence of individual opinion is due to its being the predestined result to which sufficient inquiry ultimately lead' [C.P.5.494]. Peirce here states that no doubt there is true description of the totality of real things but 'reality' is not a thing existing independently of all relation to the mind's conception of it. Moreover, the mind referred to should be understood as the mind of the ultimate community of

inquirers who will reach final agreement in the long run. [Peter Skagestad, The Road of Inquiry, Page 73 -74]. Here we can state the view of Karl Popper, who has a different opinion in this regard. He conceives the physical world to be the totality of mind – independent objects. There is a reality and it has its nature in itself independently of our ways of viewing them. Peirce also thinks that there are real things whose characters are entirely independent of our opinions about them. But as stated before Peirce holds that the notions of truth and reality have an indispensable connection with such inquirers and the agreement they would ultimately arrive at. Though truth and reality are not created by man still the reference to human is incorporated in the very definition of truth. 'The opinion which is fated to be ultimately agreed to by all who investigate is what we mean by the truth and the object represented in this opinion is the real'. Hence, according to Peirce reality is something which is independent of us but this 'real' must be conceived in terms of the effect it has upon us. Indeed, if the real had not really been what it seemed to be its effect upon us, one could hardly share Peirce's optimism that in the long run science is destined to hit the truth. However Popper believes that there is an objective truth which is mind-independent. We aspire to achieve the ultimate end but truth and reality should not be defined in terms of human inquirers.

Concluding Remarks :

From the above discussion it can be said that Peirce is endorsing some sort of idealism. I have mentioned before that Peirce considers himself to be an objective idealist. In answer to the question, what is the nature of the universe, Peirce identifies three answers – dualism, materialism and objective idealism and he indicates the preference for the third. Peirce insists that matter and mind cannot be two distinct entities. Nor can everything be materialistic in nature. Thus one intelligible theory of the universe is objective idealism.

It can be said however that though there is idealistic side of Peirce, there are also realistic leanings in him. For, Peirce optimistically hold that 'we can ascertain by reasoning how things really and truly are; and any man, if he has sufficient experience and he reasons enough about it, will lead to the one true conclusion'. [C.P. Peirce, Fixation of Belief, pg-25]

Hausman in his Charles Sander Peirce's Evolutionary Philosophy considers Peirce to be a realist. For, Peirce admits generals which can be understood as repeatable conditions having an ontological status in the world independent of particular thought or language. Peirce says in one of his papers, whether the object immediately before the mind is the real object or not seems to be a question from which it is difficult to extract any clear meaning; but it is quite certain that no thinking about it will at all modify the Real Object. Now, this sort of realism is not at all contradictory to his notion of objective idealism for Peirce recognizes generals as realities that are independent of the thought of any individual or group of individuals, but not of thought in generals.

Hence, I think that there are both idealistic and realistic tendencies in Peircian philosophy. It can be said that Peirce is an epistemological idealist with respect to the evolution of knowledge projected towards a convergence in the future. But he is a metaphysically realist with respect to the status and origin of the final object i.e. Reality.

Dr. Chhanda Gupta in Realism v/s Realism comments that in Peircian philosophy we find a half way house between two types of realism i.e. external realism and internal realism. Peirce's theory retains the idea of independent external world without which no theory can be qualified as 'realist'. However Peirce's realism takes a strong internalist stance too, when he speaks of the 'reality' to have connections with collective minds of the inquirers. However this internalism is without subjectivity and this unique type of realism is somehow named as objective idealism.

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Women Migration and Its Complex Dynamics: A Gender Perspective

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Abstract

Movement of people, as a natural expression of desire to choose a better life for economic, political and social reasons is as old as humankind. In the 1960s and early 70s, the phrase "migrants and their families" was a code for "male migrants and their wives and children". The women's movement, with its emphasis on the situation of women, however for long time, has remained *invisible*. Since early 1980s, increasing number of women (both single and married, and often better skilled than men), moving on *autonomously* to take up jobs abroad, challenges the belief that migration is purely a portrayal of male phenomenon.

However, the decision to migrate and its factual happening in general largely depend on social-economic contexts and on level of poverty and gender equality. But research on different surveys shows that how a seemingly gender-neutral process of migration is, in fact, highly *gender-specific* and may result in different outcomes for men and women. The difference in outcomes stems from the facts that men and women are differently, often unequally, positioned in the economy, perform different socially determined responsibilities, and therefore face different constraints. So they are unlikely to respond in the same way to migration policies that are framed as gender neutral. Thus men and women show differences in their migratory behaviours, face different opportunities and have to cope with different risks and challenges.

To prove that the gender sensitivity is deeply embedded in all dynamics of women migration, this paper primarily gives an exposition of various stages of migration process and different risk factors underlying in each process. However, as migration can also contribute gender equality and empowerment of women by providing women migrants with income and status, autonomy, freedom, and the self-esteem, the paper also defends women migration.

Keywords : Women Migration, Faminization of Migration, Migration Policy, Problem on Left-behind, Return-Migration Problem.

Introduction :

Migration ^[1] has become an established feature of contemporary social and economic life globally. In fact, movement of people from one end to another for a hope of better livelihood, or to support the children, or to escape political chaos, or more generally, due to inadequate economic and social opportunities at the country of birth or to escape natural disasters, are as old as humankind. However, a prevailing misconception has been that men migrate and women do not because of their presumed passivity in the migration process, and their assumed place at home. Thus, women migrants have often been *invisible*, assumed to be economic dependents of spouses, despite the fact that consistently over the past 40 years, nearly as many women as men have migrated. In fact, global estimates by gender confirm that since 1960 numbers of female

cross-border migrants reached almost the same numbers as male migrants. By 1960, women already made up nearly 47% of all international migrants, a percentage that increased by only two points during the following four decades, to about 49% at present. ^[2] The real change of the last decades has occurred *in the way they move*: more women are now migrating independently in search of jobs, rather than as family dependents, travelling with their husbands or joining them abroad.

Scholarly research on migration has also changed considerably in the past decade. This change in focus reflects important developments in bringing female migration out of the shadows in many ways. Theoretical formulations of gender as relational, and as spatially and temporally contextual have begun to inform gendered analyses of migration. For example, without clear theoretical underpinnings, it becomes difficult to explain the conditions under which women migrate, or the predominance of women in certain domestic areas and not in others. Answering these questions and other more gender-sensitive inquiries requires showing how a seemingly gender-neutral process of movement is, in fact, highly gender-specific and may result in differential outcomes for men and women.

In an effort to incorporate the unique experiences and features of women migration and to determine how exactly gender is involved in the migration process, this article has been designed and arranged mainly into two sections. The first section will be an attempt to show that how a seemingly gender-neutral process of migration is, in fact highly gender specific in every step; while the second one, by addressing the different outcomes of women migration, will try to prove that all outcomes are, in fact, outcomes of gender discrimination. The section that follows will be a discussion of the migration process from a gender perspective.

1. Process of International Migration :

Incorporating women in migration, it can generally be observed that there are three distinct stages where gender relations, roles, and hierarchies influence the migration process and produce differential outcomes for women: (i) **the pre-migration stage**, (ii) **the transitional stage** across boundaries, and (iii) **the post-migration stage**, the experiences of migrants in the receiving country. ^[3] Focusing light upon these three different stages of migration, the article will defend through following subsections that migration is a gendered phenomenon in every stage mentioned above.

1.1. The Pre-Migration Stage :

This is the stage where we can analyze the factors determining women migration. In this stage, many factors exist that *shape* the decision to migrate and *make* migration more or less possible for women. Also there are often a combination of factors, which may play out differently for women and men. So before going into the deep illustration of this stage of migration, let us have a quick look of the following table determining the different general as well as exclusive push-factors of women migration.

Factors Determining Women Migration

(Except fleeing from natural disaster)

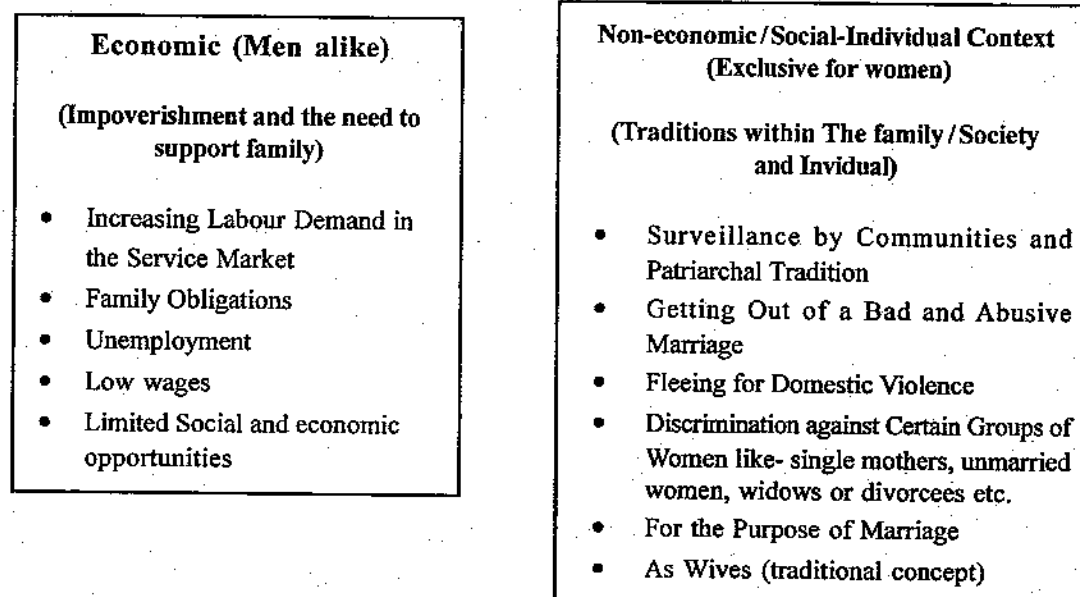


Table shows, apart from the economic factors, how gender roles/relations and inequalities prevailing in the society/family affect the decision of women migration *per se*.

Women like men migrate with the hope for better living conditions, to support their children, to escape political chaos etc. However, women generally face more drastic decision-making and financial restrictions than do men, which can pose obstacles to freedom of their movement. Usually impoverishment and the need to support family provide women and men alike with strong reasons for migrating. ^[4] However, poverty does not *always* contribute to decisions and capabilities of women to migrate. It also depends on family and individual circumstances, and on state and community settings, traditions as seen in the above table.

Within *family context*, gender relations and hierarchies largely affect the decision of migrating women willing for migration. The usual phenomenon of *female subordination to male authority*, within the family, plays a vital role in making migratory decision for women. The family both *defines* and *assigns* the roles of women, which, in turn, *determine* their relative motivation and incentive to migrate, and *controls* the distribution of resources and information that can support, discourage, or prevent migration.

Woman as an individual considering her roles, status, and age within a *particular socio cultural context* also contributes important factors for her ability to migrate. The factors that are usually taken into account are women's age, their power position within the family and their

stage in the life cycle (whether they are leaving children behind or not), the capacity of the household to do without them, and the presence of other women able to replace them in their domestic activities. In other words, the culture of the sending society determines the likelihood that women in various positions will migrate. In this sense, a woman's position in the sending community not only influences her ability to have autonomous decision for migration and to access the resources necessary to do so, but also the opportunity she has to migrate at the point when the decision is being made. For example, when women get married as children or as young adolescents, receive little and poor-quality education, bear many children at young ages, lack access to credit and banking and have few rights, they lack both the decision-making capacity and resources to migrate.

1.2. The Transitional Stage :

But decision to migrate *made* at the pre-migration level, however, are not the same as being *allowed* to exit or to enter a specific country. National or state policies play the crucial role and are major factors in international migration process. Migration policies that are usually framed as gender neutral and are applied to all, somehow affect women *disproportionately* in practice. Women and men are differently, often unequally, positioned in the economy, perform different socially determined responsibilities, and face different constraints. Thus they are unlikely to respond in the same way to policies and market signals as men do.

The migration policies of countries of origin and destination influence women migration in a large amount. State policies of the *leaving country* can influence migration process through prohibitive, selective, permissive, promotional measures that may affect men and women migrants differently. For example, some labour-exporting countries have implemented 'conditions' in their policies to protect women from exploitation that effectively prevent them from engaging in labor migration. These policies are frequently conditioned by implicit or explicit assumptions about the status and roles of men and women both within the family and in the society as said earlier.

Again, national policies of the *country of destination* also influence the migration of women and men. There are **three** ways that these policies can influence the ability of women and men to migrate. **First**, the migration policies of many receiving countries *implicitly* assume a *dependent* status for women and an *independent* migrant status for men. Women are often classified by their *relation to men* (e.g., wife or daughter) with whom they migrate *regardless of their own, independent status*. **Secondly**, by implicitly defining immigrant women as 'dependent' and men as 'independent', immigration policies of receiving societies very often place women in a *family role rather than a market role*. This, in turn, can *reinforce* some of the factors responsible for the social vulnerability of migrant women. This is especially true in labour-importing countries that separate the 'right to work' from the 'right to reside'. Those countries usually do not provide migrant women with 'work permit' and tend to employ them illegally with low wage. **Thirdly**, traditional gender roles and stereotypical images regarding the place of women in society can influence the type of work for which migrant female labour is recruited. Women admitted as workers are generally concentrated in 'female' occupations, such as domestic service or nursing.^[5] When women enter on the basis of labour-market skills, there also we observe

gender discriminations. For example, in terms of entering the labour market in the United States, women migrants' participation in the labour force is highly dependent on: the education level and the number of years spent in the United States. The number of children and the marital status are also key determinants (for example single women or women married to American men are the most likely to find work). These findings are confirmed by the country of origin of the migrant women, as female migrants from South Asia and the Middle East. These criteria also have impact on wage levels for women migrants in their receiving countries.

1.3. The Post-migration Stage :

The countries of destination also receive and treat women migrants in a way which is not always gender-neutral. Men and women may be treated differently and experience resettlement differently in receiving country thereby causing different integration outcomes. Integration outcomes are primarily influenced by three factors: (i) the impact of *entry status* on the ability to integrate and settle; (ii) *patterns of incorporation* into the labour market which follows from (i); and (iii) the *impact of migration* on the status of women and men which follows from both (i) and (ii).

If immigration policy determines the *entry status* of migrants, entry status in turn often *conditions* residency and employment rights.^[6] This can also be part of the eligibility criteria for social welfare programs. Women migrants in their entry status are more prone to be *handicapped* than male migrants because residency and employment rights and related entitlements often differ by gender. Because migrant women are often viewed by the state as 'dependents' as mentioned earlier, their rights may become legally *dependent*, sometimes precariously so on the migration and residency status of other family members, especially of spouses. This may affect the *ability* of migrant women to *obtain* those rights and entitlements in their *own right* at receiving countries.

Quite logically, the way women defined at entry in receiving countries, affects other social rights and entitlements. These rights include the capacity to gain legal citizenship quickly, to access language-training classes, to obtain job training, and to access income security programs. Probably for this reason, women more often than men are *denied* full citizenship; that is, the full civil, political, and social rights and responsibilities that normally come with membership in a society of receiving country.

Racial, birthplace, and gender-based hierarchies that exist in countries of destination are important and *influence* the incorporation of women and men migrants into the labour market. Women may have different experiences than men because they are frequently *allocated* into traditional *female* occupations, such as domestic work, childcare, or garment manufacturing. Even highly skilled women migrants as workers in other fields may sometimes have different experiences based on their gender. The gender hierarchies that affect all women in general also handicap immigrant women in particular, influencing job opportunities, work environment, and wages vis-a-vis their male counterparts.

Thus what follows that in all stages of migration, gender is deeply *embedded* in migration process. But the question: what does migration bring to women's lives-is a vital and significantly necessary discussion which needs patient hearing. Experience shows that migration can provide

new opportunities to improve women's lives and change oppressive gender relations Migration can bring autonomy, self-confidence and social status for women. But migration can also entrench traditional roles and inequalities and expose women to new vulnerabilities. Women migrants, especially if they are undocumented migrants, can face stigma and discrimination at every stage of the migration cycle. In fact, gender discrimination, poverty and violence, can provide the impetus for women to migrate or enable women to be trafficked in the first place. During transit and at their destination women can be faced with verbal, physical and sexual abuse, poor housing and encampments, sex-segregated labour markets, low wages, long working hours, insecure contracts and precarious legal status. And upon return to the source country they may be faced with broken families, illness and poverty. The section that follows deals with such various, but gender specific outcomes of women migrants.

1. Different Outcomes of Women Migration

As with any migrant, the migration outcomes for women vary depending on whether their movement is voluntary or forced, and on whether their presence in the receiving country is legal or not. But followings are the gender specific outcomes of women migration.

- Since traditional gender roles and stereotypical images regarding the place of women in society influence the type of work for which migrant female labour is recruited, women admitted as workers are generally concentrated in 'female' occupations, such as domestic service, nursing or care-giving. Except for the nursing profession, the migration of highly skilled women is relatively invisible. In the case of Japan, for example, the only regular occupation available to women temporary migrant workers is that of entertainer. However, domestic work world-wide is the most unregulated sector^[7] of the labour market (since there is no labour laws and standards), thereby, the most obvious reason for addressing inequality issues of women migration outcomes is that women workers tend to be concentrated in the most vulnerable jobs of global production systems. Women migrant are therefore at high risk of being exploited and badly treated. Due to the fact that care work and nursing remain traditional female roles and tend to be given out more frequently to the low paid overseas workers, certain migration channels are now wide open for female employees. But these jobs are frequently unstable, marked by low wages, by absence of social services and by poor working conditions. Therefore, even when migrating legally, women are relegated to jobs where they can easily become subjects to discrimination, arbitrary employment terms and abuses, trafficking and prostitution. When girls migrate to do domestic work, they are doubly vulnerable: first, they are deprived of education and consequently of a better future and, secondly, they are more exposed to violence, as such migration occurs through illegal channels.

- Female migration flows to domestic service hides the reality that a significant number of women are in fact skilled and educated professionals. Even where migration involves economic betterment for the individual concerned, obtaining a job in another country, and earning a wage that may be much higher in real terms than what was available at home country, the *successful* migrant may be subject to deep gender, ethnic and racial discrimination in the host country. Although the bulk of both female and male migrants occupy the lowest jobs at the destination due to their migration status and skill level, gender inequalities frequently combined

with those of race or ethnicity, and of being a non-national, often make many migrant women 'triple disadvantaged' – marginal, unregulated, and poorly paid. Qualifications may not be recognized, skills may be eroded by working in jobs that are below acquired skill levels, access to social rights may be heavily constrained, and the migrant may be subject to sexual and racial harassment.

- Another aspect of female migration addresses *forced migrants* or women refugees. People who live in places that are prone to natural disaster or political conflict sometimes have only one option in order to escape poverty and violence: fleeing to other countries. Women, children and the elderly are considered the most vulnerable, and represent an estimated 80% of world refugee population.^[8] Women refugees are usually the most vulnerable members of societies, victims of violence, sometimes systematic, including rape, and they often migrate with their children and other family members. In spite of such a big number of female refugee population, only a minority of women are granted refugee status. This is primarily because gender-related causes of persecution are rarely accepted as valid grounds for refugee status and because women often lack the education (literacy) and administration skills to complete the bureaucratic application process. Women and girls face many dangers and obstacles throughout the entire refugee experience.

- Women migration largely affects their family, especially those who *left behind*. Women bear huge psychological and emotional burden when leaving their families in order to support them. They provide love and affection to their employer's children or relatives in order to improve the quality of the lives of their own children, whom they (sometimes) never see for many years. Consequently, such untimely separation of family members creates a new generation of children (so-called mobility orphans) who grow up without the tangible presence and influence of their parents or adults in their lives. 'The fundamental definition of a parent is being altered, from the *primary care-taker*, physically, mentally and emotionally, to a *mere provider of material goods*'. Departures of parent(s) even with the best intentions to secure the future of the family significantly *affect* other family members especially if they are very young, and they are being deprived of the basic nurture needed during the formative period of their psychosocial and moral development.^[9] This is defined as *deficit care*, which means children are unable to go through formative care during the period when they need it most in terms of their developmental psychosocial growth. It has been noted that such situations pose a threat to the psycho-social development of the personality of the child with long-term effects on individuals and societies. Unfortunately, the situation is worse for children with mental and physical disabilities. Their already marginalized position in society can degenerate further in the absence of a parent.

- *Return-migration* phenomenon is a significant dimension of women migration. How migrants' return to their place of origin affects the development impact of their time away, for example, if and how they are able to use the new skills and perspectives they have gained, and if they have difficulty in readjusting and so to migrate again quite soon. The decision to return is linked to *structural and individual* factors as well as policy interventions. All these aspects hold important gender dimensions. Problems associated with return and reintegration such as a difficult

relation between returnees and the local communities; stigma and feelings of being a failed migrant; frustration with the political climate, corruption and the position of women; high expectations of family and friends on the returnee; feeling estranged upon return; suffering identity conflicts; nostalgia for the host country are all aspects with important gender implications and have to be considered in all stages of the return migration. Gender-based discrimination, persecution and violence like rape, forced circumcision or sterilization as well as cultural burdens placed on women are other essential specific aspects of women return migration. For example, in many Arab countries in North Africa and the Middle East the right to pass on national citizenship is something that only applies to men. Therefore, problems may occur if women migrants return having married foreign nationals. Women who are national citizens cannot pass on their citizenship to a "foreign" husband or to children born of marriages to foreign nationals. In such cases husbands continue to be foreign citizens and since children are required to take on their father's citizenship, they become foreigners in their mother's country.

So in synthesis, it can be stated that women migration faces more vulnerable outcomes than that of men and during the migration journey, probably women are doubly vulnerable than men. But it will be a half tale if we say that women migration only devaluates womanhood. It will be a long drawn decision to depict women as the victims of circumstances who have no say and no influence from the scenario of women migration cited above. On the contrary, we can say that many women are sufficiently brave, outspoken and may be examples to others. And this is probably part of the solution. It is not only an increase of figures that induces to talk nowadays about *Feminisation of Migration*, but rather the fact that women, in present days, increasingly migrate independently from families and become the breadwinners of their family.

Thus migration may contribute gender equality and empowerment of women by providing women migrants with income and status, autonomy, freedom, and the self-esteem that comes with employment. Women may become more assertive as they see more opportunities opening up before them. Moving to a new country exposes women to new ideas and social norms that can promote their rights and enable them to participate more fully in society. It can also have a positive influence on achieving greater equality for them in their country of origin. In societies where the migration brings the increasing contact between different countries and their people, the livelihood entails new existential challenges and different groups and subgroups gain trans-cultural dialogue more. Given the formative role that women play in the receiving societies, and given that they are usually charged with the care of children in their early childhood years, the most malleable years in a person's life, they have a great influence on the openness of new generations to other cultures. Indeed, depending on the kind of relationship they establish with the local population, and with other migrants, they can be agents of trans-culturality.

However, it is somehow evident that female migration has its specific features. We can say that due to their inherent caring nature, women are more focused on the well-being of others than in their own advancement, even when they have the skills to take up better positions. For example, their attitude concerning remittances is different than that of men as they keep their expenses under tight control and invest in the well being of the family as a whole.

So to have a better picture of women migration, a two-fold suggestion can be made. First, in order to incorporate gender *appropriately* and *effectively*, international migration theory must take into account the subtle as well as the obvious factors that coalesce to create different experiences all along the migration spectrum. Second and parallel to that, society should take the responsibility to educate women so as to make themselves aware of their rights, to know their potentials and to make them able in bringing a significant and deserving change in their horizon.

Notes and References :

- [1] 'Migration' in this article is meant for 'international or cross-border migration'.
- [2] *Feminization of Migration*, 2010, International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)
- [3] **Monica Boyd**: *Women and Migration: Incorporating Gender into International Migration Theory*, University of Toronto, (March 1, 2003), pp.1-7.
- [4] It is notable that extreme impoverishment makes international migration sometimes impossible, simply because people have few resources for migration, and transportation as well as communication structures are poor. Similarly, higher educational levels stimulate aspirations for suitable employment, increase knowledge about the world and capacity for action. As said by experts, migration of women is most likely to occur at the intermediate stages of economic development and when improvements in the status of women can be noticed in the society.
- [5] Domestic work is one of the few occupations where legal migration of women workers has been recognized to be necessary in the Gulf States, as well as Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan. These countries receive thousands of women migrants for domestic work every year and their numbers are increasing in importance when compared to numbers of male migrants.
- [6] Entry status of women can also have far reaching effects on their ability to enjoy social rights and entitlements including access to language training, job training and ultimately their ability to gain legal citizenship (Aurora Javate-De Dios, Stella Marquez-Fong and Anna M. Dinglasan: "Quilted Sightings: A Women and Gender Studies", Miriam College, Women and Gender Institute (WAGI), Philippine, 2008, p.42.)
- [7] This sector does not provide specific skills on the job, it does not open the way for other occupations and it rarely allows continuation of formal education. It can also involve unfixed work hours, abuse by employers, instability due to informal employment, lack of monitoring of work-place conditions, no or little social security protection and access to legal and health services, restrictions to mobility and communications, no legal redress and it can become an obstacle to the formation or consolidation of own families for women. These often create the social isolation of most domestic helpers and their inability to integrate effectively with the receiving country that can have serious psychological impacts on women over the time.
- [8] *Female Migrants: Bridging Gaps Throughout Life Cycle*, Selected papers of the UNFPA-IOM Expert Group Meeting, New York, organized by United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), (2-3 May 2006), p.34.
- [9] The importance of the presence of parents, especially mothers, during the formative process of the child was highlighted by psychology and its experiments. Psychologists like Kohlberg and Piaget, both of whom dealt with the moral development of the child, formulate that during the first 12 years of life, basic moral development of the young takes place. The presence of parents is crucial during

this period as in the safe family environment children learn to love, trust and communicate. Actually, the child progresses through stages in order, and one cannot get to a higher stage without passing through the stage immediately preceding it. Moral development is growth, and like all growth, takes place according to a predetermined sequence. Other psychologists as J. Bowlby proved that deprivation of maternal caring during the first phase of life effects the mental health of the children and can develop pathologies in them.

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Man and nature relationship from the perspective of Traditional Hindu Wisdom

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Abstract

Present day world is filled with divergent crises from different dimensions. All such crises have mainly originated from immense scientific and technological progress without any value and supported by the anthropocentric tradition of the West. Amidst this dismal situation a reflective study of the traditional Hindu thought, particularly the principles embedded in it which have fostered the growth of a healthy relationship between man and nature seems essential. The paper has tried to show that throughout its journey from the Vedic period down to the era of different Dharmashastras, Hinduism in a splendid manner tried to develop and practice a harmonious relationship between man and nature. The paper points that inspite of some inherent weakness within traditional Hindu thought, Hinduism has taught man to exercise restraint and develop compassion towards nature and her creatures. Such an enlightened vision in my opinion can save us from the crises which we are facing today.

Key words : Hinduism, Man, Nature.

Introduction :

Hinduism is one of the significant religious, cultural and philosophical traditions of the South-Asian Subcontinent. It is an expression and carrier of a great civilization, where religion, metaphysics, ethics, science, culture, literature and artistic creations are inextricably related to each other, to form an organic system. In fact Hinduism has incorporated within it different levels of thought and has undergone transformations in different times of history along with the changes in social-political conditions of the society.

In this paper I propose to explain in brief the fundamental philosophical thoughts of Hinduism, which has helped to shape the attitude of traditional Hinduism towards the environment, specifically an individual's attitude towards the environment and her members – animate and inanimate beings of the world. The paper will also try to reveal that these philosophical doctrines of Hinduism fostered the growth of a healthy relationship between man and nature in its journey from the Vedas down to the age of dharma-shastras. Such reflective vision appears necessary for all of us, to survive at a time when the world is filled with divergent crises from different dimensions – social, cultural, environmental moral and spiritual crises which have resulted from immense scientific and technological progress devoid of any value and supported by the mainstream philosophical tradition of the West which has ascribed supremacy to humans over others. This homocentric attitude which originated from the west has now permeated more or less, the entire world through colonization, neo-colonization, imperialism including cultural colonialism and cultural imperialism.

Basic Doctrines of Hindu thought :

A clear picture of man – nature relationship in Hindu tradition rests mainly on the theories of cosmology and Karma which is a metaphysical doctrine. An organized and detailed discussion of Panca-Bhuta have explained the origin of the natural world. Five elements namely earth, water, fire, air, and space have been considered to be the constituents of the natural world. Moreover these different elements of nature are also personified as parts of the divine being who has created them. In the philosophical schools like Samkhya, Vedanta, and other systems of Jaina, Carvaka and Buddhism, the Panca-Bhuta played an important role in the formation of the material world. Maharshi Vyas in the Mokshadharmma Parva in Mahabharata states that the divine being and the different parts of the natural world, (Prakriti) or nature are identical forming a single unit. ^[1] Moreover different parts of nature are thought to constitute different parts of the body of the Lord who is the creator of the world including humans. ^[2] Moksha Dharma Parva Opines “The Father of all creatures, God made the sky. From sky he made water and from water made (Agni) and air (Vayu). From fire and air Prithvi (Earth) came into existence.” ^[3] This notion of an intimate relation between the Lord, or creator of the universe, the human beings and nature culturally helped a person to develop a sense of immediate closeness with one’s surroundings. The supreme being is attributed with different names, forms and attributes in deferent times, and in different literatures. Different instances imply that Hinduism considered a supreme being as the creator and protector of the universe. ^[4]

This theistic bent in Hinduism denied any special privilege to man over others on this earth. ^[5] On the other hand certain duties were enforced on him towards the flora and fauna, creatures all over the universe, which inspired him to live in a mutually interdependent and cooperative relation with all others of this earth.

Another doctrine which also affirmed the inter-connectedness between humans, animals, plants and others in Hindu philosophy is the Karma theory. Contrary to the Christian view where ‘nature’ or ‘environment’ is subjugated to human domination, Karma theory in Hinduism rejects the dualism between nature and humanity. On the contrary continuity of relationship among different forms of life was proposed. It is however to be admitted that traditional mainstream thinking confined the principle of continuity between the different forms of life only to animals, which was subsequently extended by the Jainas who thought that there is no radical separation between humans and all other forms of beings (animals, plants, air, water, atoms of matter). Karma theory proposed that one’s ‘Karma’ or actions freely done by an individual, will determine whether he or she will be rewarded or punished in the next life. Good actions will help one towards the attaining release or moksha and fosters union with God and bad actions will drive us in the opposite direction.

According to the Karma Theory, the sorrow and happiness which we enjoy in our present birth are due to the results of the previous Karma. One’s feelings and behavior towards the animals, plants, earth, air is a direct consequence of the way one has freely chosen to behave in past lives. If one destroys environment, pollutes it he or she will move far away from salvation. But since Hinduism believes in the autonomy of the individual will, a particular person can withhold from environmentally destructive actions and act ecologically. ^[6]

Glimpses of man and nature relation in ancient India :

Philosophical thoughts in India were not only mere intellectual exercise, but a way of life. Hence these aforesaid fundamental doctrines made Hindus develop and practice the idea that man is not the absolute sovereign of this Universe. Man, therefore, cannot exercise superiority over nature. Contrary to the homo-centric view of the west Vedas and Upanishads dedicated several hymns to eulogise the earth, different natural phenomena and plants and trees which reveal the presence of strong ecological awareness in the minds of the ancient Hindus. Different rituals were practiced throughout India, which also established a deep inter-connectedness between man and nature. ^[7] We may in this connection mention about Prthvi – Sukta – one of the most ancient text which showed deep reverence for the earth, regarded her as the mother to whom all are equal. Every entity and organism is a part of one large extended family system presided over by the eternal Mother Earth”. ^[8] This harmony is essential to establish unity among all members of the earth, to balance order of the nature, and also to obtain material benefits, for abhyudaya or material prosperity. Upanishadic wisdom also emphasized that one should not harm others since to harm one is equal to harm oneself which no one wants to do either on logical grounds or for the purpose of self-interest. ^[9]

Different poetic verses in Ramayana also describe the splendor of nature, which portrays the natural beauty vividly. Mahabharata particularly the Shantiparva ascribes religious value to the Earth. In this section for example a vivid description has been given to explain the feelings of pain and pleasure in trees and injunctions have been given on man to treat them equally with humans and other animals. The person who violated the rule was punished since the action was tantamount to violating a religious norm. ^[10]

Ecological sensibility was so profound in ancient India that environmental pollution a recently discussed phenomenon of great significance was not unknown during the ancient period particularly during the epic period. Environmental pollution was considered as a Vikriti or deformation. Rajdharmanusasanaparva (16.811) of Mahabharata stated that human beings suffer from both physical and mental diseases due to environmental pollution and both diseases are inter related. “One follows the other and none exists without another. Sometimes physical diseases create the mental disease and vice and versa.” ^[11] Vishnu Smriti also puts forward that pollution which comes from the animals and humans is to be cured by the natural entities like air, Sun and the moon. ^[12] Manusmriti and Yajnavalka Smriti also issued injunctions against causing environmental pollution. They also forbid any sort of violence towards any living entity. A person who practices cruelty, injures and kills others for his personal interest will according to Manu-Smriti, never be able to be happy, or have pleasure either in his present life or when dead. ^[13] The Prayaschitta Tattva (1.535) also advised not to pollute water by doing excretion, throwing dry garlands, washing clothes etc.

Not only different ancient Hindu texts advocated the thought of ecological awareness and responsibility of a Hindu, but the practice of conserving the environment in reality was also emphasized. Thus a bridge between belief and practice was sought to be established. Kings who were the fountains of power in the Hindu society were entrusted with the responsibility of

conserving the environment. Artha-Shastra by Kautilya and Dharmashastras prescribed performance of proper behavior, and responsibilities to maintain social order and the ecological balance. In Artha-Shastra we find reference to prudential management of the natural resources. Restraint in using natural resources was also advised to be exercised. In the Arthashastra it is reminded that politics is concerned with the protection of the Earth (prthvi) on which the livelihood of human beings depend. [14]

Like all ancient texts Dharma Shastra was also emphatic on the evidence of ecological responsibility as a sacred duty like performing religious rituals. In the Dharma Shastra we find reference to protect both inanimate and animate nature as part of our obligation or Dharma to divine power.

The cultural tradition of India- dance, music all propagated to live a life of harmony with the nature as a whole. Emphasis was given on the development of the inner vision of an individual who can transcend ego-centricity and share the planet and her members in a sense of mutual inter-dependence.

Various non-Vedic cults also developed within Hinduism who had their own concept of the self- in Atman and respect for non-human life. The Natha cult for instance worshipped shiva as the lord of the animals.

Concluding remarks :

Glimpse of traditional wisdom of the ancient Hindus we have so far discussed is under severe threat in the present post-independent India, which has put excessive emphasis on economic development through industrialization, undertaking large projects to bring about material prosperity to a marginal section of population, leaving greater section outside the reach of these amenities. This has caused severe environmental pollutions, disturbing the ecological balance and, death of rare and endangered species. Moreover spiritual alienation, loss of traditional values has left us in a state of complete turmoil, distrust and destruction. The very idea of human supremacy a mainstream western ideology, has driven us far from the responsibility of preserving and protecting bio-diversity, natural heritage, and develop indigenous methods for their preservation. It is true that there were some inbuilt weaknesses in traditional Hindu thoughts. Prevalance of the system of the varna and caste system where people were subjected to tremendous tyranny and torture, oppression and inequality were antithetical to the overall sense of unity as expounded by the Upanishadic tradition. It is also astonishing as to why the Hindus who upheld harmlessness towards other creatures or advocated minimum harms only in extra-ordinary situations considers and justifies animal sacrifices and keeps it outside the purview of this noble moral principal of ahimsa. In spite of this lacuna we need to look back to our ancestors, which may help us to solve our crisis in which we are entrapped at the present moment. A retrospective study, will reveal that Hinduism in a splendid manner, tried to constitute our consciousness towards developing and practicing a harmonious relationship between god, nature and man. Administrative rules were framed accordingly for maintaining ecological balance of the Earth. All these instances reveal that Hinduism has tried to remove man from the center of the world and placed a supreme unifying being at the center of the universe. Hinduism has taught man to exercise restraint, develop compassion benevolence and live in harmony with others.

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Euthanasia and MTP-Two Sides of the same coin

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Abstract

To compare Euthanasia with Abortion is to show that there are no such dividing lines between a foetus and a new-born. So, the argument here is that: if abortion is treated as legal under some specific circumstances, why cannot Euthanasia be?

It is legal to undergo abortion of a viable foetus, in case of rape or unwanted Pregnancy without considering the potential of the foetus. Here priority is to safeguard the interest of the Pregnant Women in upholding other social standing totally ignoring the probability of birth of a normal child. Hence it can be said that legally it is permissible to kill someone (viable foetus) for safeguarding someone else's (Pregnant Women) interest. It shows that for the sake of foetus or the would be parents abortion is a legal option advocated, but the same cannot be said for the terminally ill people or people suffering from genetic disorders, who undergo immense pain and suffering everyday, but 'mercy killing' is not an option open to them legally. Here we can safely infer a viable option for some, whereas people undergoing insufferable pain at present cannot take recourse to euthanasia for alleviating their pain.

At the end of the paper, I suggest that under some restrictions euthanasia can be applied in particular cases: Euthanasia can be applied ethically as well as legally on those whose motor and sensory functioning system is not working since birth. Secondly, if a person is suffering from any kind of disease, which is not curable presently, Euthanasia can be applied. Here I have introduced a new concept of Ethical committee which shall be comprised of respectable members from different field of society. The committee will look after genuine cases whether euthanasia can be applied or not. We think this concept will help a lot to prevent misapplication of the act.

Today, the topic EUTHANASIA has become so widely discussed and debated among the intelligentsia that it deserves to occupy a prime position. In this beautiful world, every individual looks towards life. Every other poet or author has reinforced the beauty of life in their creations.

To start with, what is being alive? Is it surviving biologically or thriving as well? If it is just depending on nature to determine the span of life, then the concept of **Mercy killing** becomes redundant. On the contrary, if life means fulfillment of certain parameters like - dignity of life, dignity of labour and of course self-esteem, and if any of the above mentioned parameters are deprived from an individual due to prolonged or debilitating illness, then the topic of EUTHANASIA raises its head and seeks attention.

Due to the prolonged and debilitating illness the individual not only loses mobility but various faculties of mind fail as well, resulting in numbness, gradually or suddenly degenerating to Persistent Vegetative State (PVS). In this scenario, is not the parameters discussed above violated? Is not the individual pushed to the brink of pain and suffering? Yes, it is true that to live is a fundamental right, but when prolonged pain and extreme suffering can be alleviated through Mercy Killing, is it not the right path to liberation?

In this regard a big question comes, on whom Euthanasia is applicable? The answer is those who are terminally ill or suffering from debilitating illness or who cannot bear the extreme pain anymore can be helped through euthanasia.

It can be assumed that people with considerable wealth can afford Palliative treatment to alleviate certain degree of pain and suffering, but what about the larger section of the society who does not have the wealth to afford that luxury. Is it not Euthanasia, which can bring an end to such a grave situation? Since all debates and discussions are in the context of society and mankind at large, whenever there is any discussion on social issues, invariably the socio-economic aspects come into play. It can be seen in the weaker sections of the society that when somebody is terminally ill, the family members who are not in a position to provide adequate medical facilities, helplessly wait for the demise of the affected individual and free him from all miseries. Are they not practicing Passive EUTHANASIA?

II

The word 'euthanasia' is not a creation of modern society but various references have been found in the pages of history. Hippocratic Oath written around BC 400-300, states "To please no one will I neither prescribe a deadly drug nor give advice which may cause his death." Despite the stated position, the ancient Greeks and Romans widely believed that life need not be preserved at any cost and were, in consequence, tolerant of suicides, in cases where no relief could be offered to the terminally ill. Though the English Common law disapproved of both suicides as well as assisting suicide, nevertheless in 16th century, Thomas Moore, in propounding the concept of Utopian Community had envisaged a community wherein death would be facilitated to those whose lives had become a burden due to lingering pain and suffering. Euthanasia societies were formed in 1935 in England and in 1938 in U.S.A. to promote Active Euthanasia. Although in 1937, legislation was not passed in U.S.A. or England, doctor assisted Euthanasia was declared legal in Switzerland in cases where the person ending the life had nothing to gain.

In 1939, the Nazis carried out a program codenamed ACTION T4 to involuntarily euthanize children less than three years, who exhibited mental retardation, physical deformity or debilitating problems whom they considered "life unworthy of life." This program was later extended to include older children and adults. Due to outrage over euthanasia crimes attributed to the Nazis, there was very little public support for euthanasia in the 1940s & 1950s. By the 1960s, advocacy for a right to die-approach to voluntary euthanasia increased.

Turning point in the debate over EUTHANASIA, at least in the U.S., was provided by the public furor over the case of Karen Ann Quinlan. She was an important figure in the history of Right to die debate in the U.S. She was 21, when Quinlan fell unconscious after coming home and lapsed into Persistent Vegetative State (PVS). After she was kept alive on a ventilator for several months without improvement, her parents requested the hospital to discontinue active care and allow her to die. The hospital refused and the ensuing legal battles hit headlines and set significant precedents. The case was path breaking not only legally, but was remarkable for its rare appeal to religious principles, since her family was Catholics and principles of Catholic moral

theology were critical in deciding the case. Though Quinlan was removed from active life support in 1976, she lived on in coma for almost a decade until her death from pneumonia in 1985. The Quinlan case paved the way for legal protection of Voluntarily Passive euthanasia^[3].

In 1990, Dr. Kevorkian, a Michigan physician, became infamous for encouraging and assisting people in committing suicide, which resulted in a Michigan law against the practice in 1992. In 1994, Oregon voters approved doctor-assisted suicide and the Supreme Court allowed such laws in 1997. In 1999 non-aggressive Euthanasia was permitted in Texas. In 1993, the Netherlands decriminalized doctor assisted suicide and in 2002, restrictions were relaxed.

More recently, Terri Schiavo, from St. Petersburg, Florida, U.S., was a woman who suffered brain damage and became dependant on a feeding tube. She collapsed on 25th February 1990 and experienced respiratory and cardiac arrest, leading to 15 years of institutionalization and diagnosis of Persistent Vegetative State (PVS). In, 1998, Michael Schiavo, her husband and guardian petitioned the Pinellas County Circuit Court to remove her feeding tube. Robert and Mary Schindler, her parents, opposed this, arguing that she was conscious. The Court determined that Terri Schiavo would not wish to continue life-prolonging measures. The battle stretching seven years involved politicians and advocacy groups. In 2005, she had her feeding tube removed. Her husband had won the right to take her off life support, which he claimed she would want but was difficult to confirm as she had no living will.

III

I have pointed out an argument here that: If abortion or Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) can be deemed legal under specific circumstances, why can't Euthanasia be legalized through which incurable pain and suffering of terminally ill patient can be alleviated?

In today's times Ethics of Abortion is a raging issue in the field of Practical ethics. Except the Catholics, society at large has accepted Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) as legal on specific grounds, in 1973; US Supreme Court had declared that, it is a Fundamental right of Women to seek MTP within first six months of pregnancy on specific grounds. In India, a woman can ask for MTP within the twenty weeks after fertilization. In this context Peter Singer, in his book **PRACTICAL ETHICS, SECOND EDITION** while putting forth the debate between Conservatives and Liberals, has commented that, if we define human beings as species of Homosapiens, then the dividing line between fertilized egg and a new born child is blurred since life is equipotent in both of them.

Birth cannot be considered as the dividing line, since a foetus as well as a new born has similar mental characteristics, irrespective of our observations and perceptions. Although according to some, birth may be considered as the dividing line between foetus and child, it can be said that the foetus or child is the same entity, whether inside or outside the womb with same human features, awareness and their capacity for feeling pain. Just as birth cannot be considered as the dividing line, **viability** also does not provide that boundary, since it treats the viable foetus on a par with the infant born prematurely, at the same stage of development.

If we consider **quickening** as the dividing line, the period when a pregnant woman can feel the movement of the foetus and according to Christian belief, a soul enters the foetus, may not be appropriate because, USG reports have proven that 6 weeks after fertilization, the foetus shows movement without being felt by the mother. If we consider movement as the dividing line, then those who are paralyzed at or after birth, what should be our position in such a case?

Again, if we consider **consciousness** as the dividing line, the feeling of pain and pleasure as the key differentiation between a foetus and a child, then it may be noted that brain development is seen from seventh week of fertilization and simultaneous development of consciousness as well. Hence, consciousness cannot also be considered as a dividing line.

On the other hand, if we believe that a foetus is devoid of human characteristics which are acquired only after birth then the tenets of Universal Theory of Cause and Effect Relation is violated. Then it would mean that, everything can be produced out of anything, which is inconceivable. Hence, in upholding Causal Theory at this stage of discussion one has to concede that there is no difference between a foetus and an infant.

Whenever there is discussion on the legality of abortion, the priority is always on the opinion and convenience of the pregnant women. It is legal to undergo abortion of a Viable Foetus, in case of say rape or unwanted pregnancy, without considering the potential of the foetus. Here priority is to safeguard the interest of the pregnant women in upholding other social standing, totally ignoring the probability of birth of a normal child. Hence it can be said that legally it is permissible to kill someone (viable foetus) for safeguarding someone else's (pregnant woman) interest.

Another major cause of abortion is the discovery of genetically or physically deficient foetus through USG reports. We saw that in the previous scenario abortion takes place to safeguard the interest of the pregnant woman. However in this case, apart from the interest of the deficient foetus, the social and financial security of the would-be parents is also a sufficient reason.

The above discussions show that for the sake of foetus or the would-be parents abortion is a legal option advocated, but the same cannot be said for the terminally ill or people suffering from genetic disorders, who undergo immense pain and suffering every day, 'Mercy Killing' is not an option open to them, legally. Here, we can safely infer that considering the future scenario abortion is a viable option for some, whereas, people undergoing insufferable pain at present cannot take recourse to 'Euthanasia' for alleviating their pain. Here, necessarily the question arises, "If abortion can be legalized under specific circumstances why cannot Euthanasia be?"

To see it from another angle, abortion can be likened to a person taken into Preventive Custody under Preventive Detention Act 1950 on the apprehension that he may have the potential to do harm to society whereas appeal for Euthanasia can be likened to a person who has already committed a grievous crime and put on trial for years to prove him guilty and convict him. Here the paradox is apprehension of the propensity to do some crime leads to punishment, on the other hand a long and arduous trial takes place for a person who has already committed a crime.

IV

Survey of many places in West Bengal has been made to collect data about different types of patients. Among them, a unique case of Diptashree Dey, a 28 years old girl has been touching. Diptashree Dey, resident of Dum Dum Park, Kolkata-700055, is a **microcephalic baby**. Microcephaly as defined by the medical terminology is that a head circumference that measure more than three standard deviations below the mean for age and sex. This condition is relatively common, particularly among the mentally retarded population. Although there are many causes of microcephaly, abnormalities in neural migration during foetal development including heterotopias of neuronal cells and cytoarchitectural derangements are found in many brains. This is a disease wherein the motor-function of the brain stops and the brain ceases to develop; as a result normal growth of the patient is inhibited. The body becomes stiff which impedes not only motion but speech as well. The afflicted person goes into vegetative state.

Sudipta, mother of Diptashree has said that since birth her child has been suffering from this disease. She added that when she was pregnant, her attending doctor had detected that she was going to give birth to a microcephalic baby. But due to late diagnosis, abortion was not possible at that stage. In 1987, Sudipta gave birth to Diptashree. Since then Diptashree has been fighting for survival. Doctors have clearly said that currently there is no known medical recourse for this ailment. According to Diptashree's mother she cannot move or react to any stimuli. The circumference of her head is just like that of a 2 or 3 years old baby. As per doctor's advice she is being underfed to retard her physical growth since she has to be carried by others to meet even her basic needs. She has convulsions frequently but she cannot express her intolerable sufferings.

According to Mrs. Dey, had she known what lies ahead in her child's fate, she would have preferred to undergo MTP to prevent giving birth to a microcephalic baby or even doctor assisted euthanasia at birth.

The said case once again compels us to think on the subject: **Euthanasia**. The tragedy in Diptashree's life is that presently there is no treatment for her condition; hence it is prolonging her suffering. By prolonging her painful existence, we are indirectly decreasing her dignity of life. The dilemma here is that by prolonging her painful state we are pushing her to the path of passive euthanasia but on the other hand we are fighting over the legal validity of application of Euthanasia in this case.

V

Broadly, abortion and euthanasia are two sides of the same coin. The main similarity between these two is withdrawal of life. In the case of abortion, we withdraw the life of a foetus at present thinking about the future suffering of that potential child. In the second case, i.e. in case of euthanasia, we are talking about withdrawing life of a terminally ill patient suffering from incurable disease and in extremely painful state at present thinking about one's present situation. In my opinion euthanasia is far more relevant than abortion. For, in case of abortion we have to depend on the second person's opinion. It may be an expecting mother, may be an expecting parent or attending

doctor or board of doctors. In other words, the future fate of the foetus depends on the second person's opinion. But in euthanasia, it is possible to take opinion from the patient (at least where the patient is capable of giving consent).

The fact is that, there needs to be a complete change in outlook towards understanding euthanasia- "mercy killing". Actually we are wrongly emphasizing more on the term "killing" than on the term "mercy" and here the problem arises. It is unfortunate that emphasis has been unduly laid on the term "killing" and the import of the term 'mercy' ignored or made secondary significance. As a matter of fact the consequence is invariably death since an act of euthanasia is performed when all the means fail or prove useless to preserve a person's life. But death surely is not what we intend to bring about. In fact mercy killing is no killing at all. Killing generally means robbing one's life which is valuable to him/her. But when a person suffers from terminal illness, life becomes a burden to him and then the question to ask is whether such a life can be called life at all or is it a living death with misery and pain.¹⁹ We shall all develop a positive outlook towards euthanasia, if we consider it on humanitarian grounds. Euthanasia is just a way to liberation. Here the concept is to pave the way to liberation from suffering states. It is a mistake to put "killing" and "liberation" under the same category. In fact, we have to realize the whole situation more sensitively. Without realization and appreciation we can never understand the intolerable suffering of patients.

According to German Philosopher Immanuel Kant, we should judge the morality of a work from the point of view of purpose, not from result. An act done for a good purpose without any imposed condition will be considered as unconditioned good, though the result may vary. Suppose, a doctor has operated upon a serious patient to cure him from the disease he is suffering. Unfortunately the patient does not survive. It would be wrong to think that the act of operation is non-moral. Here though the result is opposite of the expected outcome, the purpose was unconditionally good. Likewise, in the case of euthanasia, to reduce intense suffering of terminally ill patient, if we go for mercy killing, I opine that it would not be morally wrong. Here also the purpose is unconditionally good.

After discussing various aspects of euthanasia and comparing it with abortion, we can conclude that, realizing the physical agony and mental trauma of the patient, mercy killing is not unethical to some extent. And that which is not unethical can be converted into legal. Moreover, it is not just a matter of morality or immorality, but it is a question of justice. Our approach towards patients should be to minimize unbearable pain and to bring a peaceful death to a dying patient. I think some conditions which if imposed, can reduce the misuse of the act to a great extent. The conditions are:

- a) The disease from which the patient is suffering should be incurable, in terms of the present medical science.
- b) The disease has advanced to such an extent that the patient is experiencing intolerable suffering everyday or he is in coma.
- c) If the treatment is stopped, the patient shall collapse almost immediately.

- d) The patient (if capable of giving consent) has appealed for discontinuation of special treatment. (Special treatment is that which only helps the patient to be alive for the time being, it cannot cure the disease at all).
- e) To assure painless death palliative treatment should be continued.
- f) If the patient is incapable of giving his/her consent, the appeal of patients nearest relative shall be taken into consideration.^[6]

Under these conditions if we demand the application of Euthanasia, then the chances of misuse of the concept shall be minimized.

In this regard, we need to analyze condition "f", wherein the kin of patient (viz. mother, father, son, daughter, and husband) shall appeal to the authority appreciating a patient's current physical condition. Here one problem may be of vested interest of the kin, guiding such a decision. To judge the genuinity of such a case, I suggest that an **Ethical Board** or an **Ethical Committee** should be formed which shall be comprises of respectable members from different fields of society. If such a process could be established, the abuse or the misapplication of the act can be prevented. In developed countries there exists similar ethical committees, which supervise Human trials of newly developed medicines. Likewise, an Ethical Committee in the Euthanasia will definitely prevent its misuse by judging its various aspects properly. Ethical Committee shall consist of the attending doctor of the patient, other doctors, relatives of the patient and representatives from legislature, administration, judiciary, literary world, social service organization, and from academic also.

In conclusion, I believe that after analyzing and discussing the various aspects of the act and after receiving mixed reactions from the general people as well as from the patient party, Euthanasia can be applied without any adverse reaction only in particular cases:

- a) Euthanasia can be applied ethically as well as legally on those who's motor and sensory functioning system is not working since birth. Euthanasia can be administered on those who are not able to receive any kind of input from the empirical world and therefore cannot deliver any kind of output to the external world. The point here is that as there is no such clear cut dividing line between a foetus and a child and if the disease of this type is detected at the foetal stage, doctors as well as the expecting parent would have aborted that foetus so if after birth the same is being detected, it will not be unethical and illegal as well to euthanize the patient.
- b) If a person is suffering from any kind of disease, which is not curable presently, or rather incurable, Euthanasia can be applied. For example, if a patient is suffering from cancer of the pancreas then to liberate oneself from intolerable sufferings, appeal for Euthanasia through an Ethical Committee would be more plausible.

In a nutshell, if Euthanasia can be applied to situations like those stated above then misapplication of the concept shall be minimized and at the same time human dignity shall be restored.

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Language and Genes : In Songbirds, Ape and Modern Humans

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Abstract

The human species acquires language skills from its surroundings during childhood, based on genetically endowed 'language instinct.' The first such gene to be identified, isolated and sequenced is called *FOXP2*, which codes for a transcription suppressor protein that regulates gene expression. Mutation in this autosomal dominant gene with a long evolutionary history, has been implicated in speech and language disorders and cognitive disabilities. Studies of its orthologues in songbirds, apes and humans have vastly enhanced our understanding of neural architecture. The faculty of human speech is believed to be partly built on modifications of ancestral brain networks involved in sensorimotor integration and motor skill learning. Involvement of other genes in language dysfunction has also been recorded in the last decade. A brief overview of such genes and their putative functions is attempted in this article.

Key words : Language instinct, verbal dyspraxia, *FOX P2*, Neanderthal men, stuttering.

Human species communicate and develop social bonds with each other by means of language. However, one can never know how our primate ancestors, or Neanderthals for that matter, spoke, because speeches do not leave fossil trails. It was opined ^[1] that language took over the role that grooming occupies in ape and monkey society – the maintenance and development of social bonds. When humans started to live in large groups, it became essential for them to invent some form of social grooming that would unite them. Apart from communication, primitive men also had to indulge in social gossip. The result was probably the development of a primordial language. The way we speak today and use our language, according to the linguist Noam Chomsky ^[2], is fundamentally the same in different societies. Whether or not it points to the existence of a universal human grammar, however, is debatable. But we do tend to follow certain rules without being aware of them, as if it were an instinct. The preordained, innate structure was there all the time; a child had only to pick up the vocabulary from its surroundings and begin to fill up the empty slots from its second year of birth. Chomsky's conjecture has been validated by different researchers. It was shown that a child removed from its own society and brought up in a different speech community, will never show proficiency in its own language comparable to a native speaker. The difficulty of acquiring new language skills during adulthood is of course well recognized. Today, there is a general consensus that all humans possess what is called a 'language instinct', something that Charles Darwin hinted at, much ahead of his time ^[3]. "Man has an instinctive tendency to speak, as we see in the babble of our young children, while no child has an instinctive tendency to bake, brew or write"; that language ability is "an instinctive tendency to acquire an art." He was only trying to draw the distinction between an innate ability or instinct and an acquired ability. Today, 'language instinct' has become a catchword ^[4]. If the rudiment of a language structure

was universally present in a new-born, it forcefully points to a genetic root of language abilities – a possibility raised towards the middle of the last century by Chomsky [5] and the neurologist Eric Lenneberg [6]. The latter pointed out that a small number of children fail to display ability to acquire language skills and that such deficiency sometimes run in families. Today we call such deficiency ‘specific language impairment (SLI)’, a condition that includes myriad language disorders that cannot be attributed to autism, deafness, retardation or other common causes. A number of attempts by researchers to identify the genetic factors responsible for language disorders have been made from the beginning of this century. The results, including those from family and twin studies do point to genetic factors contributing to different degrees to the risk of developing various language disorders, especially in articulation and syntax [7]. A caveat: culture is equally important in development of linguistic skills. Also, there exists an enormous body of literature on linguistic relativity or the Whorfian hypothesis, some of them contentious today, but any paradigm on the genetic root of language acquisition cannot ignore the data emerging from detailed studies in cognitive science at the interface of thought, language and culture [8]. Creation of inventories of human gene through the Human Genome Project has greatly propelled identification, isolation, cloning and characterization of mutated genes from patients with language impairment. Such genes are now genetically engineered into organisms like song-birds and mice and expression of such genes studied for clues about their function. With the plethora of results pouring in, researchers are upbeat about the prospects of improved diagnostics and treatment strategies for affected people. Better knowledge about the disorders may, in turn, lead to a better appreciation of biological pathways involved in normal language acquisition. State-of-the-art knowledge on how different genes influence linguistic abilities is briefly reviewed in the present article.

The KE family and FOX P2 :

The quest started with the report [9] of a large British family of Pakistani origin, called KE (name suppressed for secrecy), half of whose members over three generations suffered from speech and language disorders, in a manner that implicated an autosomal (non-sex) dominant gene or set of linked genes with full penetrance. Extensive tests by psycho-linguists showed that affected family members score below average in intelligence tests but the language deficit could not simply be attributed to low intelligence alone: some of the affected members scored in the normal range and some others even scored higher than their unaffected relatives. Those affected moreover had difficulty in articulating speech sounds, especially as children, and in controlled movements of the mouth and tongue, such as sticking out their tongue or blowing on command, symptoms known in medical parlance as verbal (or articulatory) dyspraxia. However, deficits in motor control alone could not be directly attributed to language disorders. The affected members could not also sometimes identify basic speech sounds; understand sentences or grammatical structures and related skills; they stumble on nonsense words that most four-year olds pass with ease.

Genetic dissection of the disorder :

The defective gene was identified in 1998, on a small segment, a 5.6-cM interval, in the long arm of human chromosome 7 (7q 31), which they called *SPCHI* [10]. This was an important step towards isolation of the gene that could offer the first insight into the molecular genetics of

neurodevelopment that culminates in speech and language. An unrelated person labelled CS was identified with speech defect similar to the KEs. He also had a chromosomal translocation that affected the *SPCH1* segment along with the responsible gene, which came to be called *FOXP2*. The gene defect was actually a mutation seen in all the affected KE family members (but in none of the unaffected members or the 364 chromosomes analyzed from unrelated and unaffected people). It involved substitution of the purine base guanine by another purine adenine; thereby replacing the amino acid histidine by arginine in the 'fork-head' domain of the gene's protein product. It was suspected that the *FOXP2* gene was somehow involved in the development of normal brain circuitry.

FOXP2 is actually a member of the forkhead/winged helix (FOX) family of transcription factors many of which are important in embryonic development. The transcription factors bind directly to about 300 to 400 gene promoters in the human genome, to regulate expression of a variety of genes. This gene is strongly expressed in foetal brain tissue (as also in the adult brain, in lungs and in gut tissue); in mouse embryos, homologue of the gene is expressed in the cerebral cortex. Evidently, the gene is required for proper development of speech and language regions of the brain during embryo formation; and conceivably in other biological pathways and cascades that may influence language development. In the affected KE members and in CS, only one copy of the gene is mutated. Which meant that at a critical point in the development of foetal brain, only half of the functional transcriptional protein was present, clearly inadequate for healthy brain development. ^[11,12]

FOXP2 in other organisms :

Comparison of *FOXP2* orthologues in different species revealed that the encoded protein product in chimpanzees, gorillas and rhesus macaques differ from the human version by only two amino acids out of a total of 715, and from that of mice by three. The similarity between human *FOXP2* protein and that of other mammals indicates that the genes are highly conserved in evolution. Also, different human populations show no variation in their *FOXP2* gene sequences. The similarity extends to songbirds and quite understandably, to our Neanderthal ancestors ^[13-15].

The DNA from Neanderthal bones and modern man were found to share the same version of the *FOXP2* gene ^[16]. Mutations in the corresponding gene in mice cause reduction in size and vocalization rate. Mutations in both copies of the gene in mice lead to abnormal development of the Purkinje layer; ranting becomes more frequent and pups die within weeks owing to inadequate lung development ^[17]. The versions of *FOXP2* in most songbirds are similar. In the zebra finch, the *FOXP2* protein differs by just eight amino acids and is particularly active in the striatum (area X), which is integral to song learning. The levels of *FOXP2* expression in the striatum of finches are highest during early life, which is when most of their song learning takes place. In canaries, which learn songs throughout their lives, the protein levels escalate annually and peak during the late summer months, the time when they remodel their songs. Now, what if the levels of *FOXP2* protein in the striatum were to plummet during a crucial learning phase? The answer was sought by injecting young finches with a tailored piece of RNA that blocked expression of

the *FOXP2* gene. The birds found it difficult to develop new tunes. Their songs became garbled: with the same component “syllables” as the tunes of their tutors, but with syllables rearranged, omitted, repeated incorrectly or sung at the wrong pitch. The resulting cacophony produced by these finches bears uncanny resemblance to the distorted speech of affected KE family members, making it tempting to label *FOXP2* as a vocal learning gene that influences the ability to learn new communication sounds by imitation. Exactly how diminished *FOXP2* levels affect vocal control and alter the function of neural circuits important to learned vocalizations, remains unclear [18].

However, by no means is FOXP2 a “language gene”. Birds do not have language because they lack the higher order language processing of the human outer cortex. In fact, *FOXP2* of songbirds has no essential difference with the same gene present in non-songbirds: only the *level* of *FOXP2* gene expression between the two really matters [19]. Clearly, the higher amount of *FOXP2* product is associated with song changes in adult canaries [20]. As already pointed out, downregulation or decrease in the gene product in young zebra finches lead to incomplete or inaccurate song imitation while during song learning there is upregulation or increase of *FOXP2* protein in brain regions critical for song learning [21]. Interestingly, in adult zebra finches, the levels of *FOXP2* are significantly higher when males direct their song to females than when they sing for other reasons [22]. The similarities in auditory-guided vocal learning our species shares with songbirds is probably superficial – a result of convergent evolution of avian and human lineages. There is no compelling evidence to date that bird song matches the characteristic syntactic complexity of human language.

However, in other species that exhibit vocal learning, such as whales, dolphins and elephants, no common pattern can be discerned in mutations of their *FOXP2* genes. Another point need be made. *By no stretch of imagination is FOXP2 a ‘grammar gene’* or that it has anything to do with the *emergence of syntactical speech* [23] in recent times.

The targets of FOXP2 transcription factor :

FOXP2 regulates gene expression by switching genes “off” and “on”. Identifying its targets, particularly in the human brain, would be the next obvious step. Preliminary investigations with about 5000 different genes showed that *FOXP2* potentially regulates hundreds of these. These putative target genes either controls brain development in embryos and adults, fashion the structural pattern of developing brains and growth of neurons, or are involved in chemical signaling, synaptic plasticity and long-term changes in neural connections that enable learning and adaptive behavior.

CNTNAP2 :

Sonja Vernes *et al* [24] reported that *FOXP2* switches off a large, 23 Mb long, contiguous gene located at 7q35-q36, called the *contactin-associated protein-like 2 (CNTNAP2)*, a gene involved in a broad range of language disorders including specific language impairment (SLI) and susceptibility to autism, both of which affect children, and involve difficulties in picking up spoken language skills. *CASPR2*, the protein encoded by *CNTNAP2*, is known to influence connections between nerve cells in the developing brain; they are particularly abundant in neural circuits involved in language. This discovery could have important implications on the role of

FOXP2 in language disorders. More so, because, the *CNTNAP2* gene is also implicated in multiple neurodevelopmental disorders including Gilles de la Tourette syndrome, schizophrenia, epilepsy, autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and mental retardation [25,26].

ATP2C2 and CMIP :

These two genes located close to one another on the long arm of chromosome 16 (16 q) are implicated in SLI [27, 28]. Genes *ATP2C2* stands for ATPase2C2 and *CMIP* for c-MAF inducing protein. The latter is an integral part of the cellular scaffold that links the cell membrane to the cytoskeleton [29], which is important because cytoskeletal remodeling is crucial for migration of neurons and formation of synapses. *ATP2C2* is known to remove calcium and manganese ions from the cytosol into the Golgi bodies [30]. Calcium ions are essential in many neuronal processes, including working memory, synaptic plasticity and neuronal motility [31] while altered manganese regulation has been associated with neurological disorders [32]. However, the exact mechanisms by which *ATP2C2* and *CMIP* might contribute to language impairment remains to be elucidated.

FOXP1 :

Disruptions in the closely related *FOXP1* gene has been linked to multiple cases of cognitive dysfunction including intellectual disability and autism spectrum disorder coupled with language impairment [33]. It is present in the short arm of human chromosome 3 (3p14). Since FOXP1 and FOXP2 are known to form heterodimeric proteins for transcriptional regulation, one may assume that they cooperate in a common neurodevelopmental pathway through the co-regulation of common targets.

The genes targeted by human FOXP2 also influence the development of head and face, parts of the brain involved in motor skills, growth of cartilage and connective tissues, and development of the nervous system itself. This underlines the central role of the FOXP2 in establishment of neural circuits and other physical architecture important for speech and language [34, 35]. However, the *FOXP2* story is far from complete. Ongoing investigation could throw up targets amenable to genetic screening, aimed at identifying cases of language impairments early on.

ROBO 1 :

The gene *ROBO1* ('roundabout axon guidance receptor, homologue 1') first isolated in *Drosophila* and later in mice and men, and located in the short arm of human chromosome 3 (3p 12.3) close to the gene *FOX P1* gene, is now found to be associated with the process of language learning in infants. It is the *first gene to be implicated in language deficits affecting normal variation in language ability*. One variant of this gene was linked to a short-term buffer for arbitrary phonological strings which are involved in language acquisition among infants. Role of this gene in neuronal migration underlying bilateral symmetry and lateralization of neuronal function suggests its probable involvement in the evolution of human language ability. This discovery could help us better understand speech disorders, dyslexia and short-term memory problems among children [36].

Stuttering :

It is a neurodevelopmental disorder that begins in childhood and is characterised by uncontrollable repetitions and prolongations of syllables together with involuntary silent pauses while speaking. However, most of them display normal linguistic proficiency. Investigations into the genetic root of persistent familial stuttering^[37-39] indicate involvement of several genes located in at least 10 different chromosomes – a strong indication that it is a complex multifactorial trait. In one particular study involving 46 consanguineous families from Pakistan, a gene in the long arm of chromosome 12 (12q 23.2) was found to be disrupted in most affected relatives of the largest of these families. The variant gene at this chromosomal locus is *GNPTAB*, which encodes two subunits of the enzyme Glucose N-acetyl phosphotransferase (GNPT). GNPT catalyzes addition of a mannose-6-phosphate moiety to hydrolytic enzymes, allowing them to be targeted to lysosomes. The incidence of this variant form was significant relative to other Pakistani controls. However, other variants were also reported. Probably, therefore, other unknown genes are also responsible for stuttering^[40].

Recent genetic studies have also implicated the *DYX2* (risk locus for dyslexia type 2) region on human chromosome 6p22 with reading disabilities/dyslexia, language impairment and cognition^[41]. Linguistic ability is clearly a complex multifactorial trait that results from activities of multiple sets of distributed neural circuits, both cortical and sub-cortical. They are partly built on adaptive evolution of preexisting systems through modification of ancestral brain networks involved in sensorimotor integration and motor skill learning^[42-44].

Conclusions :

Evidence is almost incontrovertible today about the genetic component of an increasing array of speech and language disorders. Researchers are discovering genes one after another that may have a role in normal neurodevelopmental pathways and in creation and proper functioning of neural circuits. Despite enviable progress in this field, many of the genetic risk factors behind language impairment and/or normal linguistic variation remain undiscovered. Such genes as we know of undergo selective changes; but such changes in evolution are relatively few and far between. However, the evolutionary dynamics of language-associated genes remains fuzzy. For the present, we have to remain content with the knowledge that the linguistic skills we pride ourselves in, are largely constructed through need-based redeployment of genetic blueprint during development; they did not arise *de novo*. Detailed knowledge of such genetic markers however, may enable development of early diagnostics and treatment strategies for different language and neuropathological disorders. There are also important lessons on offer, for example, about our place in the natural world and a deeper appreciation of what unites us with other animals.

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Translation: Some Thoughts

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Abstract

It is said that perfume of a pristine thought cannot in translation be caught. However, translations have existed and evolved over ages. Like any art form translation has its own imperfections. Translations from and into Sanskrit are no exception. The fact is, whether or not an idea in the source language changes its meaning in the target language, a translation does create a magic, something that might be absent in the original language. It can produce a new flavor, a new savor to the new readers.

In Sanskrit the term *anuvāda* primarily means saying after or again. The term is used to denote repeating by way of explanation, explanatory repetition or reiteration with corroboration or illustration, explanatory reference to anything already said. However, in the most popular way, *anuvāda* is rendering a written text into another language or sometimes in the same language in a simpler way.

There are many purposes of translation. Hindu scriptures i.e. *Vedas*, *Brāhmaṇas*, *Smṛti* and other philosophical writings were primarily translated in the same language of the original text. These are called *Ṭīkā* or *Bhāṣya*. The same scriptures were translated later into English and other regional languages. These are called literary translations and the purpose is to discover the meanings of old writings. Translation with exemplifications is also a type of translation that broadens the area of knowledge for general readers. Sometimes it is very difficult to translate idioms, proverbs and even some ideas into another language. In this case, often, instead of literary translation, the translator ends up with conveying the meaning, and hence with what is called transcreation.

According to Sanskrit rhetoric, any literary work i.e. prose, poetry or drama should be based on *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Mahābhārata* or *Purāṇas*. We may, then, call the Classical Sanskrit literature a transcreated literature. For example, *Abhijñānaśākuntala*, the famous drama by *Kālidāsa*, is present in the *Mahābhārata*, *Padmapurāṇa*, *Matsyapurāṇa* and in other compositions too. It is surprising to note that the story was translated again and again only to be retold by *Kālidāsa* in a magnificent way. The same thing is also true for *Uttarāmacarita* of *Bhavabhūti*.

It is said that perfume of a pristine thought cannot in translation be caught. However, translations have existed and evolved over ages. Like any art form translation has its own imperfections. Translations from and into Sanskrit are no exception. But the fact that it gets expressed in another language and reaches out to a whole new audience, elevates the art of translation from a literary endeavor to a noble act of communication. In this context we can remember that William Jones translated the play *Abhijñānaśākuntala* into English in 1789.

After two years, it was again translated into German by Georg Foster. Overwhelmed by that edition Goethe wrote as an outburst of admiration :

Wouldst thou the young year's blossoms and the fruits of its decline.
And all by which the soul is charmed, enraptured, feasted, fed,
Wouldst thou the earth and heaven itself in one sole name combined?
I name thee, O' *Sakuntala*! And all at once is said. (1)

Translated by E. B. Eastwick from German

The fact is, whether or not an idea in the source language changes its meaning in the target language, a translation does create a magic, something that might be absent in the original language. It can produce a new flavor, a new savor to the new readers.

Alexander Pope once said in his book '*An Essay on Criticism*' – "true ease in writing comes from art, not chance" (Sound and sense). This very art is manifested through translation over ages. This is because a translation is something beyond the text. It is a transformation. Some examples of such transformation from single original text may be cited.

Urvaśī - Purūravas hymn (*Rgveda* 10.95) is the most cultivated dialogue hymn in *Rgveda*. *Urvaśī* and *Purūravas* are the personifications of the dawn and the sun respectively. The hymn presents a tender and transient love story between the two. As the glorious sun appears, the dawn disappears, leaving an assurance of reunion at the end of the night. Being inspired by the hymn Kalidāsa transcreated a five act drama, *Vikramorvaśīyam* in Sanskrit. He transformed the two characters as human beings and presented a whole new saga of their passionate love – union, separation and reunion. The same story is retold by Aurobindo Ghosh in English. He wrote a four act play *Urvashi* based on that hymn. But the poet's perspective is totally different from that of Kalidāsa, or, for that matter, even from the original. *Urvashi* is presented here as the icon of eternal pleasure, the epitome of divine perfection (*brahmānanda*), that the wise crave for. And the way *Purūravas* did penance to get *Urvaśī* back is only comparable to an endeavour to attain emancipation. The play ends up in an eternal state where the truth becomes auspicious as well as beautiful. Here is a glimpse of *Urvashi* as depicted by Ghosh:

"Out of the widening glory move a face
of dawn, a body fresh from mystery
Enveloped with a prophecy of light,
more rich than perfect splendours. It was she
the golden virgin, Usa, mother of life yet virgin." (2)

Rabindranath Tagore's poem *Urvaśī* (*Citrā*. Tagore), however, translates a different idea, a different thought. Here she is the personification of beauty itself. Beauty, though abstract, is the inspiration of all creations, the manifestation of all imagination. Beauty, reflected in women or in nature, incites the poet within man. Man can feel the beginning of such inspiration like a flash of light, transient yet leaving permanent impression. The poet attributes her with his own love (*mānasī*), as he discovers his own desires for *Urvaśī*. And, when he starts to think of his own desires, he realizes that his *mānasī* is no more a heavenly nymph, but a beloved partner, tender yet beautiful.

These translations by Kâlidâsa, Aurobindo and Tagore are created from a single vedic hymn. It shows how translation is not simply converting a text into another language. Sometimes it is more than that. This is because every translation is the reflection of the author's mind. A translator not only represents the previous text, but also adds something of his own to it. His thoughts and ideas, his time and space, his pleasure and sufferings, his experiences are all to be traced in his writings. Thus it is quite confusing to decide whether the writing is an original creation and not a translation or vice versa. A successful translation or adaptation sometimes transforms itself into a unique work of art. Two poems of Nissim Ezekiel and A. K. Ramanujan may be cited in this context. Ezekiel in his book '*Egoist's Prayers III*' says:

No, Lord
Not the fruit of action
is my motive.
But do you really mind
Half a bite of it. (3)

A. K. Ramanujan says 'A poem on particulars' in '*The Striders*':

You can sometimes count
Every orange
On a tree
But never
All the trees
In a single orange. (4)

These are original works and not translations. However, none would mind considering the above lines to be the true interpretations of the *karmavâda* (theory of action) of *Śrîmadbhagavadgîtâ* and *satkâryavâda* (the theory that the effect lies latent in its cause itself) of the *Sâmkhya* philosophy.

In conclusion it might be pointed out that through translation the original text becomes an altogether new literary composition. It evolves like a transformed work of art, complete in itself and no more dependent on any original for any deviation.

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The Representation of Female Marginals in the Selected Novels of Amitav Ghosh

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Abstract

Representation of marginalized women and the articulation of the repressed female voice have been a significant area of discussion in the contemporary socio-political, anthropological and similar academic discourses. This fascinating area has received adequate critical reception and investigation in European, American and Indo-Anglican literature. Recent Indian English novelists have focused on the problem of woman's representation and silencing of their voice with divergent perspectives, captivating narratives and critical illumination. The present paper seeks to explore the representation of marginalized women in the major novels of Amitav Ghosh who has emerged as a leading voice in the contemporary fictional world of Indian diaspora. I would make an attempt to explore the steady evolution of Ghosh's female protagonists from subdued passive marginals to active emancipated individuals. I would like to select the women protagonists from a few of his novels and substantiate my point of view with relevant illustrations from their stories. My focal point would be to demonstrate Amitav Ghosh's humanistic endeavor to foreground the hitherto silenced stories of the women and their quest for a distinctive feminine identity.

Key Words:- 1) marginalization 2) subalternity 3) historiography 4) hegemony 5) diasporic 6) male chauvinism 7) femininity.

The voice of the marginalized women or the reflection of submerged femininity is one of the major concerns of recent subaltern scholarship and socialist enquiry. Scholarly investigation and intellectual probing into historical position of women constitute a centrally important topic for discussion in recent postcolonial as well as subaltern studies. Enormous intellectual enquiries, energy and scholarship have been devoted to recover the lost or submerged voice and position of women in the multi-layered archive of colonial historiography and the official documents of independent India as well as other developing countries of Asia and the rest of the Third World.

Before going to the focal point of my discussion, I would like to throw a little light on the evolution of feminist perspectives in context with recent post-colonial studies and subaltern historical explorations. The first wave subaltern scholars, including Ranajit Guha, Partha Chatterjee and others did not consider the silencing of feminine voice to be an integral part in their socio-historical exploration of the cause of 'Dalits', the working class community, the peasants and the displaced migrants. It is Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak who for the first time upholds the age old repression and silencing of the feminine voice in the ceaseless flow of history. Spivak adds a few more dimensions to the propositions of earlier subaltern scholars and explore the issue of feminine marginality within the context of a broader colonial, post colonial and neo-colonial historiography. In her famous article 'Can the subaltern speak?' she puts forward the view that

women are doubly marginalized firstly, because they are women and secondly, if they belong to the lowest strata of society. Lack of education, cultural upliftment, no right in parental property made the life of women miserable. The above factors led to merciless repression, socio-economic exploitation and discrimination in the family which multiplied the women's plight.

The noted Marxist deconstructionist feminist, Mrs. Spivak discusses the condition of women in 19th century parochial Hindu society where the inhuman practice of 'Sati' had been prevalent. She denounces and negates the notion that in the abolition of the ritual of 'Sati' (widow burning) the white men are saving brown women from brown men. Spivak points out that it is a sophisticated and more complex silencing that has been imposed upon women by the colonial authority, as they are deprived of their freedom of choice between an austere life of a widow in a parochial society or to sacrifice themselves in their husbands' pyre. Thus Spivak discusses the aspect of feminine marginalization and forced silencing as no less an important concern in the recent trends of subaltern academics.

The perspective of women's marginality has adequate representation and reflection in European, American and Indo-Anglican literature, though there lies a marked contrast between the approaches in Europe and America and that of India and other former colonies where the perspective is much more complex and multifaceted. In the case of Indian writing in English the question of women's marginality, disempowerment and reassessment of their position in society as well history cannot be viewed in isolation because of its intimate connection with other concomitant forms of oppressions like caste, class, race, politics and ethnicity.

In recent Indo-Anglican diasporic fiction women protagonists are assigned important critical roles as well as thematic significance within the central fabric of the narratives. The novelists' review of colonial/postcolonial historical evolution of Indian society has very many complex and divergent perspectives. In recreating and reviving the marginalized or silenced episodes of history, contemporary novelists like Amitav Ghosh, Salman Rushdie, Rohinton Mistry and others raised fascinating debates and thought provoking issues that have constantly been explored, discussed and reinterpreted in contemporary social as well as academic discourses. Among these diverse aspects the question of women's marginalization and repression in the conventional socio-political historiography has been a dynamic area of exploration in the novels of Ghosh, Rushdie and Mistry. In this paper I will make an attempt to discuss Amitav Ghosh's representation of marginalized women in his novels.

Amitav Ghosh discusses the question of women's representation in literature as well as their struggle for stability and identity within the canon of patriarchal social and literary standard in connection with other types of marginalization and disempowerment. The women's representation and their quest for identity in the face of age old marginalization and oppression are intimately linked with the class, caste, race, ethnicity and various other types of oppressive Otherization. These interlinked issues have adequate humanistic and sensitive representation in the novels of contemporary Indian diaspora in general, and in the novels of Amitav Ghosh in particular. He has responded with adequate human appeal and sensibility to those sensitizing areas of socio-political history and has thrown enormous exploratory light through illuminated fictionalized

rendering of them. In this article I will make an attempt to review and scrutinize the representation of marginal women in the novels of Amitav Ghosh and through simple textual analysis will attempt to demonstrate how the novelist has made these female voices articulate. He has given his female characters ample sensitive response and enough human dignity. In his intermingled account of facts and fiction, the novelist has illuminated very many darkened pages of history which echoes and reechoes women's plight, marginality, tolerance, oppression and relentless battle against adversities.

In his fictional world the women voices come to the foreground of the narratives and sometimes play decisive role in unfolding the plot and leading them to convincing resolutions. In his more recent novels a few female characters become the central protagonists and serve as the nucleus in structuring and weaving the narrative pattern; for example Dolly and Uma Dey in *The Glass Palace* (2000) ^[1], Kusum in *The Hungry Tide* (2004) ^[2], Deeti or Adeeti in *Sea of Poppies* (2008) ^[3]. The last even becomes the prime symbolic agent in conveying Ghosh's major thematic concerns such as the colonial oppression, opium war, large scale migration and the problem of 19th century Hindu widows. On the whole, Ghosh's fictional canvas is vibrant, complex, problematized, richly variegated by a colourful portrait gallery of females who add variety, intensity and comprehensiveness to his works. They are throbbing with desire, sometimes upholding a new set of values, sometimes showing a great concern for the restructuring of the present system, sometimes mere passive victims to patriarchal mistreatment while in some cases inspiring because of their bold attempt to transgress the imposed passivity and inarticulateness by engaging themselves into acts of rebellion, resistance and protest. To facilitate my discussion I will take into account Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* and *Sea of Poppies* and focus upon its central female protagonists. In course of my discussion I will attempt to deal with their importance in the intricate patterning and progress of the narratives.

In his fictional world there is continuous evolution of female protagonists that complicates and opens up new issues of interpretations and discussions. Particularly in his later novels some of the female characters are so vibrantly powerful that they take decisive part in the progress of the story as well as in unfolding the thematic fabric. Sometimes they set a standard of values against which all other characters could be assessed. Dolly in *The Glass Palace* (2000), Kusum in *The Hungry Tide* (2004) and Deeti in *The Sea of Poppies* (2008) are such exemplary feminine figures who set a moral standard and serve a mirror for the readers to reflect the other women as well as their male counterparts in the respective novels. In some of his complex works the female protagonists uphold a sensitive social stance that brings about a sweeping transformation and retransformation within the mindset of their fellow characters. Nirmal's radical transformation and involvement with the cause of refugees of Morichjhapi and Kusum's influence on him should be noted here, while Deeti's competent leadership of the migrant labourers in the Ibis is no less important. Thus Ghosh's attempt to raise the voice of female marginals and the advocacy of the need for rethinking over women's due importance in the society, is praiseworthy.

In the evolution of female marginals in Amitav Ghosh's novels, an important woman protagonist whom I would like to concentrate on, is Kusum Mondal who figures in *The Hungry Tide*. It is a saga of struggling refugees set in Sundarban, the eastern most archipelago of India

as well as of Bengal. Ghosh interweaves her story with one of the worst terrifying episodes of post Partition India as well as Bengal which records the terrible sufferings and horrendous plight of a group of migrant refugees. Kusum's character is inspiring, transforming and at the same time poignantly tragic. The great paradox of her life story lies in the fact that it is at once penetratingly tragic, and an inspiring account of a bold indomitable woman who can stick to a cause even in the face of worst type of misfortune.

Kusum's story is told in retrospective from the diary of Nirmal Bose an egalitarian Marxist of late sixties. Kusum is the mother of Fokir, the illiterate fisherman who becomes a key figure in the central narrative involving the triangle among Kanai Dutta, Piyali Roy and himself. Kusum's life is woven around incessant struggle, plight and misery from her initiation into girlhood. Like her mother, she became a victim of women trafficking and narrowly escaped the life of prostitution. The narrative marks her return to Lusibari, and then to Marichjhapi where she join hands with the struggling refugees from Dandyakaryana. She fights for their cause at the cost of her life, and even risking the life of her child. She inspires Nirmal by her indomitable spirit and dynamism in the face of odds and adversities. This results in Nirmal's emotional attachment to her and his involvement with the claims of helpless settlers. Kusum though a marginally illiterate indigenous woman, yet Ghosh depicts her with a great human sensibility and sweeping energy. The controversial and darkened pages of Morichjhapi episode become dramatically poignant in Ghosh's novel not only because of his vivid documentation of the sufferings of the refugees, but also because of an illiterate village woman's active and decisive involvement in it. It is noteworthy, that Ghosh assigns a paramount importance and an enormous significance to a marginal working class woman who may sacrifice her all and devote herself to the cause of the helpless disempowered. Kusum anticipates the intellectually accomplished women of our time, who are competent enough to take active part in reconstruction of the nation and progress of society.

Another point that seems no less important to me, that Kusum's action and her attachment to the cause of the struggling settlers, is strongly opposed and disapproved by her so called elitist counterparts, yet she remains committed to stand by the refugees without any moral or material support from the well to do section of the society. Even Nilima another important female character of this novel, Nirmal's wife who once loved her refuses to offer any assistance to her as well as to the struggling refugees who were mercilessly alienated by the then Government and so called establishment. Kusum's personality is indeed inspiring and worthy of respect. Her journey through odds and adversities represents an indigenous disempowered woman's enormous social commitment and human concern for the cause of humanity in distress. Kusum's arduous battle ends in an ambiguously mysterious juncture, for, nothing definite is mentioned of her fate. As Nirmal's diary closes abruptly at a critical point of crisis, so is Kusum, lost in the oblivion in the midst of chaos, confusion and the merciless torture and killing of the unarmed refugees by the machinery of the authority.

As the male protagonists in Ghosh's novels find themselves trapped in the complex dilemma between the colonial present and the indigenous past, between the wonder lust to explore and the pull towards the root: so are the women folk, torn in the dilemma between the status quo

imposed on them by the patriarchal power structure and their inner urge for complete emancipation and assertion of their legitimate significance in the global reordering of the society. In the complex process of articulating the voice from the margin, Ghosh wonderfully dramatizes this intrinsic urge of woman to let her voice sound and resound in the society. His mature novels are thus the sagas of heroic women's battle against a series of misfortune and the conventional approach of marginalizing them. Globalization is the cry of the hour and hence Ghosh is an ardent champion of the cause of new women aspirants, working on equal footing with men.

No discussion on Amitav Ghosh's projection of the voice of marginalized women becomes complete without throwing light on *The Sea of Poppies* (2008). The first volume of the Ibis trilogy set against the background of Anglo-China opium war of 1837. In this breathtakingly vibrant and sensitively humane work there come a few dynamic female protagonists whom Ghosh draws with tremendous insight, overwhelming social consciousness and artistic imagination. These women protagonists are brought into the centre of the action and are indispensably linked to the incessant flow of humane migrants and continuous march of time and history. These female marginals leave indelible impression in Ghosh's socio-anthropological probing of the colonial world. They represent the notion of history suffering. These women characters in quest of a stable identity in the complex process of reordering of the world attempt to overcome their multifaceted marginalization: as women, as native, as belonging to poor working class community and similar other forms of repression and silencing. The evolution of female protagonists in Ghosh's fictional world reaches its pinnacle in *The Sea of Poppies* where the women are the makers of their own life and fortune. They are neither the passive victims of enormous socio-economic oppression, nor radical, rather are ready to take the challenge of adversity and determine their own course of action. Among these vibrant women characters I would like to deal with Deeti or Adeeti who comes foremost in the colourfully complex portrait gallery of Ghosh's female characters.

The central story of *The Sea of Poppies* revolves round its principal woman character Deeti or Adeeti, a young illiterate woman from a village of Eastern Bihar. Ghosh makes her character to be the nucleus of the novel against which the grand narrative of history is unfolded. Ghosh depicts her with enormous empathy and human sensitivity. She undergoes a sweeping transformation in the course of the story and her inspiring personality draws admiration and popularity among her fellow migrants in the Ibis. Ghosh makes her bold enough to stand in resistance against all sorts of repression, torture and malpractices. The articulation of the voice of marginals both men and women in Ghosh's fiction comes full circle in the accomplished depiction of Deeti as an emerging modern aspirant, boldly encountering the sorrows and sufferings of life and raising voice against injustice, dishonesty and misbehavior. Her opposing protest is not only restricted to her in-laws, parochially patriarchal society, or inhuman socio-religious practices but also encompasses the colonizers' brutality to disempowered labourers. Her defined personality raises a strong demand for the emancipation of inarticulate women who had been subject to various kinds of mistreatment since antiquity.

She is a simple and ordinary village woman. From her birth, she is a prey to enormous injustices and mistreatments. Bliss or fortune seldom smiles upon her. She is married to an opium addict Hukham Singh without her consent. As marriage has become a business, the price, she pays for her husband by thatching the roof of her husband's house. This shows the evils and stigma associated with the dowry system in India. Deeti plays the role of mother, wife and nurse and shoulders the burden of house work. Thus she is trapped in the complex whirlwind of misery and sufferings since her budding girlhood.

Deeti undergoes a symbolic journey from innocence to experience: from a simple village wife to an experienced woman seasoned with the experience of sorrows and sufferings to encounter various external challenges as well as internal dilemmas. In her evolution we see a complex intermingling of several instinctive as well as acquired traits of personality. Unlike the female protagonists of Ghosh's earlier novels her character does not follow a straight forward course of development, rather involves herself from one set of value to other. Ghosh wonderfully dramatizes the various critical twists and turns in her life.

In various facets of her journey we see her in different significant roles. She takes the responsibility of looking after her half conscious, impotent opium addict husband till his death, expresses concern for her daughter's future and marriage and performs her duties to the in-laws though they are tyrannically oppressive and unsympathetic towards her plight. It becomes a single handed combat for her to look after her ailing husband and little daughter Kavutari.

She is sexually assaulted by her brother-in-law Chandan Singh who unfortunately is the father of her child. She resists all kinds of temptation and confronts the tyranny of the patriarchal parochialism of her family and society. Through her misery and bitter experiences Ghosh depicts realistically the endless misery of 19th century Indian village women doubly harassed and marginalized within the family as well as the community. After her husband's death she is forced to become a 'Sati' which suggests the inhuman practice prevalent in 18th and 19th century Hindu society. At this point she finds herself in a poignant dilemma as whether to submit to the sexual desire of her brother in law or to burn herself in her husband's pyre.

Here we see the stubbornness and courageous wisdom of her character as she defiantly retorts to her brother-in-law's obscene and dishonoring proposal as: "Listen to my words: I will burn on my husband's pyre rather than give myself to you." (Amitav Ghosh, *Sea of Poppies*, p.154) ^[3]. In an illuminating essay cited earlier Malathi and Prema writes in this connection: "Deeti does not mount the funeral pyre of her husband, unlike the traditional ladies to commit sati. But she is victimized to commit sati by her family." (Malati and Prema, p.5) ^[4]. Here she conforms to the conventional code of conduct imposed on traditional Hindu widow. She unhesitatingly offers herself to her husband's pyre leaving her little daughter alone before an uncertain future. Here her decision may be debated and interrogated but nonetheless she confronts the crisis with proper endurance, dignity and a perfect calm of mind.

Amidst tumultuous roar and shouts of fanatics in the glorification of Sati, Deeti was put into her husband's burning pyre. But fate has something else in store for her. She miraculously survived and was rescued by the low caste ox-cart driver Kalua who used to drive her dead husband Hukum Singh to the Gazipur opium factory. Kalua stood by her through thick and thin and a tender feeling developed in her for the low caste Chamar. The humanity, sincerity and fellow feelings which is missing in the hard hearted relations of Deeti as well as the so called elites of the society, is amply present in the illiterate low caste marginals like Kalua. By uniting Deeti and Kalua Amitav Ghosh makes the cause of the socially outcaste marginal's triumphant.

Partly because of her growing affection as well as gratitude and partly because of her security and need of the time she offers the proposal of marriage to Kalua and they are united in a wedlock. Deeti's marriage with Kalua symbolizes a silent revolution in the parochial Hindu society of 19th century India where the inter-caste marriage had been destructively condemned. In making it possible, Ghosh advocates the need for blurring and complete abolition of the age old caste hatred and menacing attitude of the higher social class and caste towards the lower sections of it.

Deeti here emerges as the representative of independent womanhood who is bold enough to assert and reassert her voice and decision unambiguously before a conservative village community/society. She defiantly transgresses the age old restrictions and social barriers. She blurringly denounces and sweeps aside the double marginalization imposed upon her for being a woman as well as for being a Hindu widow. In their decision to elope Deeti takes the initiative and takes the active role in chalking out their future plans.

Deeti's act of sacrificing herself at the pyre of her dead husband and her subsequent rescue symbolically suggest a kind of death and rebirth for her. She emerges out of the burning pyre as a new born: utterly transformed and initiated into a world of experience through torments and miseries. All her connections with her past life get severed and now she has no ties, no memory, no home, no family. Even she does not shed a drop of tear for her daughter whom she has left behind. Now Deeti, hand in hand with Kalua enters a new phase of her journey to an uncertain future which is cruelly hard and full of rigorous struggle. She overcomes the prolonged battle within herself and her zest for life overtakes the inclination to surrender and withdrawal. After their elopement from the native village, Deeti feels emancipated from the tyranny of space and time where neither the past haunts her nor the future makes her worried. She is transformed into a denizen of an open space looking forward to a future that is opaque. Ghosh with his mastery of delineation and profound psychosocial insight draws Deeti's character here with her internal dilemma, crisis and the firmness to encounter the pitfalls of life.

She enters a new phase of her life after being enlisted as an indentured woman labourer to be transported to Mauritius for the opium cultivation. Deeti and Kalua after undergoing rigorous battle with poverty, and the fear of being arrested by her in-laws, manage to reach Kolkata. Somehow they got the chance to be enlisted as the coolies to be transported in the Ibis to work in the plantation of Benjamin Burnham, an English opium merchant. Deeti's character symbolizes the sufferings and plight of the women during the 19th century colonial rule. They were the victims

of gender discrimination along with class and caste hatred. Through the portrayal of women in *Sea of Poppies*, Ghosh hints at the enormous possibility of women's empowerment in the subsequent centuries. The characters like Deeti and Paulette anticipate the women's defiance to lodge, protest and resistance against patriarchal oppression and marginalization as well as to acquire their due social significance through education and radical reformation.

Her entry into the Ibis is symbolic of her venture into an unforeseen destiny to which she now will have to proceed along with her fellow migrants in general, and her newly married husband Kalua in particular. She is now; out and out a new woman utterly transformed, aspiring to articulate her voice, legitimizing her demand, and raising her to the height of a self dependent, self confident and stubbornly liberated woman. She has completely freed herself from her initial meekness, passivity, tenderness and weak infirmity of a woman. She becomes the popular 'Bahooji' among the Girmities. She becomes the leader of the migrants in real sense of the term and protests against the injustice and mistreatment towards them. She offers active physical, psychological as well as moral support to her fellow women migrants like Sarju, Munia, Paulette and all. She stood by them in the face of a crisis or difficulties or the inhuman treatment unleashed upon them by the white coloured officers of the Ibis and their agents led by Subeder Bhyro Singh. She inspires the tortured migrants to raise their collective voice against vile meal (poor quality rice, chapatti and dal) served to them.

On one occasion Munia a teenager girl is sternly rebuked and punished by the men of Subeder for flirting and exchanging amorous glances with Jadu one of the laskars. Jadu is beaten severely and Munia is kept confined under the Dabusa. Deeti comes to their aid and vehemently protests against such inhumanity. Thus in the latter part of the story, Deeti becomes an active individual, projecting a defiant resistance to the brutality shown against the disempowered migrants or coolies of the Ibis. Through her characterization Ghosh dramatizes the stubborn anti-colonial resistance of the natives against the white man's discriminatory behavior. Deeti's story symbolizes the marginalized women's struggle to come to the foreground of complex chronicles of history and the process of social restructuring within the 19th and 20th century colonial/postcolonial discourse.

There are several other female protagonists in Ghosh's hitherto published novels worthy of discussion, but for the convenience of my article, I would like to restrict my exploration of Ghosh's depiction of marginalized woman to this point. The women protagonists of Ghosh's novels as I have mentioned earlier, follow a sustained course of evolution from passive sufferers and confined within the patriarchal frame of society to the independent womanhood struggling to come out of their age old prison house and triumphantly asserting their legitimate demands in unfaltering voice and action. Ghosh's women undergo a rigorous journey from the realm of weakness into the territory of radical emancipation. They are committed to their battle to assert their distinctive feminine identity in the society.

Ghosh conveys the message unambiguously that gender discrimination and woman's marginalization needs to be removed so that they may take part in the social reconstruction and progress with their male counterparts on equal footing. His female protagonists, either at home or abroad, pave the way for their independent socio-economic identity and freedom. The fictional journey from Kulfi and Zindi in *The Circle of Reason* ^[5] through Dolly and Uma Dey in *The Glass Palace*, Mongala in *The Calcutta Chromosome* ^[6]; to Deeti and Paulette in the *Sea of Poppies* epitomize this evolution. As an anthropologist and enthusiastic scholar of submerged currents of history, Ghosh's exploration never fades. Ghosh's novels in the words of Kamini Bhasin – "chronicles the daily negotiations and bargains of these subaltern women with the adverse condition of their lives and thus rescues them from being obliterated to anonymity by the 'flood of history'" ^[7]. The first two volumes of his Ibis trilogy (*Sea of Poppies* 2008 and *The River of smoke* 2011) opens up new vistas for illumination, newer avenues of thought, hence he makes the reader expectant to encounter many more fascinatingly vibrant, charming, complex and individualized woman characters in his future works.

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Societies and Associations in the 19th Century Bengal

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to trace the development of the various societies and associations formed by the newly educated youths, who constituted the middle class in the 19th century Bengal. Due to the direct influence of the spread of education, these youths were seen engaging themselves in social, political, scientific, philosophical and literary discussions. Their inquisitiveness together with their eagerness to supplement their knowledge with whatever additional information they could gather made them organize themselves into groups. This led to the foundation of more societies. These societies thus increased the urge of cultivation of literature and science. But another equally strong motivation was the urge of social reform. Education made the youths notice the flaws in the society they lived in and they directed their energy to remove these. The aim of the various societies was the propagation of the ideals of their members. They tried to spread their influence among the masses.

According to Pollard, there can be no middle class without commerce and industry. In the earlier feudal society, there were landed gentry and penniless labourers. But with the rapid growth of industry, a new class came into existence. They neither belonged to the upper strata of the society, nor to the lower one. They occupied the 'middle' part and were commonly known as the middle class. They had so much money at their disposal as to have no worries about their sustenance. With this money, they could educate themselves and settle down to some comfortable job. Having no worry about food and shelter, they engaged themselves in various social reforms. It will not be too sweeping a statement to say that there would have been no Renaissance or Reformation without this class.

Closely connected with the education and enlightenment of the middle class is the creation of societies, both literary and philosophical. The aim of this article is to trace the development of the various societies formed by this class. It also shows how these societies served as platforms for social reforms. In other words, '[...] societies of the type became centres of reforming zeal as well as of literary and philosophical illumination' ^[1]. Education made this newly emerged class notice the flaws in the society. They directed their energy to remove these. Common cause brought different sorts of people under a single banner. The consequent reformation was, therefore, a combined effort. Thus various associations and societies sprang up in the nineteenth century where people regularly met to discuss different issues.

The *Friend of India* once commented that Calcutta is not just a city of palaces ; it is the city of journals as well. Swapan Basu says that as many as 1400 journals, both English and Bengali, were published in the 19th century ^[2]. The same can be said about the societies as well, because most of the journals happened to be the organs of one or the other society. Seeing the

intellectual climate of Bengal on his arrival in India in 1830, Alexander Duff commented: '[...] we fairly came into contact with a rising body of natives, who had learnt to think and to discuss all subjects with unshackled freedom [...] we hailed it as heralding the dawn of an auspicious era' [3].

The foundation of the Hindu College led to the foundation of the Calcutta School Book Society and the Calcutta School Society. Both Englishmen and Indians worked for these organizations. According to Manomohan Gangopadhyay, due to the direct influence of the spread of education, the youths were seen engaging themselves in social, political, scientific, philosophical and literary discussions. Their inquisitiveness together with their eagerness to supplement their knowledge with whatever additional information they could gather made them organize themselves into groups. This led to the foundation of more societies and associations.

The aim of the various societies was the propagation of the ideals of their members. They tried to spread their influence among the masses. In the words of Binay Ghosh: 'These learned associations were the chief institution and medium of propagating the ideals of the new age. It was through these that the intellectuals used to spread their moral influence over all classes of the society' [4]. The educated youths used these associations to liberate the society from the evils of child marriage, polygamy and the suffering of the widows. Binay Ghosh rightly says: 'It is true that these Associations increased the urge of cultivating literature and science; but another urge seems to have been stronger and that is the urge for social reform' [5]. Both Englishmen and Indians began to freely express their views in the associations and the topics discussed clearly pointed to the evils of the contemporary society. It must however be noted that these associations were not confined to the middle class. Elites were also associated with many of these.

Many societies were founded by the British around the end of the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. Indians were not associated with these. These were strictly for the ruling class. The first among these societies was the Asiatic Society founded in 1784. David Kopf says: 'The Asiatic Society was not properly the conception of any one man, be it [Warren] Hastings or [Sir William] Jones, but the expression of a collective need. After a decade of studying facets of Hindu and Muslim civilization in India, the Hastings generation now required a more formal organization' [6]. The society was originally for the elite of the East India Company officials. Though it had over a hundred members even in 1790, only a small group of core members attended the meetings. It was only in 1829 that a few Indians got membership to the Asiatic Society, due to the endeavours of Wilson. Other societies founded by the British include the Literary Society, Oriental Literary Society, Phrenological Society, Agricultural and Horticultural Society, Commercial and Patriotic Association, Ladies' Society, Calcutta Medical and Physical Society, etc.

The Atmiya Sabha (1815) was the first Bengali association. The meetings were held at the founder, Raja Rammohun Roy's house and also at the houses of the other members. Members included Gopimohan Tagore and his son, Prasannakumar, Dwarakanath Tagore, Rajnarayan Basu's father, Nandakisor, the zamindars of Telinipara and Taki and the rajas of Bhukailas and Andul. The weekly sessions of the Sabha began with Vedic chanting, Brahma Sangit and was followed by discussions of social and cultural issues. About a meeting held at Brajamohan Majumdar's house on May 9, 1819, the *Calcutta Journal* reported on May 18:

At the meeting in question, it is said, the absurdity of the prevailing rules respecting the intercourse of several castes with each other, and of the restrictions on diet were freely discussed and generally admitted – the necessity of an infant widow passing her life in a state of celibacy – the practice of Polygamy and of suffering widows to burn with the corpse of their husbands, were condemned – as well as all the superstitious ceremonies in use amongst idolaters ^[7].

The proceeding of this session itself indicates the purpose behind the foundation of this Sabha. It did not restrict itself to merely religious reform, but wanted to flush out the evils of the society.

The Gaudiya Samaj (1823) was founded by the Bengali elite for the purpose of cultivation of education and acquisition of knowledge. Its members included conservatives like Radhakanta Deb, Bhabanicharan Bandyopadhyay, Ramdulal De and Kasinath Tarkapanchanan as well as liberals like Raja Rammohun Roy, Dwarkanath Tagore, Prasannakumar Tagore and Tarachand Chakrabarti. Rammohun Roy's reformation had not yet created a rift in the society and hence the peculiar combination of the members in the Gaudiya Samaj. Members read essays and extracts from their books. Though they were not united in their ideals, they were liberal enough as members of an intellectual society. They could freely express their views, though others could respectfully disagree.

When the practice of *sati* was abolished by law, the conservatives under the leadership of Radhakanta Deb felt Hinduism was under attack. Within a month they founded the Dharmasabha on January 17, 1830 to protect their religion from outside attacks in the guise of 'reforms'. Binay Ghosh says: 'General public gave the Dharmasabha the name of "Gurumsabha". It was so named because its members protested at the top of their voices that religion and scripture were in peril and fired cannon balls of foul language; hence the name'. The Dharmasabha did not go by logic, as did the Brahma Samaj, which was named 'Sitalsabha' 'Calm Society' ^[8].

In the first half of the nineteenth century, while addressing an important but thinly attended meeting, Dwarkanath Tagore had observed: 'Let [the] Hindu College turn out more educated men in future as it has done in the past, and in a few years these meetings will be attended by ten times the number' ^[9]. His prophesy proved true. Derozio, who joined the College in 1826, used to present all the views in favour and against a particular topic. He let the students think for themselves and then helped them to draw conclusions. Since the classroom could not be converted into a debating session, the debate continued after college hours at Derozio's house. It was named the Academic Association and had regular sessions from 1828.

Derozio's students, who are generally known as the Young Bengal, found the scope of applying their newly acquired knowledge in their discussions of social, moral and religious issues. About the Academy Rev. Lal Bihari De says: '...it was more like the *Academy* of Plato, or the *Lyceum* of Aristotle' ^[10]. The *Hindu Patriot* compared this Association with the famous ones at Oxford and Cambridge. In the words of Rev. Lal Bihari De: 'The general tone of the discussions was a decided revolt against existing religious institutions.... The young lions of the Academy roared out, week after week, "Down with Hinduism ! Down with Orthodoxy!"' ^[11]. The *Academic Acad. J.* □ B.G.C. □ 62

Association equally attracted the educated youths as well as the older and matured people. The Young Bengal, inspired by new human rights and liberal ideas, attacked the conservatives with the twin weapons of societies and journals. But the latter had some additional advantages. As Binay Ghosh says: 'Firstly the rich had money at their disposal. Secondly, they could incite the demons of superstition, besides the excuse of Hinduism. The Young Bengal mainly had recourse to "reason" [12].

By the third decade of the 19th century, many societies were formed in England. These created a desire amongst Indians to have similar ones in their country. Academic Association also encouraged other students in Calcutta to form similar organizations. Students of Rammohun Roy's Anglo-Hindu School, Hindu College and Hare School formed Anglo-Indian Hindu Association (1830). Members could discuss any stream of knowledge but religion. Same rules were followed at the Jnansandipan Sabha (1830) founded at Umananda Tagore's Pathuriaghata house. The Debating Club was founded at the house of Lakshminarayan Datta about the same time. Students of Rammohun Roy's Anglo-Hindu School also formed the Sarbatattwadipika Sabha (1832) to bring Bengali out of the neglect it had fallen in. Bengali was the medium of discussion at this society, while English was used in others.

The turmoil in the social life led to the mushrooming of the many societies in the 19th century Bengal. Robert Eisler believes that such associations are found in a society with various problems and clashes. As Rev. Lal Bihari De writes: 'Debating societies multiplied, in which bigotry, high-handed tyranny, superstition and Hindu orthodoxy was denounced in no measured terms' [13]. About the emergence of various associations, Duff also says: 'New societies started up with utmost rapidity in every part of the native city. There was not an evening in the week, on which one, two or more of these were not held; and each individual was generally enrolled a member of several. Indeed the spirit of discussion became a perfect mania; and its manifestation, both in frequency and variety, was carried to a prodigious excess' [14]. There were so many societies that Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay could not help writing: 'Fortunately he [Iswarchandra Gupta] is not alive today. Otherwise he would have been fed up with the societies. He would have surely left Calcutta to get rid of societies like Ramrangini, Syamtarangini, Nababahini, Bhabadahini, etc. Not that he would have got any respite even if he left Calcutta. Had he gone to some village, he would have seen societies desperately hunting members' [15]. It is indeed true that the craze for societies and associations knew no bounds.

The excesses of the Young Bengal created such a situation that Derozio was forced to leave the Hindu College. His ardent followers were persecuted. But the radicals re-grouped their forces repeatedly, brought out a number of journals, held meetings and set up different societies. Binay Ghosh says: 'Though few greenhorns like Madhusudan were still in the stage of "Folly, come breaking open the door", the older members had somewhat returned to their senses' [16]. When the first flush of enthusiasm was over, the Young Bengal was no longer satisfied with sporadic meetings. They wanted something more stable. A manifesto bearing the signature of Tarinicharan Bandyopadhyay, Ramgopal Ghosh, Ramtanu Lahiri, Tarachand Chakrabarti and Rajkrishna De was circulated. It mentioned the absence of a prominent debating society, requirement of

in-depth analysis of a topic and refusal to remain content with superficial knowledge. It stressed on discipline in the proceedings of the association and discussion of subjects related to their country. The Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge was established on March 12, 1838. Its name is similar to that of Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge and Society for the Diffusion of Political Knowledge, in England. However the difference in 'diffusion' and 'acquisition' can be explained by the difference in the social conditions of the two countries. In England, it was the question of 'diffusion' that had become difficult. But in India 'acquisition' was the problem.

The members of the Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge met regularly and discourses were delivered in all the sessions. One is bound to be amazed at the range and variety of the subjects discussed. There were discussions on history, geography, scientific discussions on anatomy, literary discussions, abstract philosophizing, condition of women and need for social reform, whether Bengali should be the medium of instruction and official language and so on. The British also participated in the sessions. Some discussions on politics or economics did make them feel uncomfortable ; still the Society being highly disciplined, they could not help praising it. The advocate of the Supreme Court, George Johnson wrote: 'One of the most meritorious of the native association is the Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge' ^[17].

The Bangabhashaprakasika Sabha was established most probably after Macaulay's declaration in 1835 of English being the medium of instruction for higher education. It aimed at the cultivation of the Bengali language and literature. Any discussion of religion was prohibited. On March 2, 1852, Iswarchandra Gupta wrote in his *Sambad Prabhakar* : 'This society ceased to exist only due to lack of unity. Just because Ray Kalinath Chaudhuri and others supported the Brahma Sabha, people who owed allegiance to Dharmasabha would not get attached to it' ^[18].

The aim of the Tattwabodhini Sabha founded by Debendranath Tagore at their Jorasanko house on October 6, 1839, was to 'to preach the profound essence of our scriptures and the Brahma-Vidya taught by the Vedanta' ^[19]. This society came in reaction to the moral decay of the English-educated Bengali youth and the problem of their conversion into Christianity. Presentation of papers and discussions, on education and culture, was a part of the weekly meetings of the society. Divine service used to be held once a month. Their journal, the *Tattwabodhini Patrika* published articles on literature, history, politics, economics, religion, philosophy, etc. Unlike the Academic Association or the Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge, the Tattwabodhini Sabha inculcated Indian culture, shorn of its accumulated superstitions while imbibing the good aspects of Western culture.

There was a constant flow of new ideas from the West. People got more eager to discuss topics related to education, culture and society at the associations and secure self-esteem through these. More matured after the clashes of the first half of the nineteenth century, people now wanted to direct their energy to improve the society. However, none of these associations continued for long due the loss of interest and commitment with the passage of time. The Perseverance Society (1847) was founded by Gaurdas Basak for literary discussion and social reform. The

Bangabhashanubadak Samaj (1850) was founded with the aim of publishing books for the general public. However they published only two journals, *Vividartha Sangraha* and *Rahasya-Sandarbha* with Rajendralal Mitra as their editor. The Sarbasubhakari Sabha (1850) was founded by few students of the Hindu College. Their aim, as mentioned in their journal, the *Sarbasubhakari Patrika* (1850), was to remove the prevailing evil customs and practices of the country. Vidyasagar and Madanmohan Tarkalankar were associated with this society.

At a meeting held at the Calcutta Medical College on December 11, 1851, Dr. Muatt stressed the need of having a society and 'pointed out the great necessity of devising some means of bringing the educated natives into personal contact with each other' [20]. It was decided that a society should be established for the discussion of science and literature. Since Bethune died a few months ago on August 12, the society was named after him. The members of the Bethune Society included Englishmen like Long and Marshall and educated Indians like Vidyasagar, Debendranath Tagore, Rev. K.M. Bandyopadhyay, Ramgopal Ghosh and Dakshinaranjan Mukhopadhyay. It also had a few Muslims as its members, Maulavi Abdul Latif Khan being the most prominent among them.

Discourses could be in English, Bengali or Urdu. Discussion of politics and religion was prohibited lest it should create a rift amongst the members. Thus Hindus, Brahmos and Christians remained associated with the Society, while forming smaller groups where religion could be discussed. The Preface of the 1861 report stated that the Society brought the British and the educated Indians together for the purpose of 'mutual intellectual culture and rational recreation' [21]. The Society also had a branch at Dhaka named 'The Branch Bethune Society of Dacca'. There was an inclination towards discussion of issues related to education and society, these being urgent issues of the second half of the nineteenth century. This shows how the educated people were aware of their social responsibilities. Some of the topics discussed included 'On the Education and Training of Children in Bengal', 'On the Sanskrit Language and Literature in English and Bengali', 'On Education and the Necessity of Instruction in the Vernacular Language', 'On English Education in Bengal', 'On the Remarriage of Hindu Widows in Bengal', 'On the Best Mode of Instructing the Females in India', 'Periodical Census', 'The Reformatory School System and its Influence on Female Criminals' and 'Educated Natives, their Duties and Responsibilities'. The Bethune Society had five sub-groups working on literature and philosophy, health, science, technology and social science. The heads of these groups had to present a report on their achievement and future plans in the annual convention.

The Vidyotsahini Sabha was founded by Kaliprasanna Sinha in 1853. He converted the intellectual society into a typically informal Bengali one. The discipline and restraint at the Bethune Society made some Bengalis feel uncomfortable. The homely atmosphere together with some laxity in following rules attracted them towards the Vidyotsahini Sabha. It may be called a Bengali edition of the Bethune Society. Discussions could be in Bengali and English, preference being given to the former. The society also presented plays on its own stage. They felicitated literati like Long and Michael Madhusudan Dutt.

The Samajonnavidhayini Suhrid Sabha was founded in 1854 at the house of Kisorichand Mitra. He stressed the need for social reform and added that merely composing essays and giving speeches would not help. It was decided that all the members would work to remove superstitions from the society. They would abstain from doing anything that went against truth and logic. They would work for female education, widow remarriage and try to stop child marriage and *kulin* polygamy. They wanted the members to spread the ideal of righteousness. The members included Pearychand Mitra, Debendranath Tagore, Akshaykumar Datta, Harischandra Mukhopadhyay, Chandrasekhar Deb, Rajendralal Mitra and Digambar Mitra.

The Family Literary Club (1857) was founded by Rev. K.M. Bandyopadhyay. Anyone could be its member. The meetings were held at the houses of the members by rotation. Topics of discussion were the same as in the Bethune Society. Englishmen also participated in the meetings. It did not have much difference from the Bethune Society, except in the atmosphere, as the name suggests. The Burrabazar Garhasthya Sahitya Samaj (1857) had considerable influence on the educated Bengalis. They read essays in English and Bengali. The best essays were given awards and were also published as books. Their annual convention was celebrated on a grand scale. They also felicitated deserving people. They had given a letter of congratulatory address to Long, who had been the secretary of the society in the period 1859-1867.

At a meeting of the Asiatic Society, Mary Carpenter proposed opening of a branch of England's National Association for the Promotion of Social Science in Bengal. A committee comprising Long, Vidyasagar, Debendranath Tagore and others was formed to consider it. The Committee rejected the proposal but suggested the founding of an independent organization named the Bengal Social Science Association. This proposal was accepted on January 22, 1867. The aim of this association was to create social awareness besides trying to find logical solutions to the problems of social life.

Among the societies committed to other causes were the Brahma Samaj, British India Society, British Indian Association, Surapan Nibarani Sabha, Indian Reform Association, Indian League and Indian Association. There were societies for various purposes. In an article, the *Paricharika* complained that it was not seemly for the *bhadramahila* to fight with her maidservant. Yet sometimes it was difficult to avoid it, especially when the latter remains engaged in persistent stealing. In jest, they suggested a Chakrani Hitakari Sabha along the lines of the Brahma Samaj or the Indian Reform Association to ensure an improvement in the situation, thereby allowing the *bhadramahila* to remain 'bhadra'.

In the conclusion, it might be said that societies were indeed an integral part of the Renaissance in Bengal. They were a place where the educated youths engaged in literary, philosophical and scientific discussions. Societies also turned its members into more responsible citizens. They became patient audiences, who allowed speakers to freely state views opposite to what they hold. Disciplined meetings also drew prominent people holding important positions. Their presence encouraged the members and made the discussions more thought provoking. They discussed the evils that were plaguing their country. Societies thus served as a platform for the

social reforms that had been initiated by Raja Rammohun Roy and Iswarchandra Vidyasagar. The educated youths did not just stop at discussing social issues. They actually worked to eradicate the evils prevalent in the society. Thus it might be said that the societies and associations did bring about a radical change in the 19th century Bengal.

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N.B.- All translations are by the author.

Title: Crime Fiction and the Scottish Highlands

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Abstract

The subject of this paper is the use of the pastoral mode in those detective novels of M. C. Beaton which have Police Constable Hamish Macbeth as the detective. The Hamish Macbeth detective novels develop the sense of a close community and make use of the pastoral setting earlier found in some Golden Age detective stories which had used a small village as the backdrop for a crime story. Beaton's detective shepherds the remote sparsely populated village of Lochdubh which represents the countryside and stands for a space that offers the outsider freedom from the norms that dominate the world at large. This feeling of liberty is conveyed to the reader by contrasting the attitudes of those who visit it as tourists with those who are its permanent inhabitants. Through the series of novels the fishing village remains a self sufficient community coping with the harsh northern climate and a number of murders. The pastoral detective story thus combines the illusion of freedom found in the literary tradition of the pastoral with the suspense that characterizes the plot of a comic crime story.

Key Words : pastoral, comedy, detective, snobs, cozy

The concept of the pastoral that originated in ancient Greece has migrated to several genres and blended with art forms across countries and historical periods. Through the history of English literature several sub genres like pastoral comedy, pastoral poetry and the pastoral novel have emerged as a result. It continues to be an important trope in contemporary literature. M. C. Beaton's novels featuring Police Constable Hamish Macbeth (1985-2014) are a combination of aesthetic norms borrowed from three literary traditions: comedy, pastoral and the detective story. That the tradition of setting the detective story in a rural landscape that is breathtakingly beautiful is a part of the genre of detective fiction can be seen in detective novels like Cyril Hare's *That Yew Tree's Shade*^[1]. Such detective stories owe some of their charm to the English pastoral poems of the eighteenth century. The pastoral setting in a text can stand as a symbol of harmony in nature conveying the illusion of uncomplicated inner lives of characters in such a context. On the other hand the pastoral may find this interpretation too simplistic and confront from within this illusion of harmony which it establishes.

Over the last three decades Beaton sets her popular series of detective novels in the fictional fishing village of Lochdubh located in Sutherland in the North of Scotland. That this is a special place is repeatedly emphasized in every novel. Lochdubh is realized in fiction by crossing over from the 'tidy' to the 'weird': "When they reached the viewpoint of the Struie Pass, Hamish said, 'That's Sutherland.' Ahead of them lay range after range of mountains. The clouds above were cut by shafts of light, the kind William Blake has angels using as ladders.... It was... crossing the boundary into some weird savage land, so different from the tidy fields and towns of Fife..."^[2]

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Geography and imagination combine to create this space of rural enchantment. Lochdubh is marked out as special and contrasted with Strathbane, London and other European cities through the series of novels. The bigger cities have greater crime rates, bigger gangs and fictionally they would be more suitable for the increasingly popular sub genres of the thriller and the police procedurals. By contrast Lochdubh is the pastoral fairyland where crime can be detected and removed.

Lochdubh shares many of the features of a pastoral idyll. Virgil Nemoianu lists the following features in Oliver Goldsmith's idyllic village:

The prominent idyllic features offered in *The Deserted Village* (2) include a) close contact with nature; b) integration with the regular rhythms of work-leisure alternation, seasonal change, ages in man's life; c) (hence) the feeling of security, togetherness, of cosy "Geborgenheit"; d) the microcosmic quality: completeness of the world in a small space; all ages, trades, classes etc. are represented (this is less obvious in *The Deserted Village*) e) a very sharply specified attitude towards the community which can be called neither individualism nor communitarianism: the people are not turned inwards or self-centered, but neither are they really preoccupied by the community as a whole, as an end in itself or superior to themselves; rather they are open towards the individuals in the community, toward every other member in the community. An unequalled and nevertheless entirely spontaneous degree of homogeneity is thus achieved. [3]

Lochdubh meets these norms as a fictional village. It answers to this aesthetic psychology to a large extent. It has a close community of permanent residents whom the reader meets in every novel. Beaton sketches the residents as a comic artist braiding the pastoral with the comic. Close to the police station we have Doctor Brodie and Angela Brodie the doctor's wife. Nessie and Jessie Currie are unmarried sisters who also occupy a cottage close to the police station. They are a source of information and gossip in the village and they amaze Hamish with the way they get hold of information. The village has its seer Angus Macdonald who claims to have psychic powers. The Minister and his wife are an important part of the social life of the village. In *Death of a Gossip* we are told that this small village has four churches with a congregation of about five each.

Interdependence is the basis of this village and this is often the source of social comedy. Everyone in the village is aware of one another's quirks. For example Mrs Maclean who is obsessed with cleaning must have everything clean in her cottage so her husband is always afraid of getting the cottage dirty. He cannot ask people into his cottage but steps out to talk to them as they may dirty it. Mrs Maclean is always boiling clothes to clean them well. When she offers bed and breakfast to tourists she offers to wash their clothes which shrink or fade, as she boils all fabrics, to the dismay of those who stay with her. Her husband who is usually at the pub is thought to be scared of going home for fear of being scrubbed. This social world painted in the norms dominant in the comedy of manners extends to include fishermen and their families, factory workers, women who take up cleaning jobs, sheep farmers, forestry workers, shopkeepers, schoolteachers, and the Italian restaurant owner.

Beaton's novels function in the pastoral mode updated to the present context. Hamish is made to fit into this world of pastoral comedy. The shepherd's cote in the pastoral tradition is replaced by the police station and the police constable minds the villagers as well as his sheep. Hamish's dwelling is a mixture of a police station and a small farmhouse. Hamish is greatly attached to his dog Towser who is always with him till it dies. Hamish buries him in the land behind the police station with the whole village mourning him. He then acquires a dog called Lugs and a wild cat called Sonsie whom his girlfriends consider to be his true wives. He shares his police station with them. He feels completely at home in this village. His spirits are lifted as he stands at the waterfront:

It was dark, and lights shone from the windows of the small whitewashed cottages. You could tell the time of the day by the smells in Lochdubh, thought Hamish. Morning was redolent with bacon and eggs and strong tea, intermingling with the scent of peat smoke from newly lit fires. Then, no such thing as lunch in Lochdubh. Dinner was in the middle of the day. Complex smells of soup, beef stew, roast lamb and again strong tea – tea with everything, and it must be nearly black in colour. High tea was at six o'clock. No one wanted newfangled oven chips. Chips must be fried in cholesterol building lard. High tea brought the smell of kippers or sliced ham along with the sugary smell of cakes because no high tea was properly served unless there were plain cakes and iced cakes. Supper was cocoa-and-toasted-jam-sandwiches time.^[4]

Lochdubh is not a world that appears to be complete or spells contentment to all. Priscilla who is the daughter of Colonel Halbourton-Smythe the rich owner of the posh Tommel Hotel in a neighbouring village is aware of its obvious limitations: 'Hamish, let's face it, the conversation around here can get a bit tedious. There are only four subjects - sheep, fishing, the weather and more sheep.'^[5] Hamish however always defends himself by saying that it has everything a person can want. Priscilla who had once been engaged to get married to Hamish moves to London to work in a computer firm. The motif of the lovelorn shepherd, a part of the pastoral tradition gets absorbed into the genre of crime fiction which has its own tradition of detectives as lovers. Only it is somewhat different from the pastoral tradition of the faithful shepherd pining for his mistress. Hamish is often seen "going around with young lassies"^[6] when he should be trying to catch a murderer. Every novel sees Hamish foolishly entangled in a love affair. These affairs are juxtaposed with his long term loves Elspeth and Priscilla. Clearly this is the comic love triangle as Hamish is equally devoted to both of them. Beaton seems to be making use of the convention of laughing at the pastoral norms, a convention well established by Shakespeare's pastoral comedy.

Nevertheless Hamish is the central controlling figure in the novels. As he belongs socially and economically to the same strata as many of those whom he polices local knowledge is of immense advantage to him. He relates to the land and to the people who are his personal friends. He knows the ground he stands on. Here the mutual dependence of the community which regards Hamish as one of their own, for whose wellbeing they are all responsible, is important. Had they regarded him as an arm of the law that is above them, they would never confide in him. And Hamish solves crimes in Lochdubh as one who is of the people with the help of the people living there.

By solving crimes using his intelligence and common sense Hamish can beat the better educated police hierarchy in the town undercutting the notion that the successful detective is sophisticated and learned. He protects the village of Lochdubh and its inhabitants from every kind of peril, often endangering his own life. Rescuing lost children by swimming across rivers in full flood, pulling out women trapped in cars when waves from the sea crash on roads or rescuing travelers snowbound and dying when they are trapped in blizzards are a part of his life. Hamish is seen roaming the country in his police vehicle or going for long walks on his beat. He is a skilful fisherman who fishes out in the sea or poaches in the river Anstey secure in the knowledge that the water bailiff is a lazy man and will not catch him.

As readers we side with the detective and with the inhabitants of Lochdubh. We reach out to both: sharing their adventures and fearing their troubles. The 'insider' versus 'outsider' scheme is important to the novels, which to a certain extent is established as Hamish/Lochdubh versus the rest of the world. We are told of the sources of income of this fishing village and the attitudes of its inhabitants: "Lochdubh was situated in the far Northwest of Scotland. In winter it went into a long hibernation. In summer the tourists brought it alive. The tourists were mostly English and they were treated by the locals with outward Highland courtesy and inner Highland hate."^[7] The tourists or the new short term settlers do not share the attitudes of the inhabitants. They are obsessed with social rank and its privileges and bring into Lochdubh a variety of social snobs and criminals. Hamish's job is to rid the village of anti-idyllic elements.

The tourists visiting Lochdubh often impose their higher social and economic status upon the permanent inhabitants. They present a gallery of snobs who have to be policed by Hamish. Through the series of novels Lochdubh is successively visited by people who are snobbish about their social connections. They often desire money and power and wish to exploit their social positions for unfair advantages. In her book *The Snob in Literature: Three satirists of Snobbery Thackeray Meredith Proust* Margaret Moore Goodell gives a clear analysis of how an English person would describe a snob:

...someone who, accepting the conventional hierarchy, is specially intent on asserting a favourable position in it for himself, whether by insisting on the barriers between his class and the ones beneath it or by trying to improve his position by gaining entry into a class above his own. In other words, the snob proper is thought of not only as passively accepting some kind of faulty standard of judging human beings, but also as desiring to profit by the standard himself. ^[8]

Such snobs figure famously in English plays and novels. The motif of snobbery emerging from class consciousness is an inheritance that can be traced back to novelists like Jane Austen, Dickens and Thackeray. Detective stories written during the Golden Age had fully reflected the class conscious society of that time. Beaton makes the snobbish tourists provide entertainment in her pastoral setting. In the Hamish Macbeth novels the motif of snobbery is woven into the mutual rejection of the 'outsiders' and the 'insiders'. The 'outsiders' cannot share the fellow feeling the 'insiders' have with one another. They generally tend to pose a threat to the orderliness and

coherence of the village community. In *Death of a Gentle Lady* this is brought out by Beaton when she makes a generalized observation: "The English who settle in the north of Scotland sometimes find they are not welcome. There is something in the Celtic character that delights in historical grudges."^[9] Hamish and the 'outsider', the gentle lady of the title, share a mutual dislike. Hamish realizes that there is something very wrong in her hypocrisy and her old fashioned snobbery. In *Death of a Scriptwriter* we find a culture snob. Patricia Martyn-Broyd a writer of detective stories chooses a home in the Scottish Highlands hoping to find inspiration to write. She clearly adopts the stance of the 'outsider': "She could have made friends, but the ones she considered of her own caste did not want to know her, and the ones who did, she considered beneath her, but it was the way she had been brought up. She did have acquaintances in the village, the local people she stopped to chat to, but no close friends at all."^[10] In both these novels the snobs are either murderers or victims of murder: the plot establishing the dire consequences of being a snob. In *Death of a Scriptwriter* Patricia cannot be a part of the social world of Lochdubh as her attitude towards the villagers is, to say the least, condescending:

Hamish Macbeth was really quite intelligent, she thought. It was a shame he was only a village policeman. Perhaps with her help he could make something of himself. And so Patricia drove happily homewards, not knowing she had joined the long list of women who thought they could change one contented, unambitious Highland constable.^[11]

Here the vanity of Patricia's thoughts traps her in an error many a comic snob has made before her. Hamish's difference in socio economic positioning makes him cultivate a different attitude towards snobbery: "Snobbery is a terrible thing, thought Hamish dismally. It can almost kill young girls. Would they kill because of it? That is a question well worth turning over."^[12] Hamish's perspective is beyond snobbery, being made a target by snobs does not have much effect on him. He is not ashamed of who he is nor does he lose anything very dear to him by not pleasing the snobs.

The police department which is also treated in the comic tradition has marvelously corrupt, greedy and foolish characters like Blair and good natured ones like Daviot who cannot detect knavery. Both types act as foils to Hamish Macbeth. The police who have their own hierarchy have links with the larger social world all along the ladder. Personal friendships, hatreds and likes and dislikes in the police provide ludicrous situations in the novels. This makes Beaton's novels rank with the best contemporary comic crime writing. For example in the novel *Death of a Scriptwriter* Detective Chief Inspector Lovelace arrives at the police station at Lochdubh one morning before Hamish has had time to change into his uniform and is found repairing a broken plank on his henhouse:

They walked indoors to the police station. Lovelace sat behind Hamish's desk and folded a pair of white well-manicured hands on the desk in front of him. Hamish stood before him. Lovelace was a small, neat man with well brushed fair hair. He had neat features and a small, prissy mouth. He looked at a corner of the ceiling and began... Hamish was to learn that Lovelace never looked you in the eye, not out of shyness or furtiveness, but more as if he thought his august gaze was too valuable to waste on underlings."^[13]

The reader is always delighted when Hamish outwits such snobbish superiors despite all their efforts to exclude him from everything they consider important.

His well-meaning superiors wish to move him to the nearest town of Strathbane which may be equated with the court in the pastoral tradition. In *Death of a Witch* Hamish thinks of this town as "a blot on the beauty of the highland landscape with its decaying docks, crumbling tower blocks, vice and crime."^[14] The village is the home preferred by Hamish precisely for not being a city. The city dwellers are often like the corrupt courtiers in the pastoral tradition. The ranks of policemen and women above Hamish like those who are higher up on the social and economic ladder are connected with the town and the city.

As the series of novels progresses Hamish's beat becomes more extensive. The adjoining police stations are shut down and he becomes responsible for policing crimes committed in several villages. Community policing is the basis of these novels. Hamish puts up constant resistance against Strathbane's efforts to shut down and sell off the police station. He has a bit of land behind the police station where he keeps his sheep and hens and moving to Strathbane would mean selling off his livestock. Also living at the police quarters at Strathbane would mean getting rid of his pets. One of the important pastoral tropes that surfaces from time to time is that of Hamish the lone policeman living a happy life at peace with nature and society, the turbulence of crimes, murders and his love affairs which recur in every novel are always to be resolved with the customary neatness found only in formula fiction. This effect is often achieved by making things deliberately uncomplicated. Just as Hamish is glad to have his pets about him at night he is happy to have Lochdubh safe and free of the threat of crime at the end of a novel:

...The snow became a blinding blizzard.

It raged all day and then by evening, it roared away to the east. Hamish dug a path outside the police station, leaned on his shovel, and looked along the waterfront. Everything was white and glittering under the moon. He felt the village and landscape had been sanitized by the snow, swept clean of murder and strangers and blood.

With a comfortable feeling of being safe at home at last, he went in and locked the door.^[15]

Through such a passage the landscape induces a tranquil mood after the excitement of the crime story. The illusion of simplicity and social security is re-established in the village. This picture of the apparently untainted idyll winds up most of the novels.

The Hamish Macbeth novels present an updated version of the comic pastoral detective story. The detective story like the fairy tale follows a path from danger to security. The classic stories of the Golden Age removed the criminals building the illusion of a safer world at the end of the story. This 'cozy' tradition of the genre refuses to die as it spells comfort for every reader. The pastoral mode of the detective story accepts that there may at times be winter and rough weather but there are compensations. The reader wants Hamish to preserve in Lochdubh the idyllic values which give the novels a cozy snugness that would be destroyed if Hamish became discontented with his life or gave in to the wishes of those who wanted him to better himself.

For the escape into this utopic world where the reader's fantasies are realized is the chief attraction of the series. Hamish must resist changing his life and his world and deal with all those elements that threaten to spoil its enchantment so that the reader can experience the vicarious comfort of this holiday world and share the suspense of the mysteries.

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On the Trail of Woolf: A Literary Odyssey

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Abstract

The following write-up attempts to highlight, in its brief expanse, the inseparable bond between the personal life of Virginia Woolf and her literary works. In the process, this piece also touches upon her unique approach to the art of novel-writing as well as her contributions to it. Woolf, in view of the multiple modes of pain she had to endure in her early life, her repeated attempts at suicide, and the inadequate details available about her personal life and so-called madness, remains a figure steeped in melancholy and mystery – a curious combination that makes her an alluring subject of study. The dearth of details makes the study nothing less than a challenging trail, an expedition that leads the pursuer to the realization of Woolf's uniquely potent mind.

Keywords : writing, mystery, life, trauma, madness.

Introduction :

She liked writing with an intensity which few writers have attained or even desired She had a singleness of purpose which will not recur in this country for many years, and writers who have liked writing as she liked it have not indeed been common in any age. ^[1]

E. M. Forster's commemorative appraisal of Virginia Woolf acquaints us to her intense and lifelong attachment to the act of writing. Writing, for Woolf, was the vent her tormented mind so desperately panted for and the means for relentlessly pursuing her favourite preoccupation of navigating to the deepest core of life and its mysteries. The act of writing virtually became Woolf's second nature, the means to the unburdening of her soul. Writing allowed her to silently voice her inmost questionings, trauma, and crises, things that would otherwise have remained coiled up inside her and would have aggravated her inner torment. In moments of insufferable distress, Woolf would desperately try to overcome the pain by transmuting it into the written word and inundating page after page with a deluge of obscure thoughts and queries fundamentally related to the grain of human existence, thereby offering a distinctive discourse on life.

Now is life very solid or very shifting? I am haunted by the two contradictions. This has gone for ever: will last for ever; goes down to the bottom of the world – this moment I stand on. Also it is transitory, flying, diaphanous Perhaps it may be that though we change; one flying after another, so quick so quick, yet we are somehow successive, & continuous – we human beings; & show the light through. ^[2]

Woolf's life and work: the nebulous boundaries :

Particularly because of the general awareness of her suicide and the background of her so-called and much-highlighted 'madness', it is extremely difficult rather impossible to treat Virginia

Woolf's work as an independent, sovereign entity blissfully untouched by the emotional tumults that ravaged the personal life of their creator. Laura Marcus succinctly states the truth:

As readers of Woolf, we need to know not only that it [madness] was an aspect of her life and of her writing, but that the writing was in part her way of living through, and with, a sometimes terrifying intensity of response. ^[3]

Woolf's own deliberate blurring of the demarcations between life and art in her works of fiction and her diaries, letters, and memoirs, impacted by her own belief that 'Every secret of a writer's soul, every experience of his life, every quality of his mind is written large in his works,' ^[4] has led to the effacing of all barriers between her life and her text. Woolf's awareness of the intensely retrospective character of her work and the fact that it originated from her personal experience is evident in her introspective query, 'I wonder whether . . . I deal . . . in autobiography and call it fiction?' ^[5]

'Look within': Woolf's ideation of the new novel:

Woolf has provided us with 'one of the most comprehensive and celebrated statements of priorities of modernism,' ^[6] primarily by way of her injunctive exhortation to 'look within'. ^[7] Woolf's 'looking within' was a revolt against the conventional mode of subjectivity which was still being extensively used by stalwarts like Arnold Bennett, H. G. Wells, and John Galsworthy, who obstinately held on, in Woolf's words, to 'the falsity of the past'. ^[8] Woolf's prime approach as a novelist was to portray life in terms of a new 'aesthetic' ^[9] that would aptly articulate the sensibilities of the modern moment:

Look within and life, it seems, is very far from being 'like this'. Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impressions – trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms . . . Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. ^[10]

Woolf's new aesthetic was based on the belief that it is the novelist's 'task' ^[11] to convey, with an uncoloured outlook and the utmost fidelity to reality, the inscrutable and random transformations that define the 'uncircumscribed' ^[12] phenomenon called life. This novelty of perception and intention as a novelist links her to her contemporaries, e.g. James Joyce, Joseph Conrad, and the French 'new novelists' like Natalie Sarraute. Led by a severe dissatisfaction with the then prevalent conventions of novel-writing and an acute awareness of her own responsibilities as an author, Woolf embarked on the lifelong exploration of the limits and potentials of the novel and endless experimentations with the myriad genres of fiction, ranging from the novel-elegy to the biographical novel and from the novel-essay to the novel-play and others. Hence, to read Woolf's novels is to witness:

..... [H]ow the structure of the traditional novel, with its rounded characters, logically articulated plot, and solidly specified setting, melts away; how the climaxes of plot are progressively pushed to the margins of the discourse, mentioned in asides and parentheses;

how the author's voice, narrating, explaining, guaranteeing, fades away as the discourse locates itself in the minds of characters with limited knowledge and understanding; how the unity and coherence of the narratives comes increasingly to inhere in the repetition of motifs and symbols, while the local texture of the writing becomes more and more densely embroidered with metaphor and simile. ^[13]

In a letter written during the composition of *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), Woolf stated that her precise motive behind establishing the new aesthetics was to surpass 'the formal railway line of the sentence'. ^[14] This deliberate abandonment of a linear narrative format and her adoption of the stream-of-consciousness mode were directly related, among other things, to her personal involvement with evaluating life against the backdrop of inscrutable death. The new novel, as conceptualized by Woolf, would be the most appropriate means for proffering an answer to the problem of the life-and-death tussle, a novel wherein 'the causal or chronological ordering of events was subordinated to rendering the impression they made on the individual consciousness, showing, in Lily Briscoe's words, "how life, from being made up of separate little incidents which one lived one by one, became curled and whole like a wave which bore one up with it and threw one down with it, there, with a dash on the beach". ^[15]

Woolf's work: insights into the individual called Virginia Woolf :

Fragments of Virginia Woolf, the individual, are found scattered across the length and breadth of her novels because :

Through fiction alone was she able to expose what lay in the recess of her mind What Virginia Woolf could not verbalize, she communicated only to ghostly sharers so that her inner life might well seem, at times, unreal. Her fiction was the sole bridge between this ghostly mental existence and the waking world ^[16]

The lack of social acceptance of the potentials of Rachel Vinrace, the heroine of *The Voyage Out* (1915), leaves her irrevocably absorbed in fatal hallucinations just like Woolf. And just like her, Rachel shares her innermost secrets with ghostly listeners.

Woolf's preoccupation with the dead is reflected in *Jacob's Room* (1922), *To the Lighthouse* (1927), and *The Waves* (1931) which are, in different ways, elegies written in memory of the dead. In both *Jacob's Room* and *The Waves* Woolf indirectly touches upon the loss of her extremely dear brother Thoby whereas in *To the Lighthouse* she attempts to lay her parent's ghosts to rest.

The awareness of death lurking round the corner, its unmistakable shadow looming large over each and every moment of life were some of the realizations that seem to have haunted Woolf's quotidian existence. Although she loved to live, none of her moments of being, it appears, was free from the malevolent consciousness of death. This is so sensitively expressed in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Out on the London streets to place order for flowers for her party, Mrs. Dalloway basks in the goodness of life, loving 'life; London; this moment of June,' ^[17] soon after which, while walking towards Bond Street, she feels disturbed by the thought of death, with the meaninglessness of her existence: 'did it matter that she must inevitably cease completely: all this must go on without her'. ^[18] Still, she seeks consolation from a specious notion of immortality:

'somehow in the streets of London, on the ebb and flow of things, here, there, she survived, Peter survived, lived in each other, she being part, she was positive, of the trees at home'.^[19] Actually, Mrs. Dalloway is much more disturbed by the overwhelming thought of death-in-life than her own corporeal death. This is the feeling that grips her in moments of negativity and ultimately compels her to commit suicide.

The severe emotional crisis resulting from lack of communication or mute endurance of pain that had been a part of Woolf's life since early girlhood gets expression in the conversation between Martin and Rose in *The Years* (1937). 'What awful lives children live!' says Martin. Rose replies, 'Yes. And they can't tell anybody.'^[20] This brief verbal exchange is strongly reminiscent of Woolf's helplessly silent endurance of the perverted sexual torments she was subjected to by her step brothers and the unspoken accord among the Stephen children about never speaking of Julia and Stella. The rage boiling in the adolescent James Ramsay and his sister Cam in *To the Lighthouse* regarding their father's extreme vacillation of moods is evocative of the anger that used to seethe in Woolf in reaction to the emotional tyranny unleashed on her and her sisters by their father following their mother's death. This silence, this 'linguistic impasse',^[21] as described in the novel, reflects Virginia's own condition as a girl living in the *fin de siècle* world.

Some unknown facets of Woolf's mental condition may be deduced from the conditions of Septimus Warren Smith in *Mrs. Dalloway* and Rhoda in *The Waves*. Through these characters, who might be taken as Woolf's portrayal of her own tormented self, she demonstrates the most horrible experience she knew, namely to lose communication with the world at large. Rhoda feels that the sole purpose of her existence is to be the butt of others' scorn and ridicule. 'What I say is perpetually contradicted I am to be derided all my life,' she believes. According to Roger Poole:

If we assume Rhoda is one, very prominent, aspect of Virginia's expression of her own embodiment, then we can deduce that she [Woolf] went through a martyrdom of embarrassment and anxiety. It was for her as if she were constantly in a room of people, looked at by them all the time, ridiculed by them, and stark naked. Every glance goes home, every laugh comes to rest on exposed flesh. She is undressed, open, simply exposed (both in the sense of being shown up, and also in the sense of being exposed) to everyone in the room. 'Hide me, I cry, protect me, for I am the youngest, the most naked of you all.'^[22]

Rhoda's and Septimus' fear seems to indicate that one of the deepest traumas suffered by Woolf was the feeling of purposelessness accompanied by the fear of time. When Woolf describes Septimus feeling like 'a relic straying on the edge of the world, this outcast who gazed back at the inhabited regions, who lay like a drowned soldier, on the shore of the world,' she is actually describing 'what "breakdown" meant to her, not so much collapse but thought so rapid that language, the main route of communication, became incoherent. Here, if anywhere, is the link between Virginia Woolf's madness and creativity.'^[23]

Septimus takes us deeper into the mazy wilderness of Woolf's mental states when he becomes the projection of her suggestion: 'what a depressed intelligence sees may not be unrealistic, merely unendurable. In that state, we are awake to our customary oblivion.'^[24] Septimus is awake to his inability to feel as well as to the fact that others are being tactically evasive. His failure to communicate comes to such a head that he loses control over his outward

behaviour. He finds the world to be devoid of meaning and realizes that humankind has 'neither kindness, nor faith, nor charity beyond what serves to increase the pleasure of the moment.'^[25] This is clearly a reflection of the spells of the 'Swiftian hatred of the human race'^[26] Woolf used to have during phases of mental illness and are corroborated in the entries in her Woolf 1915 diary wherein she states: 'I begin to loathe my kind, principally from looking at their faces in the tube. Really, raw red beef and silver herrings give me more pleasure to look upon.'^[27]

The First World War had a devastating impact on Woolf's mind. In novels like *To the Lighthouse* (1927) and *The Waves* (1937), the Great War is described as an abyss or a watershed, the divide between the past and the present. *Jacob's Room* (1922) ends with the poignant visual of the shoes of Jacob Flanders, a victim of the War, being held out by his mother in his 'overwhelmingly empty yet eerily occupied room'.^[28] In 1920, two years after the War had ended, Woolf complained that her 'generation [was] daily scourged by the bloody war'.^[29]

Perturbed by inner questionings and doubts, and witness to the paradigm shift in the world around her, Woolf suffered a cataclysmic shock, probably akin to that of the ground being swept away from beneath her feet, exacerbated by the terrifying sensation of being uprooted from her familiar surroundings. So does Septimus, the worst victim of the War in Woolf's fiction. A war veteran, Septimus has spent four years on the war-front. The War has taken a heavy toll on him primarily by robbing him of his mental energy and the ability to feel. He is overtaken by this unsettling awareness of being emotionally numb when his officer-mentor Evans is killed in action: 'the appalling fear came over him – he could not feel'.^[30] Incurably traumatized by the War, Septimus comes to the conclusion that life is not worth living and the world is an evil place from where he urgently needs to escape. In suicide Septimus finally finds his nirvana, epitomizing Woolf's identification of death as the ultimate relief from mortal sufferings as well as the accomplishment of the lifelong yearning for the reunion with the dear departed:

Death was defiance. Death was an attempt to communicate, people feeling the impossibility of reaching the centre which, mystically, evaded them, closeness drew apart; rapture faded; one was alone. There was an embrace in death.^[31]

Conclusion: a mighty mind above madness :

Life was never a smooth sailing for Woolf as it was mostly an intense effort to stay afloat in the rough and hostile waters, resisting its overwhelming surge to drag her into its shattering eddy. Contrary to the general conception of a feeble mind susceptible to so-called madness, Woolf was, in fact, a mind powerful enough to mould those moments of negativity into occasions of introspective forays into itself that resulted in unique ideas and realizations. As her diaries, letters, and literary opuses suggest, those supposed bouts of insanity were occasions to lose herself in creative 'illusion,' to 'see reality',^[32] to 'escape into the past',^[33] and to 'find her subjects' in 'the lava of madness'^[34]. And in those moments of intense inner strife the act of writing became the medium for her to find succour by extensively expressing the results of those extremely significant self-explorations :

[T]he shock-receiving capacity is what makes me a writer it is or will become a revelation of some order; it is a token of some real thing behind appearances; and I make it real by putting it into words. It is only by putting it into words that I make it whole; this wholeness means that it has lost its power to hurt me.^[35]

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Sovietization in Eastern Europe: Reflections from Recent Studies

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Abstract

The present essay is a discussion of the new departures in the studies of the Cold War and Sovietization in Eastern Europe, made possible by the opening up of the former Soviet Union and East European archives. Old questions like whether Sovietization occurred according to the pre-conceived master plan of the Kremlin, or the extent to which Stalin succeed in imposing his will upon the client states, are addressed by the new researches with more concrete archival evidence. Now it is much clearer that the Soviet state did not have any blueprint in this regard. Stalin definitely wanted friendly regimes in Eastern Europe but did not abandon the idea of good relations with the West at the initial stages. Some of the new works have shown that Stalin had no clear vision of his foreign policy and the Soviet policies were often responses to immediate happenings. There are instances of how East European Communist leaders were more eager for Sovietization of their countries than the Soviet leadership itself. Sometimes Stalin appeared more democratic and moderate than the local communist leaders of East Europe in this new literature of the Cold War. The question of violence as a method of Sovietization is also discussed at the end of the essay and the author has argued that this violence occurred in varied degree in different countries depending on the strengths and popularity of the Communists. Besides violence, there were also attempts of revolutionary movements towards the betterment of the livelihood of the oppressed people, which should not be overlooked.

(1)

From the 1990s, as a result of the opening up of the archives of the former Soviet Union and East European communist states, new possibilities emerged in the field of the study of the Cold War and related issues like Sovietization in Eastern Europe. These newly-available archival documents are vast, diverse and one may question even its reliability. Despite these limitations, a huge amount of new research has come up since then, based on the newly-discovered evidence. These works sometimes confirmed the previous arguments with more extensive documentation, and sometimes threw new light on this subject adding a few new dimensions. In this essay we shall discuss some of the issues related to the process of Sovietization – establishing the Soviet state's control and domination in Eastern European countries incrementally until it reached its height and the imposition of the same political system of the Soviet state there – as it came through these recent studies. The debate among scholars and historians regarding the nature of the development in Eastern Europe labeled as Sovietization or Stalinization is as old as the Cold War historiography. This debate from its very beginning has asked questions like what were the actual goals of the Soviet behind the act of Sovietization? Was there any preconceived master plan? Was it an example of 'imperialist expansion', or, simply a defensive response against the growing threat of the hostile Western powers? Historians of various generations have intended to deal with these issues, yet the issues remain alive. From the 1990s a new era has been started in this field as mentioned above; however, old questions are not resolved with unanimity, but initiating a path of long engagements with further research.

(2)

We know that Sovietization in Eastern Europe proceeded through stages and one can divide this process of development into two broad phases. During the period between 1945 and 1947, when the political structure of various East European countries had begun to be formed, the communists had to work with other nationalists and progressives. Despite the political interference from the Soviet side and by the Soviet army, the imposition of Soviet control in this region made little progress, leaving considerable initiatives for the local communists. In Yugoslavia, the local Communists unquestionably established their firm control over the state. In other countries of Eastern Europe, the Communists shared power with other parties in the 'popular' form of governments, which in Marxist language were called People's Democracies, falling short of the 'dictatorship of the Proletariat'. In Eastern Europe, at this stage, other parties were allowed to participate in the governments. Stalin wanted friendly regimes and their cooperation and not yet decided to impose communist regimes in this region. The Soviet leadership was continuing to look forward to the good relationship with the West. The second phase of Sovietization started around and after 1947, when Stalin wanted to consolidate Soviet power more strongly in the zone. Eastern Europe became the Soviet bloc. A replica of Soviet-type one party rule was imposed and pro-Moscow puppet regimes by the communists were set up. From 1949-50, Sovietization took on a more repressive character. Following the Yugoslav Communist leader Josip Broz Tito's rebellion against Stalin, the fear of nationalist and other kinds of resistance within his 'own bloc' pushed Stalin to deepen the Soviet control in the region. With the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 the monolithic structure within the Soviet bloc was further strengthened. The leaders of the Kremlin thought that the US 'attack' on North Korea probably marked the transition of 'the American-British bloc' from preparation of aggressive war to direct acts of aggression against the Soviets.^[1] Such fears and sense of insecurity were translated into its East European policy and took a more ruthless form.

Students of the Cold War are known that the first generation of the Cold War writers in the West blamed the Soviet Union for unleashing of the Cold War. They saw the growing expansion of the Soviet influence over the Central and Eastern Europe immediately after the World War II as merely the first step towards the domination of the whole world by an aggressive authoritarian power. The Cold War on this view was nothing but 'the brave and essential response of free men to the Soviet or the Communist aggression.'^[2] In the 1960s and early 70s, the so-called 'revisionist' scholars challenged this view, pulling the blame on Americans for their quest for worldwide domination in the post Second World War world, and viewed the Soviet 'actions' as mere 'reactions'. According to them, the Soviet policy in Eastern Europe was defensive in nature; it emerged mainly out of its security needs.^[3]

Similarly, there is a debate on whether Sovietization in Eastern Europe was carried out according to a preplanned programme. Long time ago, Hugh Seton-Watson argued in his book *The East European Revolution*^[4] that Sovietization of Eastern Europe proceeded according to the pre-conceived plan of Josef Stalin and of East European Communist parties and it was achieved in three stages. At the first stage, as Seton-Watson suggested, the genuine coalitions between the Communists and various non-Communist parties were formed. Then, at the second

stage, the Communists came to dominate the governments and thus, gradually, the real coalitions became, in the words of Seton-Watson, 'bogus coalitions'. In the final stage, the Soviet-backed monolithic Communist regimes were established, eliminating all forms of opposition. Another important book, published in 1960, titled *The Soviet Bloc/Unity and Conflict* by Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, represented a roughly similar but a more complex point of view.^[5] According to the author, the ultimate aim of the Soviet Union was the total subjugation of Eastern Europe. But, in 1945, the domestic situation in most of the East European countries combined with the international situation did not allow the Soviets to impose its will in this region. There were in the first place many dissident groups and parties which were still powerful in Eastern Europe. The chances of severe Western reactions against any use of force by the Soviet state were strong. Therefore, a transitional phase was needed for them. As Brzezinski commented, '[to] a Communist, every situation is fluid – the important thing is to detect the speed and direction of the flow of events'.^[6] In his opinion, notwithstanding the definite goal for Sovietization in Eastern Europe, they did not have any fixed time-limit for that transition. In 1946-47, once the domestic situation in Eastern Europe became more favourable and international situation changed, the Soviet leadership accelerated the pace of the process of transition to achieve the final goal in a much shorter time than what was originally expected.^[7]

In the 1960s, the revisionist historians rejected this kind of 'deterministic' model of Sovietization in Eastern Europe and gave more emphasis on the impact of the Cold War upon the whole process. On their opinion, Sovietization was not inevitable. Initially Stalin did not have any preconceived plan for full scale Sovietization in Eastern Europe. But when the Cold War was unfolding and the western powers, especially the USA, were trying to push their overwhelming power against the interest of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe, the Soviet leadership, with the security imperatives, changed their earlier policy and adopted the new policy of establishing tighter control over the states in the region. In other words, had the Cold War not started, Stalin would have permitted the coalition governments in Eastern Europe to continue indefinitely and would have relaxed Soviet control there. In this view, popular front governments established in Eastern Europe did not stand for merely a tactical scheme for future full-blown communist domination.

Since the Soviet and East European archives were still beyond the reach, there were many assumptions and inferences in both of these arguments. From the 1990s onwards, after the end of the Communist rule, and, shortly after the demise of the Soviet Union itself, the moment had come when researchers were able to get access to the Soviet archives as well as the archives of the former East European Communist states. By these new researches it is now much clearer that the Soviet Union did not have any master plan or blueprint for Sovietization in the entire Eastern Europe.^[8] For the need of security, they wanted friendly governments there from the outset; but this does not mean that they had a preconceived plan to make Eastern Europe Communist. Some of the new researches in the 1990s took a position against the view that Stalin was a visionary and a farsighted diplomat who was able to impose his will on the post-war settlement quite successfully than any other contemporary statesman.^[9] These new researches

show that Stalin vacillated on his project for particular countries and regions and sometimes even he had no clear-cut idea of what he might do. What the Norwegian historian Odd Arne Westad has said in his research on the Chinese Civil War is perhaps equally true for Stalin's European policy. Westad argues: 'To the historian – as to his contemporaries, Soviet and foreign – Stalin's foreign policy is not as much inexplicable in its parts as incoherent in its whole.'^[10] According to his opinion, Stalin's China policy as well as his European policy was aimless and incoherent and rather erratic in nature. Another distinguished historian, Norman Naimark, has concluded his research on the Soviet policy in Germany in a similar way.^[11] He has pointed out that the Soviet policies were often motivated by concrete events in the zone, rather than any predetermined plans. And, owing to the lack of clear vision regarding Germany, one may find contradictory moves in the Soviet occupied zone by officials of the Soviet military administration, the secret police, the foreign Ministry, and reparations teams. For instance, the Soviet expected to win over the support and sympathy of the East Germans; this expectation was quite contradictory to its reparation policy, which wanted to acquire desperately the East German resources for the Soviet rebuilding programme. Later, Molotov admitted that incoherence, stating the Soviet reparation policies undermined the new Germany the Soviet state wanted to build.^[12] The brutal reality of large-scale rape and sexual violence over the German girls and women by the Soviets soldiers during the last part of the Second World War was another issue which stood as barrier of mutual co-operation of the two nations. Naimark's research clearly shows that how Russians actions destroyed the ability to mobilize popular support for German Communists.^[13]

Traditional literature of the Cold War was simplistic enough as it assumed that the Soviet Union had able to impose its will upon its client states of Eastern Europe and clients' actions merely reflected the Soviet desires. But many new researches show that the actual picture was much more complex. Sometimes the local communists could exercise some leverage over the Soviet in order to pursue their own interest.^[14] Undoubtedly, immediately after the Second World War, in most of the states in Eastern Europe, the local communists were in relatively advantageous position. But this does not mean that they had enjoyed enough support to win power freely and establish their complete domination over the state apparatus. Therefore they needed the assistance of Soviet officials, secret police, and the military organs in suppressing their opponents. There are some evidence, uncovered recently, which indicate that sometimes the Soviet officials tried to restrain their clients' revolutionary stimulus, recognizing that harsh actions might anger the Western powers, which they did not wish at that moment.^[15] I mention here only one case, that is of Bulgaria. In an essay, entitled 'Communism in Bulgaria', Vesseline Dimitrov demonstrates that between the period 1944 and 1947 Stalin tried to restrain to the revolutionary fervor of the local communist partisans of Bulgaria and repeatedly told them that they should work jointly with other parties as well as some other oppositions. In the words of Stalin, 'An opposition is unavoidable in a society consisting of different classes'. On 11 July, 1945, Bulgarian communist leader George Dimitrov telegraphed from Moscow to a Bulgarian Politburo member by saying that Stalin 'stressed that our party should not be afraid of differences of opinion and criticism in the Government and the Patriotic Front'. However, despite Stalin's advice the local communists of Bulgaria accelerated their speed of revolutionary transformation to make an opposition-less

communist state there.^[16] Dimitrov's essay and some other researches prove that Eastern Europe had its own momentum and the Soviet leadership in many cases did nothing but to comply with support to the schemes of their clients.

Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, two Russian scholars, have written a book, entitled *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War/ from Stalin to Khrushchev*, using recently discovered Soviet archival documents. This book shows the evolutionary character of the Soviet foreign policy during the post Second World War. Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov have cited enough evidence, which have suggested that in 1944-46 Stalin and other Soviet leaders had been oriented towards a long postwar cooperation with the West. These two scholars have referred in their book a cable discussion between Maisky and Molotov about postwar world in the year 1943. In January 1944, Maisky summarized the first part of the discussion in a long letter to Molotov, who read it and then passed it on to Stalin and other Politburo members. Maisky wrote in this letter that the main Soviet goal after the war would be to ensure a durable peace, enough for the Soviet 'to become so powerful' that 'no combination of powers in Europe or Asia could even think' of threatening her. It would require 'about ten years for the healing of the wounds inflicted by war.' As a Marxist he put his hope that 'thirty minimum, fifty maximum' years would be necessary for Europe, at least in the Continent, to become Socialist. Noteworthy that, in this letter to Molotov, Maisky mentioned that in the interest of the USSR, the state organization of most countries after the war 'should be based on the principles of broad democracy in the spirit of the ideas of the Popular Front.' According to Maisky, some countries, such as Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, and Czechoslovakia, were ready for that. Other countries, such as Germany, Italy, Japan, Hungary, Rumania, Finland, Bulgaria, Poland, Yugoslavia, Greece, and Albania, would need all kind of external inducements from the USSR, the United States, and Britain.^[17]

Zubok and Pleshakov strongly put forward the argument (apparently like the revisionist scholars) that for Stalin the Marshall Plan was a watershed. The Marshall Plan was a serious challenge to the Soviet vision of future Europe. In their view, the Marshall Plan 'marked a watershed in Stalin's postwar foreign policy, from relative relaxation to ruthless determination'.^[18] 'There is little evidence that before the Marshall Plan Stalin had any master plan for immediate expansion. He had to digest what he had already gained.'^[19] But, later, with the reaction of the proclamation of Marshall Plan, the stance of the Soviet foreign policy changed to a new direction. However, this does not mean that the Soviet, in the changed circumstances, adopted a policy of direct confrontation with the West. There is no evidence of overt expansion in the West. The Soviets knew their limitations and they were engrossed with fears of war. The fear had become more acute with intensified American initiatives that further reinforced the insecurity of the Soviet state. Owing mainly to this security concern, Pleshakov and Zubok argue, Stalin was choosing the path of building up the Soviet-led bloc with rigid control. In the words of these two Russian writers, 'he used the common ideology of Communist parties to organize Eastern Europe into 'a security buffer' for his state.'^[20] However, it is noteworthy that, this new research, unlike many revisionist works, does not wish to justify the Soviet actions in Eastern and Central Europe in

terms of security needs. Security and imperialism can be a similar concept and we may find many instances when imperialism has emerged out of the security needs. In fact, one can apply the same security issue to justify US goals and policies during the Cold War. Zubok and Pleshakov admit the security needs of the Soviet, but there was also an imperialist inclination of Soviet foreign policy. 'The nature of Stalin's foreign policy may be described as cautious expansionism in those areas that Stalin and his advisors defined as Soviet 'natural' spheres of influence.' Yet, according to them, there was no master plan. [21]

An inevitable question arises in this connection. If the Soviets did not have a master plan, how can we see the same pattern of action in the entire Eastern Europe? We may find a possible answer to this question in the argument of the Norman Naimark in his research on Germany. Naimark argues that 'the Soviet officers bolshevized the zone not because there was a plan to do so, but because that was the only way they knew how to organize society'. [22] That was the moment when only one particular way of socialism, that is bolshevism, seemed successful and the USSR was the only state that had achieved this and, thus, they had acquired an expertise to do so. To the communists of the world, the Soviet Union and the CPSU had a special place by virtue of its unique position and historical role and Stalin was the supreme and most respected leader in the Communist world. The determination of policy on the basis of ideological assessments and tactical needs was thus conceded to be a CPSU's prerogative. This sort of mood in the European communist world was clearly manifesting in a comment of a high-ranking Yugoslav leader, S. Zhujovich:

'The Soviet Union as the offspring of the October Revolution, a country of socialism, the homeland of the proletariat of the whole world, was a state with an administrative organization, with a leadership in the organization of the economy and production that corresponded to the teaching of classical socialism and the postulates of Leninism, theoretically formulated and elaborated by Stalin. Therefore, there was or could be no comment or explanation—only silence...the Soviet Party was the parent party, the only complete and correct interpreter of Marxism-Leninism...above all: Stalin, the Leader, the Teacher.' [23]

In this kind of atmosphere and situation, when the local communists of East European countries, with the help and guidance of the Soviet, went forward to the path of 'social revolution', and through them, Stalin decided to secure complete control over these states, the outcome was nothing but Sovietization of the zone.

There was a long-standing view that Sovietization was carried forward by means of terror and repression. Newly released documents and some research-works confirmed that assumption. In spite of the popularity, the Communists were not so powerful in most of these countries to acquire and apply power freely to bring about that kind of social change they needed and aspired. Therefore, to carry forward the programme of 'social revolution' and Sovietization, it was necessary, even inevitable, to use brutal force, which however varied from country-to-country depending on the relative strengths and weakness of the local communists. The same was true about the Soviet backing and assistance to the local communists. Yet, at the same time it should

be remembered that Sovietization and the associated changes in the society and economy in Eastern Europe did not go forward only with the methods of brutal force and repression from above; there were also, at least in initial stages, some honest attempts for genuine mass-mobilization in most of these countries in favour of radical social reforms, and through these initiatives the appeal and popularity of the communists among the deprived classes of the society had been increased. It needs to be mentioned that massive land reform-programmes were taken in Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and East Germany between 1944 and 1952 and as a result of these measures large number of landless and poor peasants acquired land-rights. The landlord class was virtually wiped out from the entire Eastern Europe. Collectivization of agriculture was a prolonged and uneven process, which blended with, definitely, an element of coercion. Nationalization and central planning of the economy began as early as 1946 in Yugoslavia and Albania. The process got underway in the following years or so elsewhere. Livelihood of workers and peasants was certainly improved. There were sincere attempts for opening up educational and employment opportunities for men as well as for women. As one historian puts forward, economic activity throughout the zone by 1949 was higher than before the Second World War and, he continues, up to this point it could be compared favourably to the situation in the postwar Western Europe. ^[24] If one can remember the historic backwardness and long-standing feudal exploitation of the region, then it would be considered as praiseworthy initiatives for the better. In an editorial note of a collection of the Cold War documents and eyewitness accounts, Hanhimaki and Westad have accepted the fact that, 'In spite of political oppression and foreign control, East European societies did advance substantially during the Communist era in terms of educations, social rights, and maybe particularly the status of women.' ^[25] However, we know and it is undeniable that the negative effects of Sovietization, which cumulated more and more with the increasing of repression, coercion and control, especially in the later years of the process, ultimately overshadowed the positive sides of the development.

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Are labour laws of India leading to growth of contractual labour? Capturing the theoretical debates

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Abstract

The global business environment is more attuned to the idea of 'hire and fire' policy in the new millennium. Mainstream macro-economic philosophies often project that inflexibility in labour law hinders growth of market and distorts competition. In this regard, India's labour law regimes have received criticism from global business community on various grounds, principally because it is seen as archaic. With the demand for job-creation for India's youth touching an all-time high, interests of multiple stakeholders need to be addressed properly to entail a harmonious business environment. On the other hand, growth of contractual labour is a matter of concern across multiple platforms as it affects both workers' rights and scope for creating decent jobs. This paper tries to capture the theoretical debates surrounding the issue that pro-worker laws may influence business prospects negatively. For long, a paradigm was prevalent that industries try to bypass the inflexible labour-law regimes by hiring temporary and contractual labours and hence, labour law reforms will benefit both the worker and the employer. This paper tries to argue that labour law reforms, though necessary, need not be premised on the above ground.

Keywords : Labour laws, contractual labour, unemployment, reform.

Introduction :

Labour is a concurrent subject in India and due to this factor there are in excess of 150 State and Central laws relating to the management of labour relations and associated aspects. Apart from the inspiration received partly from the views of nationalist leaders, labour laws were also influenced by important human rights and UN conventions and standards. These include "right to work of one's choice, right against discrimination, prohibition of child labour, just and humane conditions of work, social security, protection of wages, redressal of grievances, right to organize and form trade unions, collective bargaining and participation in management."^[1] With the development of a global economy, the macro-economic philosophies in India too are undergoing rapid changes. As a result, there is a belief that existing structures and frameworks need to be reviewed and reshaped to yield better results. Naturally, attention of mainstream political economy and development debates have been drawn to the legal framework behind labour market and there is near consensus that labour law reform is a project which the Indian economy can ill-afford to ignore. Among various negative effects of the rigid labour law structure, hindrance to creation of stable and regular jobs has often been highlighted. Also the rigid labour laws are seen as one of the contributing factors behind the growing informalization of the Indian labour scenario. Informalization refers to rise in such economic activities that are neither taxed nor monitored by government norms nor included in calculation of the gross national product (GNP) and gross domestic product (GDP) of a country and is signified by the plight of contractual workers. In India, where more contract labourers are being employed by the firms and less decent jobs are

being created in the economy, growth of informal economy has been traced back to, *inter alia*, the pro-worker legal structure. The following discussion tries to capture the existing debate around such theme, and will examine whether there is any co-relation between rigid labour laws and the rise of contract workers.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. Section II outlines the predicaments of India's labour sector, while section III traces the legal frameworks behind the system of contractual labour in India. In section IV the theoretical foundation of Timothy Besley and Robin Burgess is presented which spawned later ideas that pro-worker labour laws hurt economic growth, while section V shows the theoretical limitations of such ideas, followed by conclusion.

Current Predicaments of the Indian Labour Scenario :

The tally of the world's youth (15-24 years) without work has touched an all-time high, says the International Labour Organisation (ILO). In its 2013 Global Employment Trends report, the ILO forecasts "unemployment numbers will rise by 5.1 million in 2013 to reach 202 million, topping 2009's record" (as cited in Katy Barnato, 2013). In India, half of whose population is below the age of 25 years, this is an alarming call. Even as various projections put forward the claim that India will be the largest contributor to the global labour force in the coming decades and will add anything between 80 million to 110 million workers in the global economy by 2020, it is also pointed out that to absorb such a large labour force, the Indian industry would need to create 40 million jobs over the next decade. This is where the predicament lies. Chowdhury (2011) shows that "in total, there has been an increase in employment of less than a million people in the country between 2004-05 and 2009-10, a period in which the Indian economy was growing rapidly. It is accompanied by a significant decline in the labour force participation rate (LFPR), particularly for women."^[2] He thus argues that the stagnant employment scenario is a reminder of the 'jobless growth' scenario only, where growth in gross domestic product (GDP) is not concurrently associated with growth in jobs in the formal sector of economy. This is where the complexity begins. By many estimates, unemployment rate in India was in the region of 9.4 per cent in 2009-10, where 10.1 percent of rural labour force is unemployed, compared to 7.3 percent in urban areas. However, according to 'World Development Report 2013, titled 'Jobs', part-time work is on the rise in India. The number of temporary workers in the country grew more than 10 per cent in 2009 and 18 per cent in 2010. More unusual is the increase in the number of informal workers in the organized sector. 'The share of informal workers in organized firms is up from 32 per cent in 2000 to 68 per cent in 2010', says the report. Again, 67th report of the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) too found that unorganized manufacturing, unorganized trading/retail and unorganized services employed about 10 percent each of all workers nationwide, as of 2010.^[3]

In this backdrop, scholars suggest that India's rigid labour laws and excessive regulations, assumed to protect the labour, are the cause of slow employment growth in high paying, organized sector. 'Doing Business' Report of World Bank, after analyzing various facets of Indian business environment, has ranked India below the 130th position for consecutive years. In fact, as per the data pertaining to June, 2013 India's overall rank is 134th in the Ease of Doing Business Index, and it lags at a shocking 186th on the issue of enforcing contracts.^[4] It has consistently been

pointed out that laws such as Industrial Disputes Act of 1947 imposes restrictions on employer. Critics indicate that though the Act does not prohibit layoffs and retrenchments, it does require entrepreneurs and companies to get the permission from government officials to fire an employee for absenteeism, retrench employees for economic reasons, or to close an economically nonviable company. In order to bypass the inflexibility created by such regime, employers tend to hire contractual labours. In this backdrop, the critics demand liberalization of labour laws. The next sections will examine the framework of such theoretical assessments.

Existing Legal Framework regarding the Contract Labour system :

Organized sector workers employed on a non-regular and contract basis do not enjoy social security cover under different legislative provisions, such as Employees' Provident Fund Act 1952, Employees' State Insurance Act 1948, Workmen's Compensation Act 1923, Maternity Benefit Act 1961 etc. In 1982, Government of India amended the Industrial Disputes Act 1947 to introduce the concept of 'unfair labour practices'. Certain hiring practices, such as continuing employment of workers on casual or temporary contracts perennially with 'the object of depriving them of the status and privileges of permanent workmen', are regarded as unfair. Section 10 of the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970 provides for prohibition of contract labour under certain circumstances, such as, perennial nature of the process, operation or work etc. In its judgment of December, 1996 in the Air India case the Supreme Court, inter-alia, ruled that where employment of contract labour has been prohibited in a process, operation or other work in an establishment, contract labour engaged in such activities would automatically become the employees of the principal employer. Subsequently, a five-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court in the matter of SAIL vs. National Union of Waterfront Workers has quashed the Air India Judgment in August, 2001 prospectively diluting its impact. Even as attempts to integrate and consolidate Indian labour laws into a single Labour Code, such as that initiated by the National Labour Law Association in 1994, have been unsuccessful, most important and ongoing movements towards liberalization in labour law have taken place at the state government level. Much of this change has been facilitated through administrative procedure rather than formal legal repeal and enactment, argues Mitchell et al (2012). Notwithstanding the purpose of the Contract Labour Act, contract labour is endemic throughout many of India's most important industries.

Theoretical Framework behind the idea of 'Rigid Laws Obstructing Growth':

The main thrust behind the theoretical proposition that inflexibility in labour laws hinder economic development and regular job creation, comes from the study of Timothy Besley and Robin Burgess, whereby they analysed the differences in the level of labour law protection across different Indian states. They wanted to study the impact of variations in legal regulation on levels of investment and employment in manufacturing sector only. This study primarily focussed on pre-liberalization period of the Indian economy, and found that adoption of pro-worker labour laws leads to a drop in employment in the organized manufacturing sector and an increase in the size of the informal sector in the states concerned. Besley and Burgess noted that while "the (Industrial Dispute) Act was passed at the central level, state governments were given the right to amend it under the Indian Constitution."^[5] In the reference period of their study (1958-1992) they found that 113 amendments to the said Act were passed at various levels and classified

these as either pro-worker or pro-employer or neutral and tried to analyse the impact of such amendments on formal manufacturing. Different states were accordingly placed in both time and cross section variations and whereas the status of registered (formal) firms were studied vis-à-vis the Industrial Disputes Act, the data on unregistered (informal) firms were collected through National Sample Survey Organization. They classified six states Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu as “pro-employer”; and four states Gujarat, Maharashtra, Orissa and West Bengal as “pro-worker” on the basis of amendments made to the said Act in the reference period. They found that pro-worker states are marked by growing informal sector, lower investment and less employment, whereas the pro-employer states witnessed high growth. Deakin and Sarkar (2011) point out that this study by Besley and Burgess has been very influential on subsequent research and policy. Indeed, the claim of labour regulation imposing costs on firms and distorting market outcomes has influenced World Bank policy for much of the past two decades.

It has also been argued that lower wages of informal workers actually act as saving of expenditure on worker benefits and help in reducing cost and thus improve competitiveness. This supports to some extent a view that globalization is leading to a ‘race to the bottom’ in labour standards. Goldar and Aggarwal (2012) note that this aspect has led many theoreticians to jump to the conclusion that labour market rigidities particularly the Industrial Disputes Act is the prime factor behind the increase in contractual and temporary employment of workers.

Problems in the idea of ‘Rigid Laws Obstructing Growth’:

Deakin and Sarkar (2011) in their study showed that adoption of pro-worker laws at national level over an extended period of time did not have some of the same effects as shown by Besley and Burgess in some of the Indian states, implying that state-level phenomenon in India does not necessarily corroborate a pan-Indian outcome. Using the Labour Regulation Index (LRI), covering changes in the law of a number of developed and developing countries for the period 1970-2006, they also found out that India’s labour regulation is highly protective by international standards so far as job termination is an issue. It provides limited flexibility for employers, and though the Constitution is silent on the Right to Strike there is a general tendency for worker protection in Indian laws. However, their study also suggests that trends in Indian labour law are largely qualified by the conditions in the economy itself.

This is precisely the point made by Goldar and Aggarwal (2012) as well, whose argument is that the rise in casual and part-time workers can be traced to import competition. Though higher level of education acts as deterrent against the susceptibility of regular workers being employed on temporary basis or what is broadly termed as casualization, import competition causes informalization among relatively more educated industrial workers, due to emphasis on cost saving. Ahmad Ahsan and Carmen Pagés (2008) too agree that ‘use of contract labor comes as a result of changes in the composition of employment across industries rather than deliberate attempts to counterweight the impact of regulations’. While Ahsan and Pages do insist that ‘contract labour more than offsets for effect of amendments in job security laws and almost offsets the effect of amendments in dispute resolution laws’, they also find substantial differences in contract labour intensity across industries.

Conclusion :

Development of a legal regime is matter of decades-long deliberations. Most studies on Indian labour laws indicate that the colonial hangover has loomed large on the Indian jurisprudence. An interesting point of study could lie in assessing whether countries outside the purview of such colonial baggage would still depict the similar issues in their legal regime. Nonetheless, such methodological concerns should not shroud the necessity of labour reforms in India. There is necessity to check the phenomenon of 'footloose migration', to increase the social security cover from existing 163 persons per 1,000 workers ratio, to strike balance between growth in labour productivity and growth in real wages, and to remove difficulties faced by both workers and employers in accessing the court system. However, the argument for reform need not stem from the conception that rigid laws hinder growth. It is unemployment that triggers pro-worker labour laws, not the other way round. So it is mostly a case of the economy driving legal development. Establishing a co-relation between rigid laws and rise in contract workers thus is a difficult exercise. In fact, even if the proposed labour law reforms do facilitate 'hire and fire' policy, there is no guarantee that system of contractual labour will cease to exist or the number of part-time workers will decline. Reasons for flourishing of contract labour system are endemic to the economy which the post-reform legal regime may or may not remove, since the market seeks ever ingenious ways to reduce costs. Also the reasons for slow growth in employment rate in the high paying organized sector can be traced back to a multitude of factors. The demand structures of the globalised economy are showing strong undercurrents for the past few years and as a result macro-economic growth have stumbled on many parameters. To blame the labour law regime for slowing down such an intricate and complex phenomenon will be unjustified. There is little doubt that the effect of such slow growth in organized sector is resulting in rise of part-time workforce but a simple change in some labour laws shall not guarantee the arrest of such development. Social security is a scarce commodity and finding a turnkey solution for such security is even more difficult.

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Bidyadhari – A river flowing at present with great misery to an unknown destiny

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Abstract

Bidyadhari was a flourishing river of deltaic Bengal. It was a major navigation route for earlier civilisations which were evolved by the side of this river. In the early 19th century the river was flowing through the eastern side of the present Salt Lake City of Kolkata. Various natural and anthropogenic factors are responsible for the gradual deterioration of the river. The water is highly polluted. Level of dissolved oxygen is very low. BOD level is very high. Presence of Fecal Coliform in the water is found round the year. The river water is turbid. To upgrade the river, various schemes have been taken, crores of rupees have been spent, but the condition of the river remains same. Beside the government efforts there is an urgent need of active involvement of non-government organisations, individuals to save this river. They should raise their voice and help administration to prevent encroachment of spill area and to stop further pollution and deterioration.

Key words : Tidal flow, Spill area, Siltation, Pollution.

Introduction :

Deltaic south Bengal is a network of innumerable tidal rivers. River Bidyadhari is an important one. It was the lifeline of deltaic Bengal. It was one of the important outlets of river Ganga. Gradually the channel had been delinked from the headwater source. After that its gradual deterioration started.

Presently many settlements have been developed by the side of this river. Still now it serves as an important transport artery in many parts of N 24 Parganas district. It is acting as a drainage channels for surface water. It absorbs huge urban sewages of Kolkata and N 24 Parganas district. Many fish farms, cultivated lands and various industries are still dependent on this river.

In this paper, flourishing past condition of the river along with the ruined situation of present has been described. A study on water quality has also been undertaken. Lastly, some plans have been recommended to save the river from its deterioration. Secondary data have been used to study the water quality of the river.

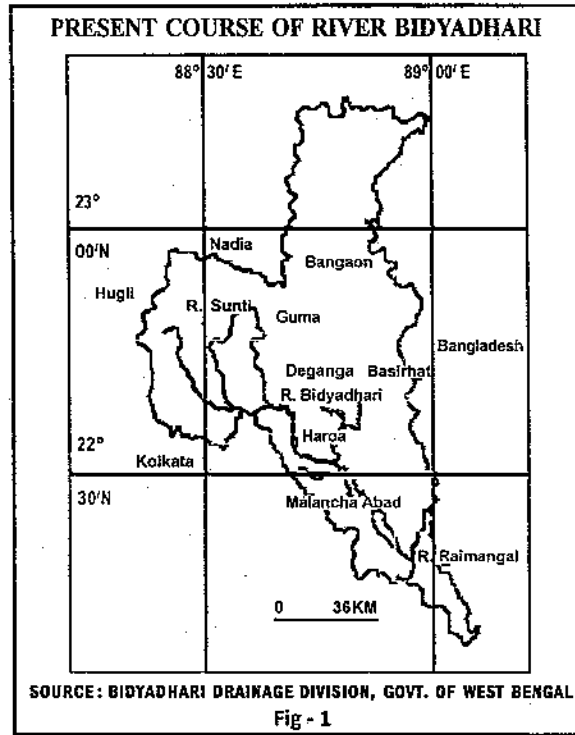
Present course :

Though in some literatures it has been dealt that Barga Bill – a meander cut off situated near Haringhata of Nadia district is the originating place of this river. But from recently published map of Bidyadhari Drainage Division, its origin can be traced near Habra of North 24 Parganas district. From there it follows south eastern direction and ultimately merges with river Raimangal.

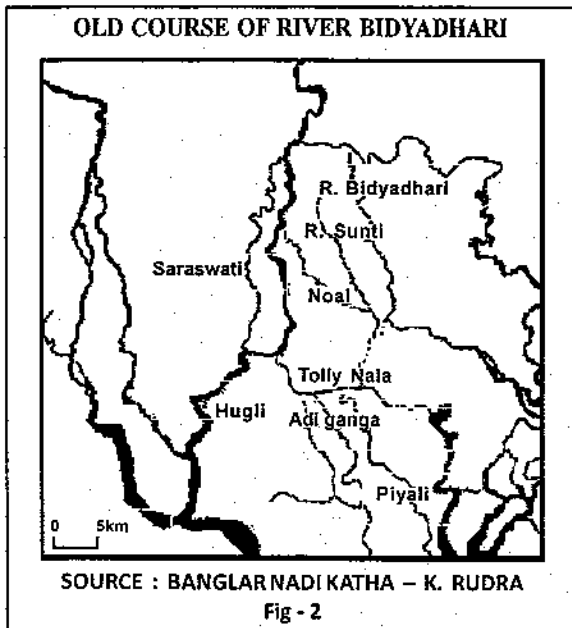
On its way the river is fed by several channels. At Gangdhulot (north western part of Haroa Police station) it meets with an important channel namely Haroa Khal (also locally known as Bidyadhari). This again is the Combine flow of Nawai Khal and Sunti River. Near Malancha Abad of Basirhat subdivision of N 24 Parganas district two channels – (i) Sekha Bidyadhari (on western bank) and (ii) Bidyadhari (eastern bank) join with it (Fig .1).

Historical background :

Bagerkhal canal near Kanchrapara is considered as the old course of river Bidyadhari [1]. Kalyan Rudra(2008) in his book Banglar Nadi Katha, has written that the river was bifurcated into two branches near Tehatta. According to him, in the early 19th century western branch of river Bidyadhari, now a dead section was flowing through the eastern side of the present Salt Lake City of Kolkata. It was then merged with River Piyali and finally confluenced at river Matla. The southern section of this western branch is known as Sumadhgiri canal which meets with old Ganga channel, ‘Tolly’s nala’ near Samukpota [2] (Fig .2). The eastern branch of river Bidyadhari still exists and flows towards south-east direction and finds confluence at Kulti gang which ultimately merges with river Raimangal (Fig .2).



SOURCE: BIDYADHARI DRAINAGE DIVISION, GOVT. OF WEST BENGAL
Fig - 1



SOURCE : BANGLARNADI KATHA – K. RUDRA
Fig - 2

direction and finds confluence at Kulti gang which ultimately merges with river Raimangal (Fig .2).

The river had its glorious past. It was a very flourishing tributary of river Bhagirathi. The river was considered as the important trading route of the ancient period. Ancient international river port Chandraketurgh excavated near Berachapa of N 24 Parganas district was developed on the bank of this river. Many small sized settlements were developed by the side of this river. Balanda excavated near Haroa of N 24 Parganas district was another ancient civilization which had been developed centring the large river port Gangarijiya by the side of this river [3].

Causes of deterioration :

The natural cause of the deterioration of the river lies in its tidal nature. In case of the tidal river, tidal flow carries huge volume of silt which begins to be deposited without any constraint at the mouth. Being a tidal river Bidyadhari faced the same problem of siltation. The quick inflow of the tidal water in the river channel during high tide and sluggish out flow during low tide are very favourable for deposition of huge amount of silt in the river bed creating acute drainage problem. Though monsoon rain helps to wash away silts in rainy season but in the dry season the process of siltation becomes overwhelmed. Another natural reason for gradual deterioration is the west ward shift of the Bhagirathi river which delinked the Bidyadhari from fresh water source [4].

Anthropogenic causes of deterioration of the river Bidyadhari correspond with the changing nature of Bhagirathi-Hugli river. Riparian vegetation cover of the western Bengal or Rarh region played a significant role upon the hydraulic dynamics of rivers in the area by controlling the sediment load of river water. Due to the expansion of agriculture and construction of railways massive deforestation occurred which in turn affected the dynamic equilibrium of the rivers of the deltaic Bengal [5], particularly Bhagirathi-Hugli and Bidyadhari rivers.

In the name of development unscientific land reclamation along the river bank of almost all tidal rivers in the Sundarban region forced them to their gloomy future. So river Bidyadhari's bank reclamation was not the exception. Processes of sedimentation were aggravated by the construction of artificial embankments built up at the time of reclamation. These embankments hindered free tidal flushing of the spill areas but favoured aggradation of the rivers in the Sundarbans.

The anthropogenic cause of deterioration of the quality of water is unplanned urban development without proper sanitation system. Untreated sewage water from the cities of both North and South 24 Parganas and Kolkata are being discharged into same rivers through several canals which left the river of the rivers water polluted.

Encroachment is another factor for the deterioration of a river. As stated earlier, there are large numbers of Bheris/ fish farms and illegal brick fields in the spill area of the rivers which curtailed the spill area and affected the tidal flow.

Present scenario :

Now the river is mainly used for local navigation and trading purposes. The existence of Bheris/ fish farms by the side of the river is also seen. The Bheris are mainly fed by this river water. A number of brick fields have developed near the river banks and are sustained by this river.

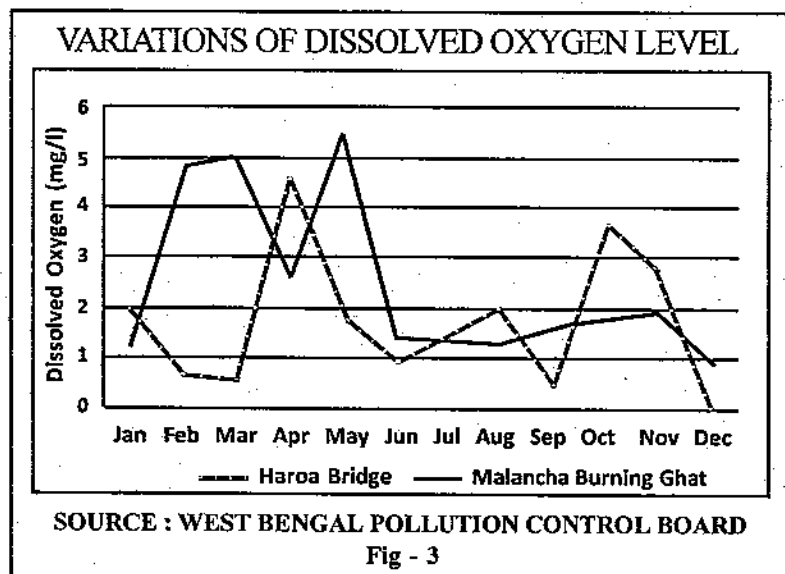
The river water is now highly polluted. This is mainly due to the rapid development of urban centres along the river in last two to three decades. But corresponding expansion of sewage disposal system is yet to build up. As a result of such unplanned expansion of settlements without development of proper sanitation system every day a huge volume of untreated sewage water from the cities of both North and South 24 Parganas and Kolkata are being discharged into this river through several canals viz. Kestopur Khal, Bhangar Kata Khal, Calcutta Sewage Canal and some other sewage canals.

Water quality :

Spatial and temporal variations of Dissolved Oxygen, Fecal Coliform and Turbidity of the river water have been examined. To assess the quality of river water, monthly observations at two stations of the river for the last one year (i.e. January 2013 to December 2013) have been taken into consideration from secondary source. The stations are: Haroa, near Haroa Bridge in upstream area and Malancha, near Malancha burning ghat in downstream area.

Dissolved oxygen :

The data reveal that except few observations the values of dissolved oxygen are always below the standard limit i.e. 4.0 mg/l. At the upstream area the values of DO is slightly exceeding the standard limit only in the month of April whereas value is exceeding its standard limit in the month of February, March and May at the downstream area (Fig. 3).



Lower level of DO ascribes to eutrophication. This situation happens when nitrates and phosphates have discharged into the river through agricultural run-off carrying fertilizers or untreated sewage effluents. Phosphorous is the essential nutrient of plant growth.

Algal growth is also amplified when phosphorous are abundant. Normal functioning of the ecosystem is hampered by algal blooms and profuse vegetation growth. It causes lack of oxygen for the survival of fish. The water turns cloudy. When algae die they are decomposed by bacteria. Oxygen is needed in the decomposition process, as a result of this BOD (Biological Oxygen Demand) of the river water increases followed by the death of fish and other aquatic organisms.

Fecal coliform :

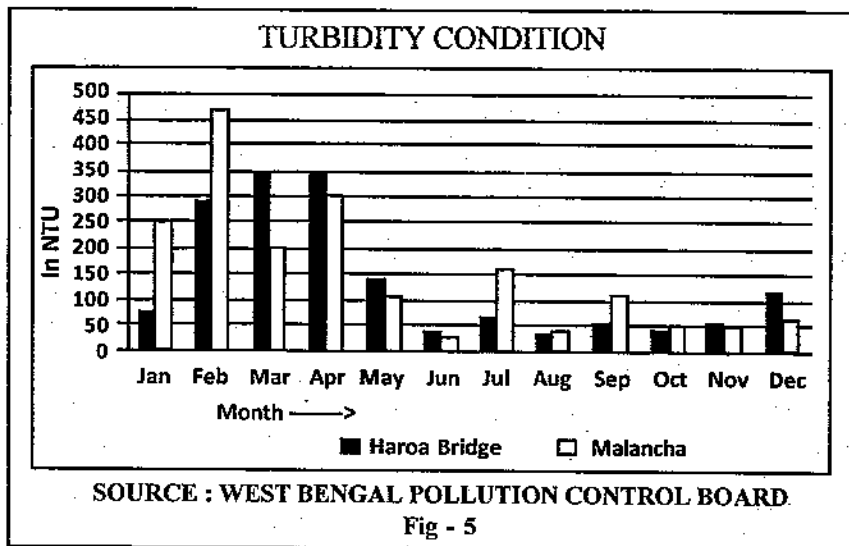
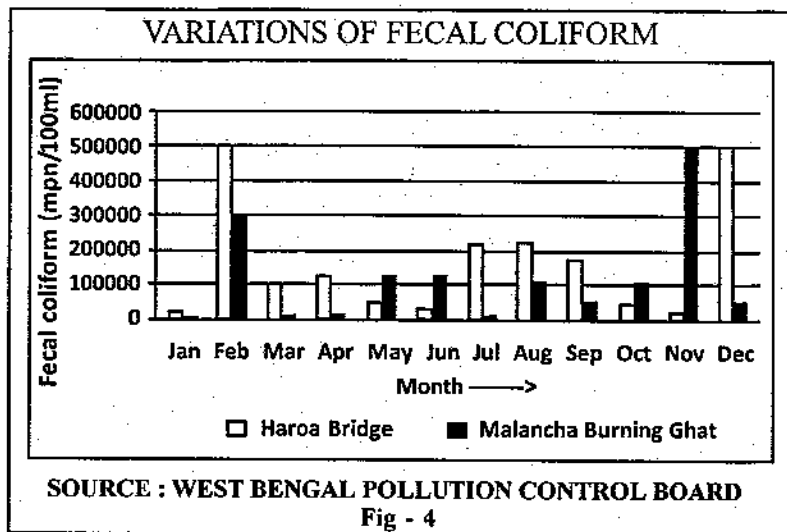
From the data it has been found that Fecal Coliform (FC) is present in the water round the year. Very high level of FC is recorded in river water at Haroa River Bridge in the month of December and February, and at Malancha in the month of November and February (Fig. 4).

The presence of high rate of Fecal Coliform in the river water indicates that the water has been contaminated with the fecal material of humans or other animals. This may have entered in the river through direct animal or avian discharge or through agricultural runoff and storm runoff or through human sewage. In the sub-urban or in the village areas sewage lines that are connected to storm drain channels can also allow human sewage, animal wastes into surface waters.

Livestock grazing on the river bank, spreading animal manure in the agricultural fields during wet periods near the river channel also contribute to Fecal Coliform contamination.

Turbidity :

Turbidity determines the cloudiness of the water. From the observation it has been found that river water is turbid throughout the year. It



has been observed that in the month of February and March water is highly turbid near Haroa Bridge whereas high turbidity condition has been recorded in the month of January, February, March and April at Malancha burning ghat (Fig - 5).

Turbidity determine to the cloudiness of the water. The high turbidity may be due to the high

level of agricultural runoff. Besides suspended particles of silt, clay, waste effluents and other particulate matter resulting from construction works, soil run off, suspended sediments, waste food and faeces from the Bheris/ fish farms, sewage, remnants from Burning Ghats, and industrial wastes may also be responsible for turbidity of river water. High turbidity levels reduce the inter gravel concentration of dissolved oxygen (DO) which in turn affects the aquatic life.

Now it can be stated that the river water is highly polluted because the level of dissolved oxygen is very low. Except few observations the values are lower than their standard limit. BOD level is very high. Presence of Fecal Coliform is found round the year and water is very turbid almost throughout the season. So the river water is unable to fulfil the increased demand of fresh and non polluted water for consumptive uses in various fields like domestic and many industrial, agricultural domains. Thus the socio economic value of river flow is also decreasing. The river is unable to maintain its aesthetic quality of water and can no way be used as domestic purposes.

So there is an urgent need to protect the river and aesthetic quality of its water. In the name of economic growth and urban development the river has been turning into sewers. Spill areas of river have been curtailed whimsically and this phenomenon affects the flow of the river. River is getting polluted in such a pace that it is very difficult to treat river water to safe levels.

Government Initiatives :

To save the river and to improve the sewage system of N 24 Parganas district, a scheme named 'Haroa Gong – Kulti Drainage Basin Scheme' had been taken in 1971 under the Bidyadhari Drainage Division by Irrigation Department, Government of West Bengal. Nona Gang Basin Scheme or Bidyadhari drainage scheme was one of the sub projects of this scheme. Under these schemes 22.35 km (0 to 11.10 Km in first phase and 11.10 Km to 22.35 Km in second phase) stretch had been excavated and desilted in two phases. Project cost for each scheme was more than a crore.

In spite of these huge investments to upgrade the river, no fruitful results have been achieved. As the spill area of the downstream section of the river is yet to be excavated and desilted, this downstream section is now clogged. Hence siltation starts again due to the existence of obstructions in the downstream areas.

Apart from this, despite the best effort to evict the encroachers from the spill area, it is found that all efforts have been wasted in some cases as the encroachers have gone back to their prior positions.

Proposals :

In spite of huge investments the situations remain unchanged. To upgrade the river channel and to check the pollution of river water the following actions can be suggested :

1. Proper and scientific desiltation of the entire river channel to facilitate the free tidal flow.
2. Bringing some fresh water in-flow to the channel by excavating canal at the upstream area.
3. Construction of sluice gate to prevent the entry of water during high tide and speedy discharge of the water during low tide.
4. Interrupt the free flow of all sewage channels and dry weather flows into the river. To do this there is urgent need to construct sewage treatment plants in the crucial locations.
5. Systematic and permanent removal of all encroachers with proper rehabilitation.

Lastly it can be stated that government initiatives are not the only solution to save this river. There is an urgent need of active involvement of non-government organisations, individuals to spread awareness regarding the importance of this river. To protect the river it is necessary to spread consciousness among the people regarding the proper land use practices and agricultural practices e.g. they should leave an uncultivated buffer strip along the side of the river, they should spread animal manures only in dry periods, they should avoid manure spreading nearer to the river channel. To stop further pollution of the river water people should be aware of the uses of chemicals in household as well as in industries. Harmful industrial wastes should be treated separately. Apart from these, people should raise their voice and should help administration to prevent encroachment in the spill area and to stop further pollution and deterioration of the river.

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Clay Doll Art of Krishnanagar - a uniformity of Industry and Culture

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Abstract

The crafts of West Bengal are renowned all over the world. Amongst all the crafts of the state, the art of clay doll making is the most popular one. These beautiful, lively clay doll structures are created with vibrant colours. Ghurni, in Krishnanagar city of Nadia district (West Bengal), is the place renowned for its clay sculptures and toys. The clay dolls are basically made partly by pressing and molding methods. First of all, different kinds of clay are blended and mashed, to form a dough-like material. With this dough, different parts of the sculpture are designed, by moulding and pressing them to give the desired structure. Then, clay paste is used for sticking together all the separately moulded parts. The resultant object is baked in a high temperature kiln. After the basic structure is formed, the dolls are painted in various vibrant colours, by brush. Putul, as the Bengalis fondly call their clay dolls, come in various types, depending upon their structure and the purpose they are made for. These dolls are a craze amongst the foreign tourists of the state, who find this art totally unique and love their vibrant colourfulness. Assessment of the industrial nature clay doll industry and its impact on society is to be discussed in this paper.

Key Words : Clay doll industry, Putul

Introduction :

In West Bengal, Krishnanagar is an illustrious name in the field of clay doll making since long. The people who are engaged in giving shape to those fascinating dolls mainly belong to kumbhakar community. Their quality of being perfect in form, feature and gesture, meticulous realism of cloth to the last fold and tuck and the marvelous expressions are so identical to real ones that they compel the customers and tourists to purchase all those clay items which make their way into the showcase for the beautification of the room.

Apart from meeting the domestic requirements the reputation of those clay dolls have resulted in high demands from international markets. The clay doll industry of Krishnanagar, in particular Ghurni and its surrounding areas, has a long historical background which dates back to the pre-independence period under the East India Company of the British period.

Historical background :

Before the seventeenth century Krishnanagar city was a rural village named 'Rewie' and the name was changed to 'Krishnanagar' by the then ruler King Raja Rudra Roy of primitive Bengal during the early seventeenth century. After 1728 Raja Krishna Chandra took over the reign and with his active initiation by way of taking help from foreign labourers, clay dolls of Krishnanagar became a trade name for their outstanding quality in all respects. Within a short period clay artistry started to get appreciation not only in India but also abroad. In this connection it is necessary to mention that in the year 1851 the East India Company of British India introduced

in these beautiful clay-dolls an exhibition of 'all the works of industry of all nations' ceremony where it had gained huge appreciation. Since then this clay doll industry has become gradually enriched and it is now enjoying the status of a small scale industry. [1]

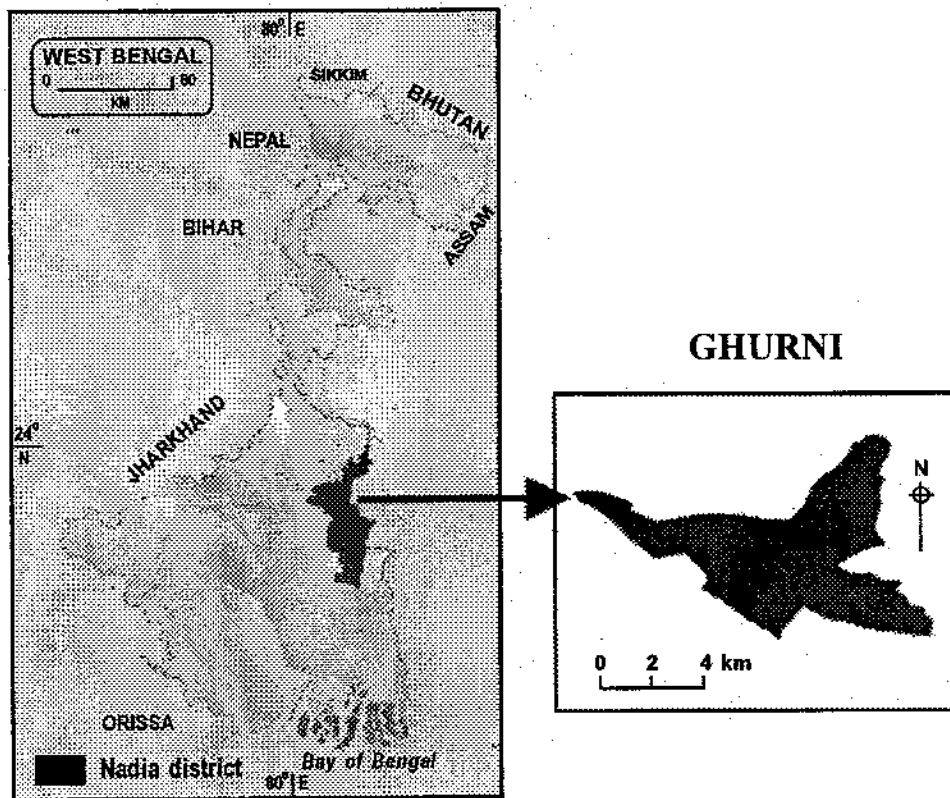


Fig. 1 : Location Map of Ghurni

Location of the Study area :

Krishnanagar is situated on the right bank of river Jalangee in Nadia district. Its geographical location is $23^{\circ}24'N$ latitude and $83^{\circ}31'E$ longitude. The total area is 15.80 sq.km. Ghurni, the main industrial centre, is situated to the south east of Krishnanagar. Other clay doll manufacturing villages are Sastitala, Rathtala, Kumorpara and Natunbazar which are located within close proximity of Krishnanagar.

Objectives :

The objectives are as follows:

1. To show the present position of clay-doll industry in Krishnanagar
2. To assess the impact of clay-doll industry on socio-economic condition of the workers engaged in clay-doll industry
3. To highlight the core problems and to give suggestions for the development of clay doll industry.

Methodology :

Ghurni has been taken as a sample village from where a reasonable picture of the industry can be ascertained. A questionnaire has been made for primary survey. Secondary data has been taken into account from census and district gazetteer. Other secondary data has been collected from Kutir & Kudhra Shilpa Adhikar, Jela Shilpa Kendra Krishnanagar, Nadia, Municipal Corporation, Mritshilpa Samabai Samity etc.

Why is clay-doll industry called a cottage industry ?

Clay modeling industry is one type of cottage industry. Because, every unit employs domestic labour. Besides, capital investment is nominal. Small spaces are needed for this clay industry and raw materials are available from local areas. But involvement of skilled labourers is highly required. Labourers are actually traditional artists. Hence, they make the clay models out of their thoughts.

Raw materials for clay-doll industry :

- 1) Soil:- Soil is the prime material of clay-doll industry, which is available in Hanskhali, of South Krishnanagar and Paninala which is close to Ghurni. Price of the soil depends on its quality which always varies because, it is totally different from normal soil and is basically loam in character.
- 2) Instruments:- The main instruments of clay-doll industry are: (a) Chewari – made by bamboo (b) Basua – it is also made by bamboo, (c) Brush – of different scales. All the instruments are available in the local area but sometime they also use imported ones.
- (3) Colours:- previously, clay-doll artists used only powder colour. Now they are using pastel colour, tube colour etc. They also apply Tarpin oil, Varnish, Kerosene oil etc. to give better effect on colour. Another unique application of colour is made by mixing of seed dust of tamarind and gum. [2]

Worker's profile :

Clay doll workers are mainly classified into two broad groups. Accordingly, artists, account for only 20%. Rest are labourers. Among the labourers 60% are male and 20% female. A category of labourers including their respective wages has been given in table no. 1

Table No. 1: Categories of Workers and their wage rate/ day

Category of Workers	Percentage of Workers involved in this industry	Working Hour/Day	Wage Rate/Day
Clay-maker	38	8	Rs. 100/-
Colour Designer	22	8	Rs. 150/-
Structure maker	10	8	Rs. 200/-
Artist	20	8	Rs. 200/-
Model-maker	8	8	Rs. 250/-

Source: Primary Survey

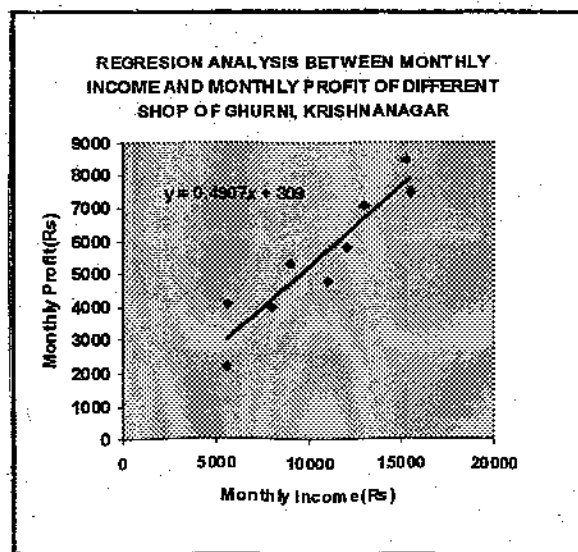
Most of the workers are involved in this industry from generation to generation and almost every family member is engaged in it. As per a primary survey, large number of workers of this industry are involved in making clay models, specially of Hindu gods and goddesses, because of their high demand. Since they are not so skilled in other types of idols, their rate of wage is very low. Whereas, well trained model makers get higher wages, though their share is only 8%. Apart from their participation in national level examinations, artists of Ghurni are being invited to participate in many international exhibitions held in different countries. For their well acclaimed workmanship, some of them were even awarded.

Demographic Characteristics :

- **Age group Composition of Worker:** Most of the workers of clay-doll industry belong to the age group between 15-55 years which is almost 74%.
- **Education Level:** According to the census 2011, 40% of labourers are illiterate. Only 32% have completed primary level, 25% secondary level and very few of them have done their graduation.^[3]

Economic Characteristics :

- **Income level of different workers:** Monthly income of 50% labourer stands in between Rs. 1,000-3,000. Whereas, 27% earn not more than Rs.1,000. Monthly income of a small number of labourers (16%) varies from Rs. 3,000 to 6,000. Apart from this 7% of artists earn a monthly income in between Rs. 6,000-9,000. The following diagram depicts the relationship between monthly income and profit of different shop owners of Ghurni.



Source: Primary Survey

Fig.2

- **Marketing prospects:** Clay-doll industry is highly dependent on the prospect of marketing which is guided by changing demands of various customers. Hence, variety of products and perfection are of great importance to cater to a wide range of markets. At the same time potential marketing is an essential part of progress and prosperity of the clay-doll industry.
- **Different types of finished goods and their making and selling rates:** According to demand, different types of clay models are made such as small doll, dog block, human figure etc. Following table depicts the making and selling rates of such clay models.

Table No. 2: Making and Selling Rate of finished goods

Name of Finished Goods	Quantity of Finished Goods	Making Rate/ piece in Rs.	Selling Rate/piece in Rs
Small doll	50 Pcs Per Day	Rs. 150/-	Rs. 220/-
Dog Block	80 Pcs Per Day	Rs. 120/-	Rs. 150/-
Peacock Block	10 Pcs Per Day	Rs. 180/-	Rs. 275/-
Flower Block	25Pcs Per Day	Rs. 180/-	Rs. 310/-
Human Figure	4 Pcs Per Month	Rs. 3,000/-	Rs. 5,000/-
Ganesh Block	20 Pcs Per Day	Rs. 120/-	Rs. 210/-

Source: Primary Survey

- **Selling outlets:** Since Ghumi is famous for clay-doll industry a large number of people are engaged in selling those products to customers of various states including tourists who come to this place for this purpose. Generally artisans sell their products to local shop owners or outside businessmen. They also sell their models direct to customers as per their orders. But in most of the cases they are to depend on wholesale markets. There are agents also, who place orders to clay-doll manufacturers according to the demands and collect them. Besides, local markets, exporting clay dolls is another outlet. This export exercise is not limited to different states of India but abroad also. U.K, U.S.A, and Russia are the prominent buyers. The pattern of marketing over time is shown in table no. 3 as under:

Table No. 3: Selling of products in different sectors

Year	Total No. of Salesman	Salesman selling their production in different sectors		
		Public Sector	Private Sector	Selling of Goods in other sectors
2001	180	0.5%	6%	3%
2002	260	0.4%	9%	5%
2003	355	0.5%	11%	7%
2004	459	1%	18%	6%
2005	585	1.6%	23%	7%

Source: Primary Survey

Problems :

- There is no scientific process of burning to avoid sudden breakage and defects.
- Unhealthy competition leading the customers to buy cheaper dolls made of plastic and glass fibre.
- Present young generation is less interested in taking up this craft as their profession.
- Due to unsatisfactory wages, laborious work, artists are migrating to other cities like Baharampore, Bardhaman and Kolkata for other jobs and good earnings.
- Lack of proper education and experience have become hindrance in their way of making proper marketing of the products they produce. Thus they earn poor profit margin out of sales proceeds.
- Government does not give any type of help towards clay-doll makers.
- Poor packaging system of clay-doll is one of the major problems of clay-doll industry, specially for exporting clay-dolls to England, France, Australia etc.
- Due to gradual degradation of quality, there is a large rejection in exports which reduces its popularity in the international market.

Suggestions :

- First and foremost necessary step is to disseminate general education and proper technical knowledge about craftsmanship, including computer generated design to the concerned people.
- Government should encourage co-operative marketing system to avoid bad competition among makers.
- Government should undertake a proper plan for the development of the artists.
- Research and testing laboratory is an utmost need for quality control and to improve the process of burning to avoid breakage etc.
- Develop new designs and patterns according to changing demands of the market.
- Website, package graphics, brochures and branding may help.
- Cheap and modern packaging system is also essential for this industry to avoid breakage of goods in transit.
- Quality control is a must to maintain goodwill.

Conclusion :

The traditional tendency of buying habits of people have already been changed by advancement of science and technology. In consequence, consumers nowadays are lured by plastic products including different types of eye catching dolls which are comparatively cheaper in price than clay dolls. Moreover, all those dolls are light, unbreakable and easy to carry. In addition, fibre-dolls have also gained a good amount of share in consumer markets. As a result, clay-doll industry is facing a hard competition. But still there is a wide scope of prospect for this industry. Because, there are people who are interested in art and culture of Bengal as was in the past and so they prefer to buy the same. More so, since all the natural elements are being used in the

process of making clay-dolls, these are considered eco-friendly products. Over and above, this industry could play a vital role in generating mass employment. So, it is very essential for the concerned Government department to look after this clay doll industry by giving financial help with proper scheme to boost the activities of the community and nourish the culture.

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