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**Panjab University**  
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## Theory's Quietism: Edward Said on Contemporary Literary Theory

MUFTI MUDASIR

### Abstract

*The present paper examines Edward Said's views on literary theory and criticism to underscore his significant intervention in the debate on the purpose and function of criticism. It argues that Said's critique of the dominant trends in theory merits a serious consideration at a time when high-theory is trapped by its own abstractions and ultimately lends support to a quietist politics, while a return to the traditional approaches to literature seems well-nigh impossible. Said's advocacy of liberating criticism from the deleterious influence of institutionalization and professionalism, his insistence on its "worldliness" and full-blown engagement with the current political problems, and his trenchant critique of the cult figures of theory, all distinguish him among a host of intellectual writers of the recent history. His view of criticism as an act of political and social engagement aims to counter the political pessimism which is characteristic of much literary theory today manifested in its failure to provide a substantive criticism of the status quo as well as to critique the capitulation of the public intellectual to the forces of domination, deceit and exploitation. Seen from this perspective Said, far from being a champion of identity politics, actually emerges as a strong advocate of a new humanism that aims to be critical, comprehensive and universalist.*

**Keywords:** Literary Theory, Criticism, Textuality, Humanism, Foucault, Power

In an interview on Edward Said after his death, Terry Eagleton, in response to a question by Ibrahim Fathy, made this observation, "I think it's vital to appreciate that Edward Said wasn't primarily a theorist. One might say that he was more important than that. In fact, he ended up quite hostile to so-called theory" (Eagleton: 258). Eagleton's remark succinctly sums up Said's position as a thinker, yet it must be stressed that Said's "anti-theoretical" stance does not suggest an off-hand dismissal stemming from a lack of engagement but is a result of his long and deep engagement with it. The primary reason for Said's final disenchantment with contemporary literary theory as he became increasingly vocal about it from *The World, the Text, the Critic* (1983) onwards was his recognition that much of it was at odds with his redefinition of criticism as a moral enterprise requiring integrity, honesty and courage, and much more than an exercise of explication of literary texts. "Criticism", says Said, "cannot assume that its province is merely the text, not even the great literary text" (*The World*:224).

Criticism for him assumes a crucial importance in the contemporary world and critics are much more than the custodians of literary taste. In redefining the role of criticism, Said distances himself from the liberal humanist tradition dominant in the Anglo-American world and enshrined in the ideas of Arnold, Leavis, Richards, Eliot, Frye and others. However, while welcoming the opening up of literary studies to theory, Said also emerges as a trenchant critic of this turn to theory as he begins to take into account the political quietism characteristic of the most dominant theoretical schools.

Said recalls Raymond Williams mentioning how theory was introduced into Cambridge in 1970 when

Georg Lukacs' pupil Lucien Goldmann delivered two lectures there. This enabled literary scholars like Williams himself to learn about the work of thinkers trained in the Continental tradition and promised to be a liberating idea. Literary studies was carried for too long within the confines of a putatively hermetically sealed framework, positing the literary text as something standing aloof from the concrete context of its production and reception, encased within an autonomous territory and impervious to the "profane" politics of the external world, basking in its own glory as a "verbal icon" or a "well-wrought urn". Said, therefore, welcomes the arrival of French theory into the American universities, viewing the development as providing a much-needed freedom from the orthodoxies of the New Criticism and Frye's mythological structuralism. His reading of the canonical texts especially in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) was a spirited attack on the Arnold/Leavisite version of liberal humanism which values literary works as embodiments of supremely apolitical and universal wisdom. Contrary to this, Said demonstrates how a racist ideology permeates the European literary canon. His impeachment of the cultural imaginary that was constitutive of the English novel, for example, strikes at the roots of the liberal humanist tradition. And yet, as will be discussed below, Said remained committed to the foundational values of humanism.

Said's initial warming up to French theory, however, soon gave way to a realisation that it had little to offer to those who wish to see theory contributing to the cause of laying bare the machinations of power in order to provide the basis for a meaningful resistance to it. He recalls in *Reflections on Exile*:

By the time "theory" advanced intellectually into departments of English, French, and German in the United States, the notion of "text" had been transformed into something almost metaphysically isolated from experience. The sway of semiology, deconstruction, and even the archaeological descriptions of Foucault, as they have commonly been received, reduced and in many cases eliminated the messier precincts of "life" and historical experience (xviii).

Said's discontentment with the prevailing thrust in theory dates back to his second work *Beginnings: Method and Intention* (1975) where he offers a critique of structuralism and briefly assesses its impact on intellectual history. But it was in his collection of essays published as *The World, the Text and the Critic* (1983) that Said undertakes a thorough critique of the prevailing state of criticism. The essays antagonised many in the American academy and a number of literary tabloids published rebarbative, bitter, but mostly superficial, reviews of the book. Why Said's book was taken as a threat to the established notions is not difficult to gauge from the reviews carried by *The New York Review of Books*, *The London Review of Books*, *The New Republic*, *The New York Times Book Review* and *TLS*, almost all of which voiced a right-winged misgiving about the "political" turn in the otherwise "ideologically neutral" field of literary studies. Eager to stamp out any "possibility of negation", unabashedly championing the dominant values and tradition of their time and interested primarily in validating the status quo, cultural critics trivialized Said's call for "oppositional criticism". Said's assertion that

the inevitable trajectory of critical consciousness is to arrive at some acute sense of what political, social, and human values are entailed in the reading, production, and transmission of any text, was interpreted, rightly indeed, as a threat to the established ways of reading literary texts (*The World*: 26).

If Said contested approaching literature as an autonomous archive concerned primarily with aesthetics, he became equally wary of the turn towards theory which aggressively demolished the very categories

of the literary and aesthetic and opened up the literary text to a radically “political” reading. This was not because Said wanted to secure for literature a closed-off domain untainted by the incursions of power and politics but because he quickly realised that theory itself was fast ossifying into a dry-as-dust, hypercritical, but ultimately an impotent, body of knowledge. “Textuality,” he notes, “is the somewhat mystical and disinfected subject matter of literary theory”. What Said found objectionable in literary theory as it was practised in the American academy was its tendency to isolate “textuality from the circumstances, the events, the physical senses that made it possible and render it intelligible as the result of human work”. Said deplores that critics have “given up the world entirely for the aporias and unthinkable paradoxes of a text” (*The World*: 3, 4, 4). The structuralist and the poststructuralist currents in theory particularly raised deep suspicion in Said about their efficacy. Thus Said, the first in the ‘holy trinity’ of postcolonial theorists according to Robert Young, unlike the two others, Spivak and Bhabha, remained suspicious of postcolonial theory’s increasingly manifest debt to poststructuralism. This explains his exasperation with theory which, according to him, has become “a guild designation now that has produced a jargon I find hopelessly tiresome”. He also commented on why he lost interest in theory. “I simply lost interest in literary theory about ten years ago. It just doesn’t strike me as something that is of interest to me in what I’m doing on a given day” (Wicke and Sprinker: 249, 247). This anti-theoretical strain got stronger in him with time and in *The Politics of Dispossession* (1995), Said, while responding to the failure of the intellectuals in critiquing American foreign policies, made the following observation:

One would pretty much have to scuttle all the jaw-shattering postmodernisms that now dot the landscape. They are worse than useless. They are neither capable of understanding and analyzing the power structure of this country nor are they capable of understanding the particular aesthetic merit of an individual work of art. Whether you call it deconstruction or postmodernism or poststructuralism or post-anything, they all represent a sort of spectacle of giving back tickets at the entrance and saying, we’re really out of it. We want to check into our private resort and be left alone. (316)

For his critics, Said’s critical works evince a deep paradox and often it is difficult to reconcile one strain of his thought with the other. Said’s simultaneous employment of Foucault’s concept of discourse and his commitment to humanism is often cited as an instance of a fundamental inconsistency in his thought. Said’s chequered relation with Foucault has thus attracted a lot of attention from critics. In the context of the problem under discussion, it is important to note that despite Said’s indebtedness to Foucault, his commitment to the idea of a socially responsible criticism led eventually to his strong aversion to Foucault’s intellectual bent. Drawn to his rich and insightful critical analysis of how knowledge is produced, Said found Foucault’s concept of discourse quite useful in presenting his thesis of Orientalism. And yet, Said’s position is tellingly un-Foucauldian as he regards the personal imprint of the author seminal in the production of knowledge, “Unlike Michel Foucault, to whose work I am greatly indebted, I do believe in the determining imprint of individual writers upon the otherwise anonymous collective body of texts constituting a discursive formation like Orientalism” (*Orientalism*: 23).

A crucial question which came up in critical reviews of *Orientalism* was whether Said believed that the Orient existed independently of and prior to its depiction by the Orientalist discourse, and if yes, how? The fact that Said’s basic premise was that Orientalism misrepresented the Orient was sufficient to mark his distance from Foucault for whom no object of knowledge could be isolated from the act of

knowledge itself as representations of any kind are constitutive of the objects they represent. Although some critics have pointed out what they see as inconsistency in Said's use of Foucault, he made his fundamental difference from the latter amply clear. In the "Afterword" to *Orientalism*, he underlines the possibility of transcending the constraints inherent in Foucault's paradigm; "I would not have undertaken a book of this sort if I did not also believe that there is scholarship that is not as corrupt, or at least as blind to human reality, as the kind I have been mainly depicting". Said also uses phrases as "intellectual dishonesty" and "dogmatic slumber" to characterize Orientalism. In the introduction to the book he claims that his argument is "deliberately anti-Foucault", which again shows how far his ideas are at variance with those of the French thinker (326, 327, 24).

As noted above, Said had already articulated his incisive critique of the seminal structuralist premise in his early work *Beginnings*. Suspicious of the "linguistic turn" in contemporary critical thinking and fearful of its political implications, his primary concern is to lay bare the dangers of the "linguistic reduction of man" and structuralism's emphasis on system in which "intention has been...totally domesticated by system" (319). An intriguing point of this work is Said's distinction between Foucault and structuralist and deconstructive currents in contemporary thought. While Said commends Foucault's critique of origins and describes him as a participant in the "adversary epistemological current", he finds structuralism's privileging of an overarching system deeply troubling. Said's increasing disillusionment with Foucault's thought will briefly be explored here.

Said's divergence from Foucault's basic thesis became increasingly obvious as he realized how contrary Foucault's ideas were to his vision of critical consciousness and resistance to power, concerns which were central to him and which presupposed a theoretical foundation to the concept of human subject hardly possible within Foucault's system. Said's disillusionment with Foucault was due to his realization that Foucault's conceptual paradigm left no scope for effective intellectual and political resistance to power and domination. He was particularly disturbed by Foucault's refusal to identify any point of origin to power. Committed to his idea that viewed power floating freely in a capillary fashion, Foucault seemed to reject what Said viewed to be the most important factor about power, that it is wielded by groups and individuals who exercise it over others for political, economic and intellectual control. Said can, therefore, be seen as radically revising his earlier admiration for Foucault in *Beginnings*. This along with Foucault's insistence that no effective resistance to power is possible because of the human subject's inability to escape its all-pervasive influence contributed to Said's discrediting of Foucault. In "Criticism Between Culture and System", Said remarks about Foucault:

In a variety of ways therefore Foucault is concerned with *assujettissement*, the subjugation of individuals in society to some suprapersonal disciplines or authority. Though obviously anxious to avoid vulgar determinism in explaining the workings of the social order, he pretty much ignores the whole category of intention. (*The World*: 186)

He notes that Foucault's analysis, notwithstanding its richness and complexity, moves definitely towards dissolving the very conceptual category of the human subject. Foucault, he remarks:

has provided a prodigiously detailed set of possible descriptions whose main aim is, once again, to overwhelm the individual subject or will and replace it instead with minutely responsive rules of discursive formation, rules that no one individual can either alter or circumvent. These rules exist,

he argues, and they are to be complied with, mainly because discourse is not a mere formalization of knowledge; its aim is the control and manipulation of knowledge, the body politic, and ultimately (although Foucault is evasive about this) the State. Perhaps his interest in rules is part of the reason why Foucault is unable to deal with, or provide an account of, historical change. (*The World*: 187)

Foucault's quietist politics emerging from his refusal to grant that a vision of a just society is possible and that humans can collectively move towards the realisation of that vision make him an antithesis of Chomsky. Both in his famous debate with Foucault on the Dutch TV as well as his book *Language and Responsibility* (1979), Chomsky takes issue with Foucault's concept of power, justice and truth. The Chomsky-Foucault debate centred on the complex problems of justice and human nature. While the two agree on what political struggle should be about, they sharply disagree when it comes to the question of human nature. Chomsky regards the concepts of justice and freedom as *a priori* categories whereas Foucault categorically denies that they can be regarded such. For him the category of the human is contingent because it is always historically constructed and therefore groundless. Said is definitely on Chomsky's side here and, in "Criticism Between Culture and System", expresses his fundamental disagreement with Foucault's concept of power in the following way:

Yet despite the extraordinary worldliness of this work, Foucault takes a curiously passive and sterile view not so much of the uses of power, but of how and why power is gained, used, and held onto. This is the most dangerous consequence of his disagreement with Marxism, and its result is the least convincing aspect of his work. Even if one fully agrees with his view that what he calls the microphysics of power "is exercised rather than possessed, that it is not the 'privilege', acquired or preserved, of the dominant class, but the overall effect of its strategic positions," the notions of class struggle and of class itself cannot therefore be reduced—along with the forcible taking of state power, economic domination, imperialist war, dependency relationships, resistances to power—to the status of superannuated nineteenth-century conceptions of political economy. However else power may be a kind of indirect bureaucratic discipline and control, there are ascertainable changes stemming from who holds power and who dominates whom. (*The World*: 221)

Said is convinced that Foucault's model is both inadequate and defective as it refuses to identify the agency that wields power and because of that leaves little scope for transformation of the power-wielding agency:

In short, power can be made analogous neither to a spider's web without the spider nor to a smoothly functioning flow diagram; a great deal of power remains in such coarse items as the relationships and tensions between rulers and ruled, wealth and privilege, monopolies of coercion, and the central state apparatus. In understandably wishing to avoid the crude notion that power is unmediated domination, Foucault more or less eliminates the central dialectic of opposed forces that still underlies modern society, despite the apparently perfected methods of "technotronic" control and seemingly non-ideological efficiency that seem to govern everything. (*The World*: 221)

In "Travelling Theory", another important essay in *The World, the Text and the Critic*, Said again articulates his problems with Foucault's notion of power, arguing that "the problem is that Foucault's

use of the term *pouvoir* moves around too much, swallowing up every obstacle in its path (resistances to it, the class and economic bases that refresh and fuel it, the reserves it builds up), obliterating change and mystifying its microphysical sovereignty". As a result of this, "Foucault's theory has drawn a circle around itself, constituting a unique territory in which Foucault has imprisoned himself and others with him". Said refers to the "disturbing circularity" of Foucault's concept and calls it an instance of "theoretical overtotalization" (245, 245, 246). Again, in a later essay, "Foucault and the Imagination of Power", Said comments on the paradox in Foucault's imagination of power which aimed to "reveal its injustice and cruelty, but by his theorization let it go on more or less unchecked" (*Reflections*: 242). What certainly added to Said's final disillusionment was his experience at Paris in 1979 where Foucault purposely absented himself from a seminar on the Middle Eastern politics admitting to Said that he had nothing to contribute to it. Said found Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir clearly pro-Israelite and later learned from Deleuze that Foucault and he had fallen out with each other over the question of Palestine, Deleuze supporting the Palestinian liberation and Foucault defending Israel.

Derrida's influence on literary theory was felt towards the end of the 1960s after he read his paper "Sign, Structure and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" at a conference at John Hopkins University in 1966. Some years later, critics such as Paul de Man, Geoffrey Hartman and Hillis Miller contributed significantly to Derrida's appropriation by the American literature departments. Said's engagement with Derrida's work is again emblematic of his deep anxiety over the increasing irrelevance of theory to the contemporary politics. Said deplores the state of American literary criticism and engages head on with some ideas of Derrida and Paul de Man. Not that Said is blind to the analytical and critical skills of Derrida as is evident from his applause of Derridean close reading of texts. However, as in the case of Foucault, or even more so, Derrida's method makes a fetish of textuality and hence ends up in a kind of radical nihilism. Said argues that Derrida's proposition of meaning being deferred endlessly along the infinite chain of signifiers leads to the notion of interminability of signification and to an open-endedness of meaning which robs the text of the potential to effect a change in the world. Where Derrida asserts that "there is nothing outside the text", Said invokes the concept of "worldliness" to situate it against a real identifiable context. Said thus rejects the seminal Derridean idea of textuality and unboundedness of the context and comments thus on the effect of Derrida's argumentation:

The effect of such logic (the *mise en abyme*) is to reduce everything that we think of as having some extratextual leverage in the text to a textual function. What matters in a text is that its textuality transgresses even its own explicit statements about such things as its roots in, or affiliations with, reality. (*The World*: 204)

Moreover, Said finds in Derrida the same attenuation of the human subject that he found so perturbing in Foucault:

Foucault's dissatisfaction with the subject as sufficient cause of a text, and his recourse to the invisible anonymity of discursive and archival power, is curiously matched by Derrida's own brand of involuntarism. This is a very complex and, to me, deeply troubling aspect of his work. (*The World*: 188)

The problem with Derridean proposition is its dissolution of the human will, intention and agency

through its reduction to writing or textuality:

Whether he is Flaubert, Proust, Conrad, Hardy, or Joyce, the novelist is aware of the discourse of which voluntarily he is a part. In all this we have two things with which deconstruction as a general interpretive strategy, based on allegedly universal characteristics of Western thought, cannot deal: writing as a highly complex surface activity and formal element in narrative; two, writing that appears already differentiated from other activities not because of some preordained decision, but as the consequence of a historical evolution unique, and yet absolutely crucial, to the narrative form itself. (*The World*: 194)

Again, as with Foucault, Derrida's usefulness to an interventionist programme is deeply questionable because of his "manner of muddling traditional thought beyond the possibility of its usefulness" (203). That Said adhered to this negative evaluation of deconstruction up to the end is borne out by the following remark in his posthumously published work *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* (2004): "It is the avoidance of this process of taking final comradely responsibility for one's reading that explains, I think, a crippling limitation in those varieties of deconstructive Derridean readings that end (as they began) in undecidability and uncertainty." (*Humanism*: 66)

Said also takes issue with the most influential American voice of deconstruction, Paul de Man, whose critical oeuvre has demonstrated the inefficacy of deconstruction as a potentially oppositional method of reading texts:

The literary work for him stands in a position of almost unconditional superiority over historical facticity not by virtue of its power but by virtue of its admitted powerlessness; its originality resides in the premise that it has disarmed itself "from the start," as if by having said in advance that it had no illusions about itself and its fictions it directly accedes to the realm of acceptable form. (*Humanism*: 166)

Paul de Man's seminal idea is that literary works, in foregrounding the figurative tropes constituting them and flaunting their own fictionality, radically challenge the very notion of referentiality and thus go beyond merely undercutting the basis of mimetic representation. Literature, on de Man's view, is antithetical to all disciplines laying claim to knowledge due to their incapacity to recognise their inherent metaphoricity and constructedness. Said is impatient with such off-hand negation of historical facticity and equally deplorable admission of powerlessness. De Man's view that theory arrives on the scene with "the introduction of linguistic terminology in the metalanguage about literature", signals a radical departure from the position that assigned a referential and cognitive value to literary works. By claiming that theory positions "reference as a function of language and not necessarily as an intuition", de Man does not abrogate referentiality but radically challenges the very premise on which literature's relationship with the external world can be understood (*The Resistance*: 7, 8). No wonder then, he dismisses what he terms as "external politics of literature", one that seeks to relate meaningfully "the internal, formal, private structures of literary language with their external, referential, and public effects" (*Allegories*: 3). Said's misgivings about deconstruction's potency have been echoed by numerous scholars since, and its ironic-cynical passivity is duly recognised.

Taken as a whole, Said's criticism of literary theory is not so much about the dangers inherent in abstract thinking as about the obfuscation of facts carried out in the name of high-flown theoretical sophistication, facts which are readily available to any honest inquirer and which force upon her a

moral choice. Said deplores that such thinking is employed to evade the necessity of taking a morally compelling stance on matters of utmost importance. Theory in its most prevalent form has become a means of evading moral responsibility while criticism for Said is fundamentally a moral enterprise. In the very introduction to *The World, the Text and the Critic* titled "Secular Criticism", he notes thus, "In having given up the world entirely for the aporias and unthinkable paradoxes of the text, contemporary criticism has retreated from its constituency, the citizens of modern society, who have been left to the hands of 'free' market forces, multinational corporations" (4).

Notwithstanding Said's serious reservations about the worth of literary theory detailed above and summarised by Eagleton's remark in the beginning of this paper, one should not confuse his position with some of those writers who have dismissed the entire enterprise of theory as a misguided one. Said is not a champion of a pragmatic or anti-intellectual approach as is evident from his intelligent engagement with the important theorists of his day. His idea of critical consciousness is meant to be a corrective to the trend in theory to sequester itself from practice, the point being that only when theory is recalled to its work of transforming political relations and effect significant social change can it justify itself. What it needs is emancipation from fascination with itself and the speculative trap of rarefaction.

Said remains committed to his essentially humanistic view that human agency can assert itself against multiple pressures of a hegemonic culture. Whereas for Foucault discursive practices are totalizing and leave no room for any meaningful human agency, an individual being no more than a point of intersection of such discursive practices, Said's abiding and consistent concern in his writings is to explore the ways in which human consciousness can resist the domination of various kinds. His deep commitment to this humanist model based on the idea of human choice and will ultimately place him outside the domain of theorists of postmodernist and poststructuralist ilk. In fact, Said's critical corpus would largely remain incomprehensible without the cornerstone of his conviction that power can be resisted, critical consciousness can work against the domination of hegemonic systems, and acts of resistance can emerge from the individual's capacity to see through the power masquerading as knowledge.

Critical consciousness implies a capacity and willingness to break free from the constraints of a discursive apparatus and a textual tradition that seek to obliterate the individual's power of intervention. For Said, the existence of critical consciousness is itself premised on the idea of an irreducible human freedom to resist a mass-culture mentality. For him, therefore, criticism is a humanistic enterprise, a humanism that avoids the fallacies of dogmatism, Western exclusivism and closure. Said makes the following observation about criticism:

In its suspicion of totalizing concepts, in its discontent with reified objects, in its impatience with guilds, special interests, imperialized fiefdoms, and orthodox habits of mind, criticism is most itself and, if the paradox can be tolerated, most unlike itself at the moment it starts turning into organized dogma... criticism must think of itself as life-enhancing and constitutively opposed to every form of tyranny, domination, and abuse; its social goals are non-coercive knowledge produced in the interests of human freedom. (*The World*:29)

And also makes an important positive statement about what criticism is:

Criticism ... is always situated; it is skeptical, secular, reflectively open to its own failings. This is by no means to say that it is value-free. Quite the contrary, for the inevitable trajectory of critical

consciousness is to arrive at some acute sense of what political, social, and human values are entailed in the reading, production, and transmission of any text. (*The World*:26).

The besetting danger of criticism is to fall into abstraction and lose its connection with the concrete social and political reality. In yet another essay in *The World, the Text and the Critic*, “Roads Taken and Not Taken”, Said regrets how contemporary criticism has forfeited an active engagement with the real world:

Orphaned by the radical Freudian, Saussurean, and Nietzschean critique of origins, traditions, and knowledge itself, contemporary criticism has achieved its methodological independence by forfeiting an active situation in the world. It has no faith in traditional continuities (nation, family, biography, period); rather it improvises, in acts of an often inspired bricolage, order out of extreme discontinuity. Its culture is a negative one of absence, antirepresentation, and (as Blackmur used to put it repeatedly) ignorance. (*The World*:146)

For Said, criticism cannot be abandoned even in the very midst of a battle because the need to reflect critically on one’s own position is unrelenting. Critical consciousness therefore is a resource to be cultivated and held onto tenaciously in the face of the challenges of existence where one needs to constantly evaluate one’s position on crucial matters. Said is contending that various forms of postmodernism and poststructuralism with their obsession with textuality have had the pernicious effect of eviscerating the critical and emancipatory potential of criticism. Whether it is the Foucauldian understanding of power, the Derridean view of language, meaning and reference, or the Lacanian concept of human subjectivity, they scarcely offer any theoretical basis for an emancipatory action. Freedom, self-determination and resistance to power abuse are goals which presuppose a theoretical foundation that the dominant contemporary modes are incapable of providing.

In his 1984 essay, “Future of Criticism”, published a year after *The World, the Text and the Critic*, Said discusses two kinds of criticism, one which adheres to an essentially conservative outlook, reproducing in future its own continuity, and aiming to transform its “idle readers into active believers in, [and] practitioners of, a certain kind of criticism” (952). This kind of criticism is doctrinal, systematic and resistant to change, and seeks to reproduce the existing modes of thought by appropriating the new into the rigid structures of the old. Said discredits it and notes that it has no future. Contrary to this one the other kind of criticism resists ossification and codification, and opens itself up to the external world in refreshing ways. It is the criticism of this kind that Said pins his hopes on as a bulwark against its prevalent domestication. In agreement with some other critical thinkers such as Adorno, Said relates the near absence of this kind of criticism to the fact that intellectuals have virtually capitulated to the corrupting influence of a mass culture driven by consumerism and can only conceive of criticism as an innocuous activity with no relevance to the real world whatsoever. Said warns against the domestication of criticism, something he laments has already happened largely because of its institutionalization and becoming a professional activity. John Crowe Ransom in his foundational essay of the American New Criticism “Criticism Inc.” had bemoaned the lack of professionalism in criticism and forcefully argued for its taking up by the University teachers of literature. Said argues for the contrary and wants criticism to become an amateur activity, free of the pernicious influence of the institutions controlling the production and dissemination of knowledge. Criticism must have a clear goal of enacting a transformation by a careful demystification of the structures of power and domination. It must act as a force against settled dogmas, dismantle tyrannical hierarchies and redefine

the contours of textual inquiry to incorporate larger questions of power, control and justice. Said's insistence on reading literary texts in this way does not mean he views them as nothing more than ideological constructs. But neither does he approve taking power and politics out of them.

Whether Said's critical humanism is essentialist or not is a moot point. R. Radhakrishnan in his penetrating essay on Said's literary humanism titled "Edward Said's Literary Humanism" explores the complexity and ambivalence in his stance on humanism. Radhakrishnan argues that Said does not pay sufficient attention to humanism's historical complicity with exclusion and oppression. The strength of this critique notwithstanding, it is important to remember that Said posits a humanism that ventures to make it comprehensive and universal. "Not to see that the essence of humanism is to understand human history as a continuous process of self-understanding and self-realization, not just for us, as white, male, European, and American, but for everyone, is to see nothing at all". He laments that humanism is more often than not misunderstood: "When will we stop allowing ourselves to think of humanism as a form of smugness and not as an unsettling adventure in difference, in alternative traditions, in texts that need a new deciphering within a much wider context than has hitherto been given them? (*Humanism*: 26, 55)

Said thus seeks to reinvest humanism with a new vigour and critical capability by differentiating it from its old and politically neutral version but also defending it against the onslaught of contemporary theories that have entirely rejected it. Within the larger ambit of postcolonial theory, in which Said himself sits rather uncomfortably, it is worthwhile to look at the critical thrust in the work of Homi Bhabha to evaluate Said's spirited defence of a humanistic critique. Bhabha's concepts of hybridity, ambivalence, mimicry, derived from psychoanalysis and pressed in the service of poststructuralism, not only obfuscate the abuses of racism and oppression, but, by eviscerating the human agency of the colonial and colonised subjects, also undermine the basis of a meaningful resistance. Thus, the move to disrupt binarism, which Bhabha skilfully carries out through a specialised jargon, also threatens to erase the "native" subject as an agent of change and resistance to the colonial hegemony. Said's humanism too calls for the need of transcending the opposition between "us and them" towards a new, universalist vision, but projects that as a goal to be achieved rather than a condition already informing the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised.

To rectify the sorry state of affairs in which much of theory has become impervious to the worldwide oppressive political conditions, Said reaffirms the relation between the text and the world in a way that is diametrically opposed to the postmodernist and poststructuralist notions of textuality which for him are politically ineffective and morally nihilistic. For criticism to acquire a vitality and purposiveness, it must become oppositional and resist theoretical closure because deference to prevailing orthodoxies makes it a crippled enterprise. The new critical humanism that he advocates is therefore fundamentally discordant with most current trends in advanced theory. It is generally held today that theory is past its heyday and has lost the institutional prominence it once enjoyed. Perhaps the primary reason for this recession or at least the loss of prominence is that inherent in theory was a strong current subversive of the radical political potential that once seemed to be its promising feature. What Said defends as "secular criticism" is a moral-cum-intellectual creed that is ever wary of getting cloistered in jargon or become ineffective. As a conservative political climate prevails in the US and many other countries of the world today, Said's vision of an engaged, transformative criticism resisting the pressures of domestication gains in urgency and merits serious attention.

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## Impact of Self-help Group Programme on Income of Households

SIMRAN JAIDKA

### Abstract

*The objective of the present paper is to examine the impact of Self-help group bank linkage programme (SHG-BLP) on income in Panchkula district of Haryana. Information based on primary survey of 17 SHGs and 225 households brings out that SHG programme made a significant dent on income of beneficiary households who expend SHG loan for income generating activities. However, to strengthen the positive income impact of SHG- BLP, the SHGs need to actively monitor use loan by beneficiaries.*

**Keywords:** Self-help Group, Microfinance and income

According to International Labour Organization, “Microfinance is an economic development approach that involves providing financial services through institutions to low income clients” (quoted by Reddy and Noorbasha, 2013). Being a development tool it targets to increase incomes and alleviate poverty by assisting the poor to set up microenterprises. To help the poor come out of the vicious circle of poverty, microfinance provides saving and credit facilities to them. Besides providing saving and credit facilities, microfinance institutions (MFIs) capacitate the poor households by helping them set up income generating activities through skill impartation and training programmes, guiding them and disseminating information on potential viable microenterprises. These also provide marketing information to their clients. Self-help group bank linkage programme (SHG-BLP) is the most successful microfinance model in India. Self-help groups (SHGs) provide credit to their members for three main purposes, which are, investment in income generating activities, for meeting survival needs of households and for other productive and non-productive purposes which include utilization of loan for education, home repairs, purchase of consumer durables, meeting marriage expenditure, repayment of earlier loans and discharge of other social responsibilities.

Investment in income generating activities includes capital expenditure in both new and existing farm and non-farm enterprises as well as current expenditure in productive enterprises like hiring of variable factor inputs such as labour and repair and maintenance of fixed capital stock. The increased income from both capital and current expenditure made from SHG loans tend to increase not only the asset base, but also leads to an increase in both the present and future income and consumption base of beneficiary households.

Though the basic objective of SHG-BLP is to advance loan to potential entrepreneurs, the members also avail loaning facility to meet survival needs and for other miscellaneous activities. Loan for these purposes is generally borrowed from own pooled savings. But sometimes bank loans are also used for the same.

Use of loans to meet survival needs of households, leads to consumption smoothening. Such use immediately increases the consumption of beneficiary households and helps households overcome vulnerability to poverty and malnutrition. Many a time SHG loans are also used to cope with medical contingencies of household members. Both, expenditure on daily consumption and on coping with medical needs enable the household to escape potential danger of poverty, malnutrition and loss of human resources. In the short run, the impact is generally favourable on the consumption level of households; however, in the long run the impact depends on the nature and utilization of loans and nature and quantum of loan and repayment capacity of households. For example, loan for consumption always puts future repayment burden on households, which if they are unable to fulfil may push them into a vicious circle of indebtedness. In such situations, short term gains are often turned into long term pains. On the other hand, utilization of loan for coping with consumption shortfalls or with health requirement of households may enable them to guard against potential loss of future earning capacities and capabilities of such households. In such a happy situation, the beneficiary household has both short term and long term gain. Therefore, loans for meeting survival activities generally augment current consumption levels, but the long term impact is generally uncertain.

Many beneficiary households tend to use SHG borrowings for productive and unproductive activities other than those discussed above under two heads. These include use of credit mainly for education, home repairs and purchase of consumer durables et cetera. Use of loan for education leads to an increase in both the present and long term consumption gain of households. It may also lead to a long term increase in income and asset base of households. Loan used for home repairs leads to an immediate increase in consumption and asset base of households.

In case the dwelling unit is successfully rented out, income, consumption and asset base may increase in the long run. In case the dwelling unit is not rented out, only the asset base is widened, it may tend to draw upon future consumption of households as future income will be used for repayment of loan rather than use for consumption and investment purposes. Utilization of loan for purchase of consumer durables may have a mixed impact on economy of households. For example, expenditure on consumer durables such as televisions and refrigerators may lead to an increase in the asset base of households but may lead to diversion of resources away from investment in income generating activities and from consumption purposes. On the other hand, investment

in consumer durables like transport services, if utilized for productive activities, forms capital expenditure in income generating activities. This widens the asset base of households in the short term and may lead to an increase in income, consumption and assets in the long term. However, if expenditure on consumer durables is done for non-productive purposes, it may draw upon future income and consumption of households. Similarly, use of loan for other non-productive activities such as marriages of family members, paying gifts to friends and relatives, expenditure on social festivals and ceremonies may divert future income from consumption to repayment of loans.

In the present study three types of loans, namely revolving fund, group loan and inter-loans are provided to SHGs. Revolving fund is generally given out to acquaint SHG members with credit and repayment practices. Beneficiaries are expected to use the same for consumption smoothening. Group loan is given to them for investment in income generating activities and inter-loans are given to meet miscellaneous needs of member households. However, in practice any of these loans may be used for the purposes discussed above.

The present paper examines the impact of the SHG-BLP on the income of the beneficiary households in Panchkula district of Haryana. It is hypothesized that the SHG-BLP leads to an increase in the income of beneficiary households. It is also hypothesized that moral hazard impedes the flow of SHG-BLP gains to its beneficiaries.

Having introduced the objective of the paper and the mechanisms and pathways by which microcredit programme is expected to impact the economic status of households the subsequent section briefs the data and methodology followed in the measurement of income. Section 3 brings forward the major findings of the existing literature available on the impact of microfinance on income. Section 4 rationalizes the findings of the present chapter. The conclusions are provided in section 5.

## **2. Data and Methodology**

**Data:** The study is based on data collected on the basis of multistage random sampling technique from Panchkula district of Haryana. The case-control approach for evaluation of income of the beneficiary households was used. Thus, besides collecting information from 150 SHG households, the information was collected from 75 non-SHG households with similar socio-economic background, preferably from immediate neighbourhood of beneficiary households. Here the implicit assumption is that both case and control groups of households possessed equal income and the subsequent difference is on account of beneficiaries' access to SHGs.

**Methodology:** The methodology of the Canberra group handbook on household income statistics, 2011 given by the United Nations (from here on referred to as Canberra group handbook) is followed. Household income is used as a measure for analysis of people's well-being. The conceptual definition of household income followed is: 'Household income consists of all receipts whether monetary or in kind (goods and services) that are received by the household or by individual members of the household at annual or more frequent intervals, but excludes windfall gains and other such irregular and typically one time receipts' (United Nations, 2011). This definition includes all components that must be ideally included in measuring household income.

Household income covers: i) income from employment (both paid and self-employment); ii) property income; iii) income from production of household services for own consumption; and iv) current transfers received. The four sources of income together form the total income.

The current transfers paid are subtracted from total income to get disposable income. This estimate is relevant for income distribution analysis as it is the income available to a household to support its consumption and savings during the reference period.

Using the above methodology, the average household and per capita income are estimated separately for the case and control groups, and a comparison is drawn. Z- test is used to test whether the difference in average household income and per capita income is significant or not.

## **3. Impact of Microfinance on Income: Existing Empirical Evidence**

Literature provides mixed evidence regarding impact of microfinance on income. Puhazhendi and Satyasai (2000), Chen and Snodgrass (2001), Puhazhendi and Badatya (2002), NCAER (2008), SIDBI (2008) and Bera (2011) reported a positive impact of microfinance on income of beneficiaries. Hulme and Mosley (1996), Mosley and Hulme (1998), Shaw (2004), Ghosh (2005), Sarangi (n.d.), Rahman and

Rafiq and Momen (2009), Rooyen, Stuart and Wet (2012) reported mixed and conditional results. Montgomery and Weiss (2011), Deininger and Liu (2013) and Coleman (1999) show that microfinance has failed to impact income of client households.

**Major findings:** On the basis of the rationale provided by literature some important determinants of impact of microfinance on economy of beneficiary households have been explained as follows. The initial income status of treatment group significantly influences the income impact. Households with initial higher income are able to use the loan more productively as they bear higher risk taking ability. Also the influential members are in a better position to make larger internal and external borrowings and thus experienced larger income impact.

It is obvious that larger cumulative loan size positively impacts economic well-being. Thus, more sequential loans and larger size of loans positively influence the income impact of microfinance programmes. The programmes must be long-term as the poorer sections with the benefit of sequential loans are likely to become less vulnerable and break barriers of low income.

Training of beneficiaries by self-help promoting institutions (SHPIs) and the quality of human capital is also found to impact economic well-being of clients. Better training in income generation, marketing of produce, enterprising management is expected to strengthen the positive income impact. Also better education and health can significantly influence the impact of microcredit on income of clients.

Favourable location of target villages, easy transportation availability, and connectivity to urban areas are also reported by some researches to positively and significantly impact the income of beneficiaries. Some studies also discuss the importance of design of microfinance service. They emphasize the need to tailor microfinance services, such as repayment schedule, role played and services provided by SHPIs, size and nature of rate of interest et cetera to suit the socio-economic and cultural background of beneficiary households. It is seen that greater flexibility of a programme within an area makes it more popular and helps in strengthening its impact. Thus, existing literature gives us a peek into the determinants that impact the economic outcome of microcredit.

#### **4. Impact of SHGs on Household Income: Empirical Evidence**

The current study uses the methodology explained in section 2 to measure the income of the case and control groups separately from various sources. Table 1 shows a case-control comparison of annual average household incomes. Total household income along with income separately from various sources has been calculated. The average annual income of the case group is found to be rupees 100525.26 as compared to rupees 95735.47 of the control group.

Though the case group income is higher by Rs.4789.79, but the same is not significant statistically even at 90 percent level of confidence. On analysing income from various sources, it was found that average household labour income, crop income, livestock income and non-farm business income, social security receipts and income from school transfers is higher for case group. However, the difference between the case and control groups is found to be statistically significant only in the case of school transfers. This seems to indicate that the proportion of below poverty line (BPL) children is higher amongst beneficiaries of SHGs than in the control group (BPL students get money from government schools). Average household income of control group is higher from three sources namely; rental income from building and land, income from imputed rent of dwelling and from net inter-household transfers. However, no statistically significant difference is observed.

**Table1****Household income: Case-control comparison**

Source	Average annual household income (Rs.)			Difference	Standard error	Z-value
	Total	Case group	Control group			
Total (all sources)	98928.66	100525.26	95735.47	4789.79	7554.61	0.63
Labour income	61182.67	61719.60	60108.80	1610.80	6723.99	0.24
Net crop income	733.33	818.67	562.67	256.00	407.13	0.63
Livestock income	3591.20	3832.80	3108.00	724.80	1919.54	0.38
Non-farm business income	12542.35	13833.52	9960.00	3873.52	4392.01	0.88
Rental income from building and land	778.78	598.83	1138.67	-539.83	743.86	-0.73
Imputed rent of dwelling	13562.67	13184.00	14320.00	-1136.00	1314.63	-0.86
Social security receipts	4464.00	4524.00	4344.00	180.00	1995.12	0.09
School transfers	1254.03	1487.04	788.00	699.04	237.18	2.95*
Net inter-household transfers	819.64	526.80	1405.33	-878.53	543.56	-1.62

Source: Field survey

**Note:** \* indicates value significant at 1% level of significance.

To analyse further it is essential to look into per capita income from different sources. Table 2 reveals the annual per capita income from various sources. The per capita annual income of the case group is rupees 18754.71, while that of the control group is found to be rupees 19617.92. Unlike the total average household income, the average per capita income of the control group is higher.

**Table 2**  
**Per capita income: Case-control comparison**

Source	Per capita annual income (Rs.)			Difference <sup>a</sup>	Standard error	Z-value
	Total	Case group	Control group			
Total (all sources)	19024.74	18754.71	19617.92	-863.21	1470.46	-0.59
Labour income	11765.90	11514.85	12317.38	-802.53	1517.90	-0.53
Net crop income	141.03	152.74	115.30	37.44	51.41	0.73
Livestock income	690.62	715.07	636.89	78.19	287.95	0.27
Non-farm business income	2411.99	2580.88	2040.98	539.90	856.94	0.63
Rental income from building and land	149.76	111.72	233.33	-121.61	119.45	-1.02
Imputed rent	2608.21	2459.70	2934.43	-474.72	239.20	-1.98**
Pensions	858.46	844.03	890.16	-46.13	343.94	-0.13
School transfers	241.16	277.43	161.48	115.96	42.90	2.70*
Net inter-household transfers	157.61	98.28	287.98	-189.69	135.53	-1.40

Source: Field survey

<sup>a</sup> Difference of weighted per capita income is taken.

Note: \* and \*\* indicate values significant at 1% and 5% levels of significance respectively.

This is obviously due to the higher average household size of the case group. The average household size of the case group is 5.36 and that of the control group is 4.88. The difference in average household size is statistically significant. On testing the difference in average per capita income, the difference is not found to be statistically significant.

The difference is statistically significant only for, school transfers and income from imputed rent of dwelling. Significantly higher income from school transfers is indicative of a larger proportion of BPL children belonging to case group as is noted previously.

Can the difference in the two be attributed to the SHG-BLP? Why has the SHG-BLP failed to make a significant dent on income of beneficiary households? The issue is explored at length in section 5.

## 5. SHG loans and income of beneficiaries: Linkages and rationale

Thus our study finds that SHG-BLP has not been able to increase the income of the beneficiary households. Where has the loan amount gone? This could be because of other co-determinants of income of households. To examine the validity of this argument we propose two hypotheses: i) The case and control groups are not homogenous on many factors which play a significant role in impacting the income of beneficiaries. ii) Loan is not used by beneficiaries for designated income generating activities and thus income fails to rise. Both of the above hypotheses is tested in the current section. Section 5 is divided into two sub-sections.

### 5.1 Multiple regression

To examine the validity of the first proposed hypothesis, the present sub-section examines the impact of SHGs by controlling the effect of other determinants of income of households through the following multiple regression analysis.

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{1i} + \beta_2 X_{2i} + \dots + \beta_k X_{ki} + u_i$$

$Y_i$  - Income of the  $i^{\text{th}}$  household

$X_k$  - Independent variables

$\hat{\alpha}_s$  - Regression coefficients

$i = 1, 2, \dots, 225$  (sample size)

$u_i$  - Random term assumed to be independently and identically distributed with zero mean and constant variance.

A brief description of variables included in regression analysis is detailed in Table 3. These variables include the physical assets in the form of ownership of land and livestock and human resources in the form of number of workers and educational endowment of households, employment status of households as elementary workers and artisans and craftsmen.

**Table 3**  
**Description of variables used in regression analysis**

Serial number	Variables	Definition
1	Case dummy	Dummy= 1 for SHG households; = 0 otherwise
2	Land	Land owned in biswas by a household (96 biswas= 1acre)
3	Livestock	Number of milch animals owned by a household
4	Number of workers	Number of workers in a household as per principal status
5	Scheduled caste/tribe	Dummy= 1 for households belonging to scheduled caste or scheduled tribe;= 0 otherwise
6	Backward castes	Dummy= 1 for households belonging to backward caste; =0 otherwise
7	Highest education:Middle	Dummy= 1 if highest education attained by any member in household is 8 <sup>th</sup> grade ; =0 otherwise
8	Highest education: Matriculation	Dummy= 1 if highest education attained by any member in household is 10 <sup>th</sup> grade; =0 otherwise
9	Highest education: Above matriculation	Dummy= 1 if highest education attained by any member in household is above 10 <sup>th</sup> grade; =0 otherwise
10	Social security transfers	Dummy=1 if one or more members get social security transfers such as widow or old age pension, handicap pension et cetera ; =0 otherwise
11	Elementary workers	Dummy= 1 if principal occupation of household is elementary(casual workers ready to undertake any work); =0 otherwise
12	Artisans and craftsmen	Dummy= 1 if principal occupation of household is artisan or craftsman ; = 0 otherwise
13	Illness in 30 days or chronic illness	Dummy= 1 if any member of household has fallen sick 30 days before date of survey or suffers from a chronic disease; =0 otherwise
14	MGNREGA	Dummy=1 if any member of household is participating in MGNREGA; = 0 otherwise
15	Institutional loan	Dummy=1 if household has borrowed from institutional source other than SHG loan; = 0 otherwise
16	Non-institutional loan	Dummy=1 if household has borrowed from non-institutional source ; = 0 otherwise

Source: Self defined

All these variables are expected to have an impact on income of households. Variables related to caste background are included to take care of any pre or post market discrimination against scheduled caste, scheduled tribe and backward class households, which are known to be subjected to numerous socio-economic discriminatory practices in the country. Social security transfers and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) dummies are also included to control the

impact of such measures on economy of the households. Illness dummy is included to control the impact of adverse health status on earnings of households. Use of institutional and non-institutional credit has also been included to control the impact of loans other than SHG loans on the economy of the households.

**Table 4**  
**Determinants of income of households: Regression analysis**

Dependent variables →	Average annual household income		
Independent variables “! ↓	Regression coefficient	t-value	P-value
(Constant)	26691.33	1.86	0.06
Land owned	97.81	0.75	0.46
Livestock owned	1662.08	0.66	0.51
Workers	30490.69	9.44	0.00
Scheduled caste/ tribe	9836.85	1.10	0.27
Backward caste	10217.08	1.20	0.23
Highest education-Middle	5132.82	0.46	0.65
Highest education-Matriculation	15425.50	1.48	0.14
Highest education-Above matriculation	29727.37	2.60	0.01
SHG membership	-3067.99	-0.44	0.66
Social security transfers	-21674.25	-2.93	0.00
Elementary workers	-15584.18	-2.29	0.02
Craftsmen and artisans	758.75	0.06	0.95
MGNREGA	-2533.39	-0.13	0.90
Institutional loan	-598.90	-0.05	0.96
Non-institutional loan	-5717.79	-0.83	0.41
Illness/ chronic illness	10611.88	1.54	0.12
R <sup>2</sup>	0.43		
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.38		
Number	225		

Source: Field survey

This set of 16 variables is regressed on average annual income. Results for regression are reported in Table 4. It is evident from Table 4 that that human resources in the form of number of workers, their educational level and employment pattern are significant determinants of variations in income across the sampled households. The surprising result is the non-significant coefficient of SHG dummy in. This further supports our univariate comparison across case and control groups of households in the previous section. This rejects our hypothesis that heterogeneity in socio-economic background and composition of case and control groups of households may be the reason behind no significant difference in case and control groups of households as far as their income is concerned. This indicates

robustness of our earlier results.

## 5.2 Use of microcredit by SHG beneficiaries

As discussed earlier, credit provided by SHGs to its members is classified under three heads namely, revolving fund, group loan and inter-loans. Except for group loan, which is exclusively meant for investment in income generating activities, the borrowers are free to use other loans (revolving fund and inter-loans) as per their household requirements. Therefore, to study the utilization of loans by SHG beneficiaries, purpose-wise utilization of loans by SHG beneficiary households is done. To test the second hypothesis it was examined whether or not the loans were used for the designated purpose. Information detailed in Table 5 reveals the use of all three types of loans.

We see that on the whole, about one-third (32.1 percent) of the total loan is used for investment in income generating activities, one-fifth (20.87 percent) is used for survival activities including medical and other daily contingent needs, while the remaining almost half is used for other daily consumption purposes. Interestingly, almost entire (96.05 percent) of the credit provided under the revolving fund has been used for survival activities.

This seems to suggest the precarious nature of the economy of the households and also suggests that on account of poverty, the households were in dire need of money to smoothen their consumption. It is probable that the members joined their respective SHGs because of their extreme vulnerability.

Information on composition of group loans indicates that only two-fifth of (39.65 percent) loan is used for investment in income generating activities for which it was designated by the lending institutions.

The remaining three-fifth of the loan is either diverted to meet survival needs of households (12.95 percent) or for other consumption purposes (47.42 percent). This partially validates our hypothesis of diversion of loan away from designated income generating purposes.

Even in the case of inter-loans, almost one-third (32.40 percent) is used for survival activities while almost two-third is spent on other consumption activities. Only a miniscule 3.43 percent is spent on investment in income generating activities.

The overall diversion of loans away from designated purposes is indicative of poor monitoring of regulatory and promotional agencies and SHGs as an institution. There two important observations made from the distribution of loan utilization by beneficiary households as shown in Table 5 are:

1. One-third loan is used for repair and extension of existing dwelling structures. Home repair is productive only if a part of the house is rent out. However, this practice is not found in our sample. Only 0.67 percent of beneficiary households have given out a part of their house on rent. Thus, such investment of credit does improve their living conditions but does not put them on a trajectory of higher income.
2. Comparison of utilization of revolving fund vis-a-vis inter-loans, suggests that, loans made available at the initial stage i.e. the revolving fund, is almost exclusively used for survival activities. It implies extreme vulnerability of these households to malnutrition and extreme poverty. Later on, when they obtained and hence used group loan, their capacity to overcome vulnerability to poverty and shortfalls in consumption improved.

This is evident from the fact that 96.05 percent of the revolving fund is used to meet survival needs, whereas only 32.40 percent of the inter-loans are used for the same by beneficiary households.

**Table 5**  
**Distribution of SHG loans on the basis of use of loan**

Utilization of borrowing ↓	Revolving fund				Group loan				Interloans				Total			
	No. of loans used	% of loans used	Amount of loan ('000 Rs.)	% of loan	No. of loans used	% of loans used	Amount of loan ('000 Rs.)	% of loan	No. of loans used	% of loans used	Amount of loan ('000 Rs.)	% of loan	Total no. of loans	% of total loan	Amount of loan ('000 Rs.)	% of amount
Capital expenditure in farm business	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	26	17.45	817.00	18.13	1	1.08	2.00	0.25	27	7.09	819.00	14.5
Capital expenditure in non-farm business	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	8	5.37	250.00	5.55	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	8	2.10	250.00	4.43
Current expenditure in farm business	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	4	2.68	117.00	2.60	1	1.08	10.00	1.27	5	1.31	127.00	2.25
Current expenditure in non-farm business	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	26	17.45	602.50	13.37	2	2.15	15.00	1.90	28	7.35	617.50	10.93
<b>Income generating activities</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	0.00	<b>0.00</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>42.95</b>	1786.50	<b>39.64</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4.30</b>	27.00	<b>3.43</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>17.85</b>	1813.50	<b>32.10</b>
Medical	2	1.44	4.70	1.33	6	4.03	202.00	4.48	17	18.28	105.80	13.43	25	6.56	312.50	5.53
Daily consumption	133	95.68	335.42	94.72	13	8.72	381.50	8.46	30	32.26	149.50	18.97	176	46.19	866.42	15.34
<b>Survival activities</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>97.12</b>	340.12	<b>96.05</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>12.75</b>	583.50	<b>12.95</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>50.54</b>	255.30	<b>32.40</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>52.76</b>	1178.92	<b>20.87</b>
Consumer durables	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	5	3.36	184.00	4.08	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	5	1.31	184.00	3.26
Education	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	5	3.36	175.00	3.88	5	5.38	34.70	4.40	10	2.62	209.70	3.71
Repayment of loan	1	0.72	2.50	0.71	3	2.01	84.00	1.86	3	3.23	14.00	1.78	7	1.84	100.50	1.78
Marriage	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	3	2.01	75.00	1.66	17	18.28	220.00	27.92	20	5.25	295.00	5.22
Home repair	3	2.16	11.50	3.25	49	32.89	1592.30	35.33	17	18.28	237.00	30.08	69	18.11	1840.80	32.58
Miscellaneous	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	1	0.67	27.00	0.60	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	1	0.26	27.00	0.48
<b>Others</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2.88</b>	14.00	<b>3.95</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>44.30</b>	2137.30	<b>47.42</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>45.16</b>	505.70	<b>64.18</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>29.4</b>	2657.00	<b>47.03</b>
Total	139	100.00	354.12	100.00	149	100	4507.30	100.00	93	100.00	788.00	100.00	381	100	5649.42	100

Source: Field survey

Note: No. indicates number

Therefore, even though such impact may not have been reflected in terms of significantly higher income of beneficiary households vis-a-vis non-beneficiaries, the evidence is certainly indicative of an improvement in the coping capacity of SHG beneficiaries in adverse socio-economic situations. Loans to meet survival needs are generally given only by non-institutional sources, such as money lenders. In making such borrowing they are faced with high interest rates. Since such borrowing is exorbitant and is not used for income generation, there are huge concerns of repayment. Microfinance loans used to cope with such shocks are available at much lower average interest rates and a much lower chance of ending up in a debt trap.

Also, the poor may cope-up by not consuming i.e. missing meals, not visiting doctors at time of ill health et cetera. However, this has serious concerns. Fall in survival expenditure due to non-availability of funds can seriously affect health and erode productivity of individuals in times to come. Though measurement of the same is beyond the scope of the current study, we cannot deny the impact of microfinance loans on reducing vulnerability of poor borrowers.

Our results are in line with the evidence provided by Deininger and Liu (2013) who reported no increase in income and consumption of beneficiaries but had observed significant consumption smoothening. The above analysis makes it clear that since only less than one-third of total loan and only two-fifth of group loan is invested in income generating activities, the treatment group has failed to enter the trajectory of higher income and thus improved consumption. The use of loan may have smoothened consumption but did not lead to higher level of income.

Nevertheless, it shall be a little premature to conclude that SHG-BLP has not impacted the economy of beneficiaries. The case group is divided into three sub-groups on the basis of the use to which they put SHG group loan. Use of group loan is taken as the basis of dividing the case group as group loan constitutes four-fifth of total loan and aims at financing a self-stimulating income stream. Beneficiaries used group loan for survival activities form the Group 1. Group 2 consists of beneficiary households who spend group loan on 'other activities', including home repairs, marriages, education et cetera. Group 3 includes households that use credit for income generating activities. It is expected that households that use group loan for income generating activities would experience positive impact on their economy when compared to households who use it for survival or other activities.

The income of the first 2 Groups is compared to those of Group 3, which is the 'income generating group'. The methodology used to measure income of the case and control groups explained in section 2 is followed to measure the same for these groups separately. Table 6 presents a comparison of income of these groups. Group 3 forms the base group for comparison. The results for comparison made amongst different

The average loan size of group 2 is significantly higher than that of group 3. This puts group 2 at a relatively advantageous position to improve their economy. No significant difference exists between average loan size of group 1 and group 3. It is the 'use of loan' which is expected to impact income.

Comparison of average household income and per capita household income across the three groups of beneficiaries of loan users shows that both average and per capita income is significantly higher amongst those who invest in income generating activities vis-a-vis those who used it for survival activities. But no significant difference exists between income of households who use the loan for income generating activities and other activities.

**Table 6****Comparison of income of beneficiary households divided on the basis of use of group loan**

(Income and loan figures are in Rs. '000)

Use of loan → Variables ↓	Survival activities	Other activities (including home repair)	Income generating activities	Survival activities vs income generating activities		Other activities vs income generating activities	
				Difference	Z-value	Difference	Z-value
Average loan size	30.71	32.34	27.96	2.75	1.20	4.38	2.43**
N	19	66	64				
Average household size	5.37	5.37	5.42	-0.05	-0.09	-0.13	-0.38
Average income	77.36	102.05	106.59	-29.23	-2.71*	-4.54	-0.42
Per capita income	14.41	19.30	19.66	-5.25	-2.51**	-0.36	-0.19

Source: Field survey

Note: \* and \*\* indicate values significant at 1% and 5% levels of significance respectively.

Thus we see that income of the households who used group loan for investment in income generating activities increase.

**6. Summary**

The present paper has been devoted to measure the impact of SHG-BLP on income of beneficiary households. To test the same we hypothesized that the SHG-BLP leads to an increase in income of beneficiary households. We also hypothesized that moral hazard leads to misuse of loan and thus impedes the flow of SHG-BLP gains to its beneficiaries. The methodology of the Canberra group handbook, 2011 was used to measure income of households. The broad findings of the paper are as follows.

1. Case-control comparison of economy of households reveals that there is no significant difference in their levels of income. The same is validated when impact of co-determinants of income are controlled through multiple regression.
2. The case and control groups of households differ significantly on account of some components of income, however, this difference is not high enough to make the overall difference significant.
3. There is the problem of moral hazard amongst SHG borrowers as a large proportion of bank loan is diverted away from investment in income generating activities towards expenditure on survival activities and to meet other consumption needs. Borrowing leads to a significant increase in the income of those borrowers who invested it in productive income generating activities as compared to those who used the same to meet survival and other needs.

There are some significant gaps in expectation and performance of SHPIs. Probably, the programme could have performed better had these allied institutions played an active role in monitoring and promoting SHGs to ensure utilization of loan for income generating activities.

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## **State, Religion and Kingship: Relooking into the Contours of Sovereignty under the Delhi Sultanate (c.1206-c.1526 CE)**

PRIYATOSH SHARMA

### **Abstract**

*Sovereignty under the Delhi Sultanate has been studied within the principles of the Islamic character of the state linking it to the theoretic structure of Islam. Whereas the motive of destruction predominated colonial and nationalist studies, Marxists and liberals have rejected the Islamic character of the state in theology. However, the Delhi sultanate never broke away from the theological formulation of the Islamic state. The presence of theologians ensured Islamic support in the subcontinent. Moreover, Ulema preserved the homogeneity and socio-religious behaviour of the believers. They were also instrumental in declaring jihad (religious war) in political emergency. Nevertheless, the Delhi sultanate was dealing with predominant non-Muslim subjects, who might have not responded to the calls of Ulema. Sufi saints, thus, played a vital role in the dissemination of Islamic understanding while incorporating local symbols. Thus, the Sultans engaged with Sufi saints through patronage and matrimonial relations. Legitimacy bestowed on the Sufi hospice and tombs favoured the rulers when the followers of the religious places aligned with the state through the mediation of Sufi saints and places. As a result, Delhi Sultans continued to interact with both Islamic theologians and mystics while evolving various precepts of sovereignty.*

**Keywords:** Delhi Sultans, Sufi Saints, Ulema, Sovereignty, Delhi Sultanate

### **Formulation of Sovereignty in Islam: An Introduction**

You should listen and obey them even if the ruler strikes your back and takes your wealth, even still listen and obey. Hadith 4: 1847

Islamic jurists acknowledged leader (Imam) as a vital organ of society. The theoretical stand between tribal and urban societies initiated philosophical inquiries from the ninth century onward (Crone, 2004: 259). Human rationality was considered limited in scope and hence its institutions could not equal divine guidance. Without a righteous leader, the society tends to fall as Abu Hatim argues, 'if it was not for religion and laws of the prophet...people would perish' (Crone, 2004: 263, fn30). Revelation enabled humans to overcome their vices. Ibn Sina wrote that the prophet, 'must prescribe law for mankind governing all their affairs...fundamental principle upon which his code rest will be to teach them that they have one Creator...Whose commandants must be rightly obeyed;...and that he has prepared for those who obey Him a future life of bliss, but wretchedness for such as disobey him' (Arberry, 1952: 43-44).

Sovereignty in Islamic polity emerges as the prerogative of Allah. The Quran declares, "O Allah, Owner of Sovereignty, You give sovereignty to whom You will and You take sovereignty away from

whom You will. You honor whom You will and You humble whom You will. In Your hand is [all] good. Indeed, You are over all things competent” (Quran, 3:26). Thus, real sovereignty rested with Allah ‘and it is this which Islam has maintained; and if modern writers have claimed Sovereignty as an essential element, it is with His attributes that they have clothed it’ (Ahmad, 1958: 249). Building on the theocratic nature of Islamic polity, the state was considered subsidiary to the religion (Day, 1971:1). Combined with the supremacy of Allah, the indivisibility of the Islamic state constituted another key factor as the prophet Muhammad said, ‘Had there been within the heavens and earth gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined. So, exalted is Allah, Lord of the Throne, above what they describe’ (Quran, 21:22).

The tribal ideal of *millat*, sovereignty and indivisibility of Islamic states transformed when the Arabs overran Persia and were introduced to the Sassanid’s ideals of kingship. The idea of people’s will yielded place to conquerors when the Umayyads (c.661-c.750 CE) captured caliphate under Muawiyah in c. 661 CE. The subsequent emergence of the Fatimids (c.909-c.1171 CE) and the Abbasids (c.750-c.1258 CE) caliphate challenged the notion of indivisibility of the Islamic state. Islamic scholars like NizamulMulkTusi (c.1018–c.1092 CE) and al Ghazali (c.1058 –c.1111 CE) attempted to legitimizethe monarchical form of governments within the precepts of Islam. The translations of Greek and Roman scholars underwent alteration in which Alexander (c.356-c.323 BCE) occupied a prominent place in comparison to other city republic states (*polis*). Democracy (*riyasat al-awamm*) was seen as that worst state where a man was free to act ‘without restraining his passion in the least’ (Crone, 2004: 280). The absence of organized law represents *jahaliya* (ignorance/lawlessness) which marred Arab society before Allah revealed divine laws to the prophet Muhammad. In the absence of the prophet, it became the duty of the leaders to ensure the observance of divine law by the people. Without ‘a just leader’, the world may again withdraw to lawlessness. NizamulMulkTusi, commenting on the essentiality of the leader, recorded:

In every age God, the Almighty selects someone from among men and gives over to him the charge of the well-being of the world and the comfort and tranquility of the human race after duly furnishing him with the art of government. He also makes him responsible for the peace and security of the land and endows with him all the necessary prestige in order that God’s creatures may live in peace and plenty and that justice and security may be the other of the day (Sherwani, 1959:141)

Infused with the Persianised concept of sovereignty, the sultans emerged as a powerful entity reducing the Caliphs to the titular leadership. Al Ghazali also argued in favor of the Sultan. He drew legitimization of the sultanate from Hadis which declared ‘just sultan’ to be more favorable to Allah on the Day of Judgment. For al Ghazali, both sultan and religion were inseparable. He meditated between the powers of the Sultan and religious section with advice for the former to always seek the wise counsel of the Ulemas. AlGhazali advised:

An evil doing and barbarous, so long as he is supported by military force, so that he can only with difficulty be disposed and [at the cost of]...unendurable strife, must of necessity be left in possession and obedience must be rendered to him. Solong as he shows allegiance to the caliph in the matter of his prerogatives of the khutba and coinage, the same is sultan whose commands and judgments are valid in the several parts of earth (Copland and others, 2012:92-93)

### Religious Intonation of Sovereignty under the Delhi Sultanate: Historiographical Trends

Only those deserve heavenly blessings who are  
not quick to spill blood.  
He who spares the life of the enemy he brought down,  
He surely is worthy to be called a brave man.

Sultan Firuz Shah (*Futuhati Firuzshahi*)

The idea of sovereignty under the sultanate for long evolved under the shadow of colonial understanding. The Delhi Sultanate was perceived to be guided with religious zeal to expand Islam using ruthless war machinery. The binaries of Muslim rulers and non-Muslims subjects were enforced to highlight the oppressive nature of Muslim states in India. V.A. Smith, W.H. Moreland and Stanley Lane-Poole continue to perceive Islamic rulers as primitive and driven by religious fanaticism. V.A. Smith wrote, “the bloodstained annals of Delhi Sultanate...are not pleasant reading...All the sultans without exception were fierce bigots” (Smith, 1919: 258). Perceived rejection of religion under Akbar could only promote development which remained an isolated event in the general trend of oppression. Commenting on the idea of ‘revival of Islam’ Rajiv Kinra reflected, ‘For one thing, the idea that Akbar’s successors oversaw an Islamic “revival” or “return” to orthodoxy has a way of also reinforcing the inaccurate and oversimplified notion that “orthodoxy” was somehow the default position of India’s pre-Mughal Muslim rulers’ too - and in fact of “political Islam” generally’ (Kinra, 2015: 20).

Nationalist schools continued to employ colonialist methodologies but with different objectives creating an idea of utopia in ancient times where non-Muslim states were labeled tolerant and liberal. Communally charged emotions influenced some of the early post-independence writings on the Delhi Sultanate where an attempt has been made to rob the state of its violence against non-Muslims while declaring monarchy as non-Islamic feature. In an attempt to contextualize the working of the state, the Delhi sultanate was studied as a phenomenon that generated new socio-economic forces liberating the urban workers from centuries-old bottlenecks ushering in their urban revolution. The liberated workers acted as the bulwark of Delhi state in the face of Mongol invasions. Revolution was complete with penetration of state machinery in rural area under Alauddin Khalji bringing new support for the state (Habib, 1974: 59-84), Irfan Habib, further consolidating the idea of Delhi sultanate within Marxist understanding, found rural non-Islamic aristocracy aligning with the Islamic state sharpening the tools of exploitation of the rural peasantry (Habib, 1982: 56-57). The idea of non-Islamic nature of Delhi sultanate kept emerging in the subsequent works of K.A. Nizami, R.P. Tripathi and U.N. Day. K.A. Nizami opined that, ‘Turkish Empire of Hindustan was a class-state in so far as its political outlook was concerned...their wars were not the wars of religion and their political ideals were not determined by Islam’ (Nizami, 2007: 90). In continuation to delink Delhi sultanate from Islamic principles, U.N. Day summarized that the sultans of Delhi never recognized the absolute sovereignty of caliph because ‘there was no such sentiment or attachment as have been read in recent times’ (Day, 1971: 9). Recent works have attempted to restructure the studies on the political histories of Delhi sultanate. Auer attempted to reconstruct various paradigms of history writing within realms of religion, morality and justice under the Delhi Sultanate. He found writing of Minhaj Juzjani, Barani and Affif having a considerable bearing on successive Islamic writings in India. He argued that the prophet always remained the ideal reference point and successive norms of governance were explored assimilating symbols of righteousness. Comparative models were invented to legitimize the ideals of the sultanate

as a logical culmination in course of history under Islam. The contemporary writers restructured the challenges, success and actions of Delhi sultans within established Islamic ideals. The Mughal historiography took a cue from the sultanate writing traditions and thus, 'we will never know if the Delhi Sultanate was ninety percent image or action. Whatever the answer, there is no doubt that historians played a major role in producing and sustaining ideas about power, justice, and Islamic rule of premodern empire' (Auer, 2013: 160). The present paper attempts to restructure and contextualize the divergent ideas, both mystical and fundamentalist, within the Delhi sultanate. Perceived hostilities of the state towards non-Muslims (*kafirs*) can only be comprehended, not merely as religious aggrandizement, as an attempt to locate itself within Islamic ideals through the support of Ulema who could bestow scriptural legitimacy upon the sultan. At the same time the sultan could not ignore the role of mystics (Sufis), who with their persona and popularity among the masses (largely non-Muslims) could ensure popular support towards an Islamic state.

### **Scholars (Ulema) of the Book as Defenders of Islamic Sovereignty**

*Know that it is justice; not infidelity or Faith  
That ensures the safety of the country  
For the world is better served by justice without faith,  
Than by the tyranny of a faithful king*

Akhlaq- Jahangiri (Alam, 2004:73)

Islamic state, before consolidating its power into the subcontinent, had already succeeded in legitimizing the role of the sultan, whose conquests were a sufficient proof of Allah's blessing and support of religious classes. While acknowledging the importance of religion providing 'an important ideological link which held the Sultanate together,' Nurul Hasan concluded that 'sultans were reluctant to be bound by the *shari'at* law not only because it circumscribed their political and military authority but also because it would not have been practicable...since the bulk of the people living in India were not Muslims' (Hasan, 2005: 66). Muzaffar Alam, on the other hand, rejected the idea of closure of the age of rationality (*ijtihad*). He argued that philosophers continued to broaden interpretations 'within the boundaries of the known school of jurisprudence (Alam, 2004: 9-10). He further asserted that 'like the *shari'at* of the jurist, the *shari'at* of these philosophers and intellectuals deserves equal notice for a truer appreciation of premodern Muslim politics' (Alam, 2004: 10). Approached by the group of theologians under Qazi Wajih to give the Hindus an option of '*imma'l Islam, imma'l qat*', Iltutmish (c. 1211-c.1236 CE) used the analogy of Muslim being like a grain of salt in a dish in the lands of Hindus and such attempt would offset disturbance which a state was not powerful enough to suppress at that time (Alam, 2004: 83). Balban (c.1266-c.1286 CE) distrusted theologians for their selfishness. He also introduced non-Islamic etiquettes in the court and adopted imperial title of *ziliillahi* (shadow of God). Barani (c.1285-c.1357 CE) recorded a conversation between Sultan Alauddin Khalji and a *qazi* in which the sultan declared that he ruled according to what was best for his state even if it did not conform to the ideal precepts of *shari'at* (Zilli, 2015: 176-182). Muhammad bin Tughlaq's quest (c.1326-c.1351 CE) to infuse *ijtihad* (rationality) and inclusion of Hindus and other lower classes might be studied in the same light when Indian sultans confronted limitation of *shari'at* which hampered their emergence as a centre of power. Firuz Shah (c.1351-c.1388 CE) had shown interests in Hindu traditions whereas the reign of Lodi (c.1451-c.1526 CE) witnessed the inclusion of Hindus in the administrative machinery. Sikander Lodi (1489-1517 CE) was advised by Ulemas, 'not to lay waste ancient idol

temples...and prohibit ablution in reservoir which has been customary from ancient times' (Siddiqui, 1993: 1920; Truschke, 2017:106)

Delhi Sultanate had, primarily, evolved under the broad percepts of *shari'at*. The supremacy of vice-regent (*Imam*) was acknowledged in Islamic *fiqh* (jurisprudence) and the duty of Imam was to defend the religion and administer the State (Tripathi, 1975: 4). In theory, the sultans of Delhi were not Imams, they sought investiture (*khillat*) from the Caliph and adopted the title of *nasir al-mominin* (tr. Deputy of the Commander of the Faithful). It was only Sultan Mubarak Khalji (c.1316-c.1320 CE) who adopted the title '*Al-imam al-azam Khalifa rub al-almin*', thus, refusing to acknowledge the supremacy of the Caliph. In theory, the sultans owed their power and sovereignty to Muslim brotherhood through Caliph. They were expected to be the defender of the faith and Muslim brotherhood (*millat*). K.S. Lal concurred that the primary duty of the sultan was to propagate Islam, 'carrying on *jihad* against the infidels' (Lal, 1999:53). It was only Akbar who countered the dominance of Muslim nobility with the loyalty of Rajput and declaration of Mahzar (infallible decree) in c.1579 CE, which made him imam to act as the final authority in religious disputes. The Delhi sultans, on the other hand, were expected to profess their loyalty to *shari'at*. The adherence became more prominent when the sultans, faced with a crisis, attempted to bestow legitimacy to their reigns through religious symbols.

Raziuddin Aquil remarked, 'it must also be to the credit of Sunni Islamic orthodoxy that it strove hard for ensuring what it viewed as the pristine purity of Islam, condemning 'innovation' and deviance from the true path' (Aquil, 2007:118). The question arises how far the sultans adhered to these dictates of orthodoxy to implement their version of *shari'at* practices in India's political setup. One repeatedly comes across the call of *jihad* by various rulers in medieval India. Can one locate the genesis of 'pristine purity of Islam' in the sultanate concept of sovereignty? Sunil Kumar points out that sultanate in its early phase had to face the problem of creating a homogenous identity between the rulers and the ruled. The conflict between the two was reflected in a dream of Khwaja Hamid who was taunted, 'Oh Hamid! Why are you standing before this man [Tughril]. You are wise (*alim*) and he is an ignorant (*jahil*), you are a free man (*hurri*) and he is slave (*banda*), you are a pious man (*salih*) and he is an uncultured sinner (*fasiq*)' (Lawrence, 1991: 342). The varied elements in Islamic traditions with 'piety...extremely individualistic', Hodgson identified three faces of Islam (Sunil Kumar, 2010: 209):

- a) *Shari'at* minded scholars concerned with socio-political behaviour.
- b) Sufis (mystics) concerned with inner purity of human life.
- c) '*Alid*' loyalists who accepted one version of Islam as true rejecting other as heretics.

In a quest to homogenous Muslim identity, the sultans needed well-drafted behavior for the Muslims with a call to fuel the expansion of Islam in non-Islamic countries. Thus, Iltutmish appointed Najm al Din Sughraas Shaikh al-Islam who was condemned as 'petty, jealous and worldly minded individual' in Chishti and Suhrawardi works. (Sunil Kumar, 2010: 209). However, Nizam al Din Sughra had cordial relations with many Sufi saints (Sunil Kumar, 2010: 211).

With political consolidation of the sultanate, *madrassa* (religious schools) were founded under state patronage resulting in the emergence of a well-trained class of Ulema, qazi and *alims* (learned scholars) who could interpret complex doctrines of Koran and *Hadis*. The orthodoxy of the sultanate acted as a check on digression which might have risked the existence of the state. The sultans depended upon Ulemas for ensuring unity among Muslim brotherhood. Thus, Iltutmish encouraged people to perform *namaz* in the congregation which incurred more benefits (Sunil Kumar, 2010: 229). Similarly, Sikander

Lodi only spared the sacred pond of *Brahm Sarovar* at Kurukshetra when Bandagi Maliku'l Ulama Mian Abdullaha Ajodhani stopped him from doing so. The influence of the Ulema upon the Sultan might have remained an issue of debate among modern historians but these stories reflected sultans' desires to project *shari'at*centric social behavior sanctioned by Ulema. The involvement of Ulema in worldly affairs like trade and commerce further highlighted their role as the keeper of outward social behavior within the percepts of Islam. *Fawa'id* records stories of Ulema who were involved in mercantilism 'than...with rituals of prayer' (Lawrence, 1991: 405). Another important role of Ulema was to provide legitimacy to wars carried out against the opponents.

*Waqi'ati Mushtaqi* recorded that Behlol Lodi was given the kingship of Delhi by a Sufi mystic at Samana when 'Ballu' offered his earnings to the mystic Saiyid Abban (Siddiqui, 1991: 2). Such legends helped to bestow legitimacy when the usurpation of the throne was not through power. The killing of Jalaluddin Firuz by Ali Gurshup (future Alauddin Khalji) in c.1296 CE never entailed such myths to prove his credentials as sultans. Similarly, the accession of Muhammad bin Tughlaq which was clouded with an allegation of patricide never sought legitimization from any popular religious institution. However, one must be observant enough to remember that even Alauddin Khalji (c.1296-1316 CE) and Muhammad bin Tughlaq with their all symbols of power and monarchy never challenged the authority of the Caliph, who, being located outside the immediate zone of power, never posed any serious challenge to their authority.

The concept of sovereignty under the sultanate was a fine balance between the tribal element of Arabia and the traditions of monarchy in Persia. All religious scholars accepted the tribal elements of Islam in which the power rested with Muslims. The sultans were beset with a daunting challenge to evolve the percepts of monarchy within the traditions of *shari'at*. Afzar Moin further highlights that the rulers and sufis acted both collaborators and competitors competing in the Islamic politico-religious world which need not be bifurcated between spirituality and materiality (Moin, 2017, p. 5). Sufis like Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya challenged the authority of Sultan Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq (c.1320-c.1326 CE) when he wanted the Shaikh to return the gifts he had received from Khusrau Khan. The Shaikh declared that received charity being part of *bait-ul-mal* was public property and distributed accordingly among the poor. The sultan kept silent but 'his heart was turned against Nizamuddin' (Dibgy, 1990: 73). In another incident, Sikander Lodi, who was projected as a very pious sultan ordering the payment of his sins out of his legitimate property near his death bed, had an encounter with Shaikh Haji Abdul Wahab where the later cursed the sultan for his bad tongue (Siddiqui, 1991: 68-69). The author of *Waqi'at-i-Mushatqi* recorded that such was the anger of the Sufi Shaikh that sultan Sikander died of throat disease (Aquil, 2007: 197). In such a scenario, it was Islamic orthodoxy which supported the rulers. The Ulemas in such situations strove hard to legitimize the authoritative character of the sultan. The cries of religious wars and attempts to present the sultan adhering to standard sets of Islamic behaviour, suitable enough to defend the faith in the lands of infidels, further helped the sovereigns to tide over crisis in emergencies.

As Imam Ghazali justified the institution of the monarch, as long as the later owed allegiance to Islam and caliphate, because it could stop the community going into chaos, Barani also advised the sultan to be more pragmatic. The Ulema acted as a balance between the political sovereignty of the Sultan and spiritual *wilayat* (spiritual territory) of powerful Sufi saints. Sultan could also depend upon the orthodox class to declare *jihad* and call for the unity of Muslims to defend an Islamic empire. Many a time, *qazi* and Ulema also participated in such religious wars against the infidels.

For a student of political history in medieval India, the study of the concept of sovereignty remained beset with riddles between orthodoxy and liberal orientation. Whether the sultans paid 'lip service' to the tenets of Islam or they remained devout Muslims genuinely working towards the establishment of *dar-ul-Islam*. Barani, offering a solution to the dilemma, observed that it was impossible to destroy all heretic practices. He further added that rulers must only ensure that infidels remained debarred from high posts and state patronage. The low born Muslims were also kept out by Barani because of their deviance from the true faith (Alam, 2004: 41-42). Thus, Barani was only opposing state patronage to infidels whereas *adl-wa-insaf* (protection and justice) were ensured to all subjects (Aquil, 2007: 121). The fanaticism of Barani did not extend to the principle of *zawabit-i-mulki* (secular state laws). Thus, the concept of sovereignty must have evolved as a fine balance between the secular nature of justice and religious idea of administration under Delhi sultanate.

### Delhi Sultans under the Blessings (*Barakat*) of the Sufis

*An emperor in Refuge cell  
 "Refuge of the World" for the heart of the world,  
 A King of Kings without throne or crown,  
 With kings in need of the dust of his feet*

- Amir Khusrau (Digby, 1990: 72)

The Sunni orthodoxy was an important element to ensure homogenous identity of Muslims while implementing the accepted socio-religious behavior of the subjects under an Islamic state. However, India, being a land of varied cultures and communities, could never be homogenized. The mystics of medieval India swayed popular imagination and remained influential in propagating the prominence of individual piety. So, when a follower of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya brought fellow infidel for conversion into Islam, the Shaikh advised him to be pious enough in his own life to affect the voluntary conversion of his fellow beings (Faruqi, 2013: 338). Similarly, the Shaikh resented the dominance of Turks over Indian Muslims because the formers were uncultured and slaves (Kumar, 2010: 201). One may come across various incidents that hinted at the struggle between sultans and the Sufis to exert authority within the physical and spiritual realm. Sultans, as the protector of physical territories, many a time felt threatened by the presence of spiritually powerful Sufis and tend to censure their practices and conduct. So, Mubarak Khalji ordered the presence of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya in his court for Friday prayer whereas Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq warned to teach the Shaikh a lesson on reaching Delhi (Ansari and Qureshi, 2013: 107; Zili, 2003: 74-77). In both cases, the *jalal* of the Shaikh resulted in the death of the sultans (Digby, 1990: 72). So how one can understand the concept of monarchy concerning the Sufis whose ideas of *wilayat* (spiritual territory) had continuous contestations with the sovereignty of the sultan. Sultans like Alauddin Khalji were recorded by Barani flouting *shari'at* injunctions. However, the same sultan sought the blessing of the Sufi Shaikh when he did not receive the news of his armies during one of his Deccan expeditions (Auer, 2013: 85-86). Sultan Alauddin Khalji was apprehensive of the rising popularity of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya who might have brought harm to his rule like 'others had brought to the rulers in the past'. The sultan sent a letter to the Shaikh with the declaration that he being only the temporal ruler, must submit before the spiritual excellence (Nizami, 2007: 115). The Shaikh replied that he had no dealing with the material world and he could only pray for the sultan and his subject. Sultan was much relieved with the reply and declared that the Shaikh had no ill will against his rule (Digby, 1990: 72).

On the other hand, both rulers and nobles desired to be buried in the vicinity of the Shaikh Nizamuddin, ensuring their salvation on the Day of Judgment. The sanctity of the *dargah* reached to the point that the Mughals treated it as their royal cemetery, during the reign of Akbar, the remains of Murtaza Shirzi was exhumed from the vicinity of Nizamuddin to punish his heretic activities in Srinagar (Chandra, 2010: 169).

The sultans of Delhi ruled over the majority of non-Islamic subjects. In their quest to bring legitimacy to their sovereignty, a mere theological sanction by Ulema would not have served the purpose. Sufis, on the other hand, with their popularity beyond religious boundaries, could disseminate the ideals of the new Islamic state among the masses. Sufi support was sought with both matrimonial relations and land grants or patronage. Ali Asghar records in the seventeenth century that Bibi Huzaira, the wife of Shaikh Fariduddin was the daughter of Balban (Aquil, 2007: 122). Mohammad Bin Tughlaq married his daughter Bibi Rasti to a grandson of Shaikh Hamiduddin Nagauri (Nizami, 1995: 87). The most favored son of Shaikh Farid participated against Mongol invaders and died in one such battle (Ansari and Qureshi, 2013: 76). Even usurper Khusrau Khan sent gifts to the mystics in Delhi (Digby, 1990: 72-73). Despite Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya's penchant for austerity, he did not refuse the gifts from Usurper Khusrau Khan. Furthermore, Sufi saints also had prominent nobles and scholars under their tutelage. Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya had prominent scholars of Delhi like Amir Khusrau, Amir Khurd and Ziauddin Barani as his disciples. Even the son of Sultan Alauddin Khalji, Khizr Khan was a disciple of the Shaikh Nizamuddin (Digby, 1990: 72). Such was the charisma of Sufi saints that Isami, referring to continuous problems of Delhi Sultanate, asserted that *barakat* (blessings) of saints had left Delhi (Asha, 1948: 456).

Thus, one can find theologians were patronized to ensure the conformity of outward socio-religious behavior of Muslims, whereas the Sufi saints brought legitimacy for the sovereign through their *qaramat* (miracles) and *barakat*. Balban was blessed by Shaikh Farid who prophesied his rise to the throne of Delhi when as a noble Balban showed his concern for imminent anarchy in case of the death of issueless Sultan. Alauddin Khalji was blessed by Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya during his Deccan expeditions. Nizamuddin according to *Qiwam-ul-Aqa'id* bestowed the throne of Delhi on Mohammad bin Tughlaq when he was only a prince, Nizamuddin asked prince Ulug Khan to sit on his cot and asked his attendant Iqbal to address him as a sultan (Nizami, 2007: 131). The Shaikh, similarly, bestowed the throne of royalty on Hasan Gangu the future Alauddin Bahman Shah (Nizami, 2007: 132). Similarly, the success of Lodis was attributed to the blessings of mystics. A Majzub saint Sayyid Abbas was said to have blessed Bahlol Lodhi with Delhi sultanate when the latter offered the saint a donation of sixteen hundred *tankas* (Siddiqui, 1993: 2). Sultan Bahlol (c.1451-c.1489 CE) revered Shaikh Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki. When Delhi was under a sudden attack by Sharqi of Jaunpur, the sultan stood bare feet and bare head before the tomb of Shaikh Kaki to get his blessings for the victory (Siddiqui, 1993: 11). Sikander Lodhi was recorded favouring orthodoxy when he wanted to destroy the sacred pond (Brahm Sarovar) at Kurukshetra (Truschke, 2017: 106). He also imposed a censure on women visiting the *dargah* of Sufis and *mazar* but, at the same time, he shared a dynamic relationship with the mystics and Sufis. *Waqi'at* records an incident in which prince Sikander refused to accept the blessing of victory from a Dervish in the battle against Barbak Khan his brother (Siddiqui: 1993: 25). However, Sikander Lodi visited the Suhrawardi Sufi Shaikh Sama'uddin and sought his blessings before his enthronement to the Delhi sultanate (Siddiqui: 1993: 31). *Waqi'at* recorded that Sultan Sikander Lodi, owing to his virtues and divine qualities, attracted the saints. Thus, Shaikh Hasan, grandson of Shaikh Abu Lala of town Rapri, was attracted to the young prince and paid him an uninvited visit even

when the sultan treated him badly (Siddiqui, 1993: 31).

The Sufis were also instrumental in the process of Islamization. Sufi literature records how several warring tribes converted to Islam under the patronage of Pakpattan, where the descendent of Shaikh Farid acted as the *Sajjadanishin* of the *dargah* (Siddiqui, 1979:3). The shrine received state patronage in the form of land grants and attracted neighbouring Jat clans in sedentary cultivation. The *sajjada* (descendants of Shaikh Farid) known as Diwan were collecting revenue on behalf of the Delhi sultans (Eaton, 2000:220-23). *Jawahir-i- Faridi*, a Chishti *tazkirah* (biography of a saint) of the seventeenth century recorded that the shrine consolidated its while creating matrimonial alliances with the families of influential clan chiefs. The document went on to record around twenty-three clans who had married women of their clan with different *sajjadas*. Both Khokahra and Bhattis, who had created troubles for the Sultanate in its earlier stages, had managed to achieve influential positions in the imperial court through the interventions of the *sajjadas* of the *dargah* (Singh, 2019: 304-05). On the other hand, Ulema, with their abhorrence towards the non-Muslims, could not make rapport with the masses on the scale of Sufis. Thus, Ulema were a necessity to ensure the homogeneity of the Delhi sultanate and perpetuate the power of 'the defender of the faith' even if he became *zalim* and inefficient (Copland, Mabbett and Others, 2012: 92-93). The contribution of the orthodoxy also remained negligible in extending the domain of Muslim brotherhood through conversion. It was Sufis who were important in expanding the tenets of Islam into new areas. Sultans attempted to align the *Sufis* in state-building by bestowing lavish grants on famous Sufi shrines to enroll their descendants or *sajjadanishin* into state nexus. Sultan Mohammad Bin Tughlaq (c. 1326-c.1351 CE) employed Sufi saints and unwilling Shaikhs into imperial services. Barani believed that Muhammad bin Tughlaq desired to fuse the function of the caliph into the office of the sultan (Siddiqui, 1992: p. 153). Shaikh Nasiruddin Chirag-i- Delhi, the head of Chishti *silsila*, was, thus, coerced to take the service of *jaamdar* (keeper of the royal robe) by Mohammad Bin Tughlaq (Zilli, 2003: 80). Sultan Mohammad bin Tughlaq further appointed Shaikh Muizz'uddin, the elder son of Alauddin Mauza Darya, as the governor of Gujarat (Ansari and Qureshi, 2013:145; Singh, 2020: 301). Alauddin Mauza Darya (c. 1281-c. 1334 CE) was favourite grandson of Shaikh Farid and son of Badruddin Sulaiman, the first *sajjadnashin* of Shaikh Farid in Pakpattan. He wielded considerable influence in his region and appointment of his son as the governor of Gujarat was a strategic step to bring the warring clans within the ambit of the state through Chishti intervention. Shaikh Ruknuddin Abul Fateh, the grandson of Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya (the first Suhrawardi saint) was involved in the sultanate affairs to counter the dominance of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya in the spiritual circle of the Delhi. Similarly, Nizamuddin (c. 1285-c. 1335 CE) was appointed Shaikh al Islam by Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq (c. 1320-c. 1326 CE) to issue a *fatwa* against devotional singing (*sama*) in Chishti hospice (Singh, 2020: 322-324).

## Conclusion

Any understanding of the concept of sovereignty as exercised by Delhi Sultan must not override the influence of religious norms. Raziuddin Aquil remarks, 'Thus medieval India witnessed contestation... rulers, nobles, ulama, Sufi and leaders of non-Muslim religious traditions, who deployed a range of resources, from linguistic tropes and religious justifications to personal charisma and brute force, to gain power' (Aquil, 2007: 15). The religious traditions, however, in themselves are not commandments engraved on stone. In Delhi sultanate, one must not ignore the important role played by religious traditions- both orthodox and mysticism- in shaping the ideals of sovereignty. Any sultan needs to profess his submission to Islam and adhere to the etiquettes which did not reject the

accepted social norms of *shari'at*. Any innovation by the sultan could be justified while alluding to the percepts of *shari'athadith* and *ijtihad*. However, the sections of Ulema trained under the state patronage were never allowed to become powerful enough to challenge the state. Their training ensured the unity of Muslim brotherhood and invoking calls of *jihad* or other expedencies helping the sultan to act as the sole arbitrator as the defender of the faith. Ulemas in India had limited functioning as their seclusion from the masses (who were outside the tenants of Islam) reduced their influence in disseminating the idea of sovereign at ground level. The Sufis, with their prominent presence among the masses, brought legitimacy to the state through both regionalization and vernacularization of Islamic mysticism. The hagiographical literature strove to depict a sultan as an agent who worked between the benevolence of Sufi masters and the masses. Thus, the Delhi Sultan emerged as a significant constituent in both orthodox and mystical writings. Such was the success of the Sufis that by the times of the Lodis, Delhi and many prominent urban centers had become focal points of both orthodox and mystical traditions. Success against the opponent and natural phenomenon was recorded as the *baraqat* (blessings) or the *jalal* (anger) of mystical saints.

The condemnation of the Ulema, therefore, remained confined to the heretic socio-religious practices of infidels whereas the contemporary mystical literature continued to highlight the need for the benevolent and humane character of the state beyond narrow orthodox injunctions. Thus, towards the end, it is submitted that the office of the sultan continued to employ both theologians and mystics as the outer stretch of their ideals of sovereignty which gave them enough maneuverability to keep the Delhi Sultanate entrenched among both Islamic and non-Islamic settings.

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## **Questioning the Making and Negotiations of Female Subjects in the Subversive Micronarratives of Motherhood in Select Novels of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni**

ANEESHA PURI

### **Abstract**

*Carefully scrutinising the socio-political currents reveals how a complex spatio-temporal intersection re-invents the institution of motherhood to serve the contingent ideological purpose be it of class, community or country. Examining the Hindu middle-class family as a terrain for physical and ideological reproduction through the practices of mothering and the way these are restructured and reformulated in an era characterised by economic liberalisation and cultural globalisation foregrounds that institutionalised motherhood is a prime site from where to study change and social transformation. What I propose to do in my paper is to analyse the literary intervention that the Indian diasporic writer Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni makes in the dominant twentieth and twenty first century Hindu middle-class discourse of motherhood through the representation of intergenerational and transcontinental bonds between grandmothers, mothers and daughters in her novels- Sister of My Heart (1999), The Vine of Desire (2002), Queen of Dreams (2004) and Before We Visit the Goddess (2016). Banerjee's women characters, often single working mothers, sometimes struggling with their diasporic identities and caught between shifting perspectives created by changes in economics and geographies, gradually come to chart a path for themselves by retrieving motherhood as a source of emancipation, a location of social change, by redefining appropriate terms and conditions and recreating a social structure that can make motherhood a conceivably creative experience. Challenging these dominant configurations destabilises the hegemonic nationalist and diasporic logic which depends on the figure of the 'woman' as a stable signifier of 'tradition'. The idea is to highlight their agency and to challenge the image of passivity that has been so often ascribed to women of the Indian subcontinent in the western discourse and move beyond the dichotomy of victimhood and celebration.*

**Keywords:** Heteronormative, Diasporic logic, Hybridity, Multiculturalism, Mothering, Subversive micronarratives, Liquid modernity, Culinary nostalgia, Emotional economy.

Scrutinising the socio-political matrix reveals how a complex spatio-temporal intersection re-invents the institution of motherhood to serve the contingent ideological purpose be it of class, community or country. Examining the construction of family as a terrain for physical and ideological reproduction through the practices of mothering and the way these are reoriented and revamped in an age dominated by economic liberalisation and cultural globalisation, foregrounds that institutionalised motherhood is a prime site from where to understand socio-political and cultural transformation. An enormous investment in the heteronormative construction of family and the pressure on women to produce sons to consolidate their own position in the patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal set up has underplayed the mother-daughter bond and both nationalist framework and popular imagination celebrate women as mothers of sons to perpetuate the family genealogy. The mother has complete

responsibility but often no power from which to mother. Such “powerless responsibility” to use Adrienne Rich’s term, deprives the mother of the authority and agency from which she could understand her own experiences of mothering. The present paper attempts to analyse the literary intervention that the Indian diasporic writer, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, makes in the dominant twentieth and twenty-first century Hindu middle-class discourse of motherhood through the representation of intergenerational and transcontinental bonds and dialogic relationships between grandmothers, mothers and daughters in her novels- *Sister of My Heart* (1999), *The Vine of Desire* (2002), *Queen of Dreams* (2004) and *Before We Visit the Goddess* (2016). The idea is to draw attention to the emergence of new paradigms of constructions of motherhood and understand them through the framework of contemporary feminist and cultural theories. Banerjee’s women characters, often single working mothers, sometimes struggling with their diasporic identities and caught between the shifting perspectives created by the changes in economic circumstances and geographical locations, gradually come to chart a path for themselves by retrieving motherhood as a source of emancipation, a location of social change, by redefining appropriate terms and conditions and by recreating a social structure that can make motherhood a conceivably creative experience.

Novels of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni destabilise the hegemonic nationalist and diasporic logic which depends on the figure of the ‘woman’ as a stable signifier of ‘tradition.’ The idea is to highlight their agency and to challenge the image of passivity that has been so often ascribed to women of the Indian subcontinent in the western discourse and to move beyond the dichotomy of victimhood and celebration. Women should not be conceptualised only in terms of the east/west binary but should be understood as embodying complex cultural interactions of regional, caste, class and gender affiliations. The paper argues for a need to complicate the axes of fixed point of origin and departure of the diasporic novels and to focus on the layered predicaments and multiple bereavements and partings that occur within the site of the ‘home’ itself.

Conventional Hindu patriarchy celebrates women as mothers of sons. Chitra Banerjee chooses to focus on Bengali Hindu middle class women as mothers of daughters and explores the trajectories of their relationships as they unfold in all their complexities and paradoxes be it in *Sister of My Heart*, *Vine of Desire*, *Queen of Hearts* or *Before We Visit the Goddess*. Banerjee represents the subtle shift in the thrust from the traditional heritage between fathers and legitimate sons, which excludes women, to the transference of maternal legacy among mothers and daughters, making the mother-daughter relationship for the women characters in the select novels, instrumental to their social and creative unshackling. Unlike normative Hindu middle class families where fathers and husbands embody power, the men in Banerjee’s novels, eventually function largely in the background. Mothers negotiate, resist and challenge their own position as guardians of the traditional Hindu patriarchal rules and regulations. The conventional trope for female bildungsroman implying a mandatory separation from the mother gradually gets replaced by an acknowledgement that the mother-daughter bond facilitates rather than obstructs the daughter’s journey towards autonomous selfhood. Motherhood is not naturally, necessarily or inevitably a source of subjugation for women. While the novels are extremely layered in their narratives and foreground a multiplicity of issues that saturate the socio-cultural reality of women of Indian subcontinent, both in their native place and diasporic experiences, this paper attempts to critically analyse the changing dynamics of mother-daughter bonds. Through the reading of the chosen novels, the endeavour has been made to foreground how mothering could be experienced, what the feminist critic Andrea O’Reilly identifies, as a site of empowerment and of socio-political change, if women resist and challenge the patriarchal narrative of motherhood and carve out a space for the development of counter narratives of mothering.

*Sister of My Heart* (1999) and its sequel *Vine of Desire* (2002) narrate the trajectories of Sudha and Anju's lives beginning from their natal matriarchal household, their growth into womanhood and motherhood and separation, when Sudha marries into rural Bengal while secretly harbouring love for the boy who hails from a "lower" caste and Anju joins her immigrant husband in California. Though ideologically indoctrinated by their mothers to be impeccable wives and mothers, the exigencies of lives throw challenges that propel Sudha, Anju and even their mothers to chart forbidden terrains. Always taught to be docile and submissive, however, when Sudha's in-laws force her to abort her female foetus, she flees her in-laws' house and comes back to her natal home. Though initially reluctant to take her back in and worried about tarnishing the prestige attached to their ancestral Chatterjee household, the three mother figures, her biological mother, Anju's mother and her aunt help her settle back and raise her daughter. As the practicalities of living dawn upon them and they sell the old Chatterjee household for a humble dwelling, they not only physically relocate themselves but also become comparatively more liberated from the reins of patriarchal tutelage, mentally and emotionally. Banerjee subtly depicts the gradual transformation in not just Sudha who visibly takes control of her life and sexuality as a single mother but also her three mothers who become more carefree and less worried about rigidly conforming to traditional societal norms of womanhood. The changing ideological mindset attains full bloom when Sudha goes to California with her baby girl to visit Anju, who is grappling with miscarriage and her marriage's downfall due to her husband's attraction for Sudha.

Trapped in the clash of cultures and falling apart of everything they have been taught from childhood, both Sudha and Anju suffer tremendously to break free from the past; complicated and often contradictory emotions contour their passage to liberation and self-sufficiency as they eventually come to find solace in sisterly solidarity. Their tryst with life compels them to reconfigure the agential and experiential dimensions of motherhood and we are offered a glimpse of the possibility of an alternative to the heteronormative nuclear family in the poignant ending of *Sister of My Heart*, "Two women who have travelled the vale of sorrow, and the baby who will save them, who has saved them already" (347). These subversive micronarratives inject new dynamics into the spectrum of conceptual possibilities that have been made accessible in the liminal spaces opened by the contradictory impulses of globalization. As Arjun Appadurai contends, the central paradox of the contemporary globalization is the never ending tussle between cultural standardisation and cultural heterogenisation in an era of rapid change. As the points of embarkation and disembarkation are in a condition of socio-cultural transition, the quest for stable coordinates, as crucial choices are made, can be mind-bogglingly frustrating. Consequently, cultural reproduction in even the supposedly more intimate relationships, have to navigate these ruptured and fissured spatial arrangements. Women in specific are expected to shoulder the burden of this disharmony, for they often become the collateral damage of the domestic politics as they are susceptible not only to the physical but emotional and psychological violence of men who are themselves manoeuvring their way through the labyrinth of newly opened opportunities and ancestral claims in a rapidly transforming spatiality (1996:32-44). The narrative of Anju and Sudha's journey reaches its closure in an open-ended manner and foregrounds that they have finally started "unlearning" of the simplistic dichotomy between the native place and the foreign space and can speculate if not actually concretise, alternatives to the oppressive familial structures that had earlier seemed inevitable. They are poised, no matter how precariously, to embrace the paradoxical rhythms of transcending their native identities without retreating into global sameness given the dangers inherent in the all-pervasive McDonaldization. One hopes that Anju, now that she has

reconciled to her separation with her husband and her miscarriage, will channelise her love for literature and would engage with it at a much more deeper level with a new found understanding about the socio-cultural and political milieu which she inhabits. Whereas Sudha, now that she has emerged out of the guilt framework that has haunted her for the larger part of life, will transmit her life lessons to her daughter and would practice mothering from a much more informed positionality.

*Queen of Dreams* (2004), narrates a tale about Rakhi, a young second generation Bengali immigrant artist and divorced mother living in Berkeley, California, who is juggling motherhood and art in a dizzying world, especially in the wake of 9/11 that has brought new horrors about acculturation. Now, as a single mother, she spends her time running *The ChaiHouse* and bakery with her best friend and pursuing her passion, painting. One cannot deny that Banerjee's portrayal of Rakhi is premised upon the theoretical framework as outlined by Zygmunt Bauman, that the erstwhile conceptualisation of homeostatic culture - that is deployment of culture to perpetuate status quo and reproduction of society as it is, no longer holds true under the pressures of globalisation. The theoretical concept of 'liquid modernity' captures the fluid contemporary form of culture's existence where solid social forms are replaced by impermanent and melting forms to cater to consumer-oriented economies. It is characterised by a belief that every human group is expected to carve a niche for itself in reality's liquid structures and bear the consequences of its choice. However, as Bauman argues, that this very framework overlooks the fact that the representation of multiplying social divisions born of inequality as the inevitable product of free choice, is one of the main reasons for its consolidation (2011:11-13). The refurbishment and transformation of her coffee shop into an Indian snack shop where her father entertains the customers by singing old Hindi classics, is very important to Rakhi because the trusteeship of her daughter depended on her ability to show a viable source of income. Therefore, this Indian snack shop becomes a buoyant signifier in quest for multiple connotations as by intertwining culinary nostalgia with financial exigencies and further making the entire enterprise very integral to Rakhi's experience of motherhood, Banerjee foregrounds how the emotional economy of motherhood cannot be understood by delinking it from the mother's economic state.

Rakhi's mother is a dream teller, born with the ability to share and interpret the dreams of others, to foresee and guide them through their fates. This holds a strange allure for Rakhi but also isolates her from her mother's past in India and the dream world she inhabits. Given the compulsions of her passion for dream-telling, Rakhi's mother keeps her daughter at a distance and does not let motherhood give up her love for dream-interpretation. Rakhi harbours feelings of neglect and has felt like an abandoned child unable to follow her mother in the dream world. Rakhi's comfort comes in the discovery, after her mother's death, of her dream journals, which begin to open the long-closed door to her past in India and which help her come to terms with her mother who did not subscribe to conventional diktats of Bengali middle class motherhood that forbids women to strive for a selfhood outside of and beyond motherhood. Moreover, though Rakhi could not travel in the dream world, her daughter Jona inherits her grandmother's dream-telling talent. The process Rakhi goes through while reconciling with her mother's peculiar lifestyle as a dream-teller enables her not only to understand her daughter but also helps her to recognise and exercise her talent. Rakhi's own style of mothering her daughter Jona can be read to be imbued with a recognition that both mothers and children benefit, when the mother lives her life and practises mothering from a position of agency as she does not regard round the clock mothering necessary for her daughter. She does not look to motherhood to define and realise her identity. Rather her selfhood is manifested and nourished in several ways:

hobbies, work, friendships, relationships and motherhood. She insists on her own authority as a mother and refuses the relinquishment of her power as mandated in the patriarchal institution of motherhood.

*Before We Visit the Goddess* (2016) constantly traverses back and forth in time through memories and shuttles between Bengal and America through intergenerational bonds between the three generations of women; Sabitri, Bela and Tara. The narrative foregrounds the kaleidoscopic emotions that they experience for each other only to retrieve their greatest source of strength in one another when their lives take somewhat similarly painful turns after they are betrayed by the very men they loved the most. Sabitri lives in rural Bengal, India and moves to the city of Kolkata during her youth where her first experience of romantic love with her benefactor's son teaches her a lesson for all the time to come. Her daughter, Bela, grows up in Kolkata and Assam and flees away with her lover to the US and finds herself unprepared for the quagmire that awaits her when her lover turned husband deserts her in the most brutal way. Bela's daughter, Tara, grows up in the US and navigates the labyrinthine American life in her own unique manner, haunted by the choices that her mother has made during her youth and blaming her mother for her dysfunctional life. Her suffering from kleptomania is represented as symptomatic of her lack of regional anchorage and her superficial assimilation in the American culture. While trying to grapple with the unforeseen hindrances life has thrown their way, Sabitri, Bela and Tara forge unlikely friendships with men and women who further facilitate the fostering of their inner potential. For instance, Sabitri forms a close bond with a man named Bipin Bihari who works at her sweet shop in Bengal, Bela forges a deep bond with an American named Kenneth who helps her in coming up with her own recipe book when she was leading a wasted life after her divorce and Tara meets Dr. Venkatachalapathi and Mrs Mehta who function like surrogate parental figures. After the purgatorial experiences, communication gap and misunderstandings, Bela and Tara come to terms with the choices that they have made and foster a new found understanding of each other when they read Sabitri's letters posthumously that tells her side of the story from a fresh perspective. While Bela's recipe book can obviously be understood to be an attempt to construct cultural utopia of her native place but it is significant to foreground that it is not simply a product of stirrings of memory and desire for an elusive native place. Her cook book can also be read as a construction of long-distance dialogue with her mother who embarked upon a similar venture, years ago in Bengal, both for self-actualisation and for making herself finally self-sufficient. While cooking is a very emotional and personalised experience for Sabitri and Bela, Tara does not inherit a similar passion for it and sees it as a chore to get done with. In fact, her relationship with her Caucasian husband Gary is diametrically opposite to that which her mother and grandmother experienced and is predicated on progressive terms and a shared sense of responsibility towards their family. There is an obvious shift and the readers are offered a peak into the termination of what had earlier seemed like an ever ending cycle of familial oppression; there is a beginning of revamped conjugality and parent-child relationship in Bela's relationship with Gary and her son. Rather than viewing Tara's marriage to Gary as a quintessential example of perfect integration of different cultural systems, it is significant to delve deeper to understand the issues at stake and their possible repercussions. Of course, the term hybridity and multiculturalism have become buzzwords in postcolonial criticism, one needs to problematise them and critically assess them depending on the given context in a world characterised by transnational migration and globalisation of culture. Rather than being merely celebratory, this concept of hybridity can be approached without losing sight of the historical and cultural context in which such narratives of cultural exchange happen. While the concept of hybridity can be harnessed for emancipatory and

empowering purposes as it subverts the concept of pure origin through its ambivalence and foregrounds the constructed nature of all identities, it can also be deployed in the service of neoliberalism and commodity fetishism which is reliant on a kind of superficial novelty. But if one recognises hybridity in its limitations, challenges and potential (assimilation and resistance), a zone can be imagined where identities (which are always in a state of becoming) can meet and negotiate open-endedly. For instance, culinary enterprises by women of Indian subcontinent like those of Bela's and Tara's progressive relationship with Gary can be used to talk about the encounters within the heterogeneous components of contemporary nation states and about the negotiations of political and cultural identity by members of migrant Indian communities in contemporary American societies.

These novels offer new frameworks through which one can not only understand mother-daughter conflicts but also anticipate mother-daughter solidarity that can mount an attack on the seeming pervasiveness of the patriarchal family construct. First, the politics of location and its impact on experience of motherhood must be taken cognizance of. The location of the mother figure is to be problematised in both terms of temporality and spatiality. Through the reading of the select novels, it has been tried to show how the position from which a woman chooses or is forced to mother be it the geographical territory or her relative power or powerlessness in the family hierarchy, is important. The power and powerlessness of the woman make up a changing cycle, depending on the social status of her husband, her possession of sons, her fertility, physical appearance etc. The tendency to rigidly dichotomise male and female domains as blocs of total power and total powerlessness ignores the fact that patriarchy operates through far more complicated nexus, which often makes women complicit subjects of patriarchy. As far as geographical location is concerned, as cultural theorists have increasingly argued, that it is important to understand that there can be divergent configurations of location and its repercussions. As the cultural critics, Sara Ahmed et al argue, there is a need to problematise the naturalisation of homes as origins, and the romanticization of mobility as travel, transcendence and transformation. Current discursive analysis tends to valorise movement as the dominant form of social life and individual experience of the contemporary 'global' world of 'flows' and 'liquidity'. One needs to come up with a framework for rethinking home and migration in the context of experience of motherhood and mother-daughter bond in ways that take into account the multiplicity of experiences, histories and functioning of institutional structures and assess how displacement and re-locating are enacted emotionally and economically (2003:2-3).

Secondly, there is a need to recognize the redemptive power of re-discovering and remembering the misunderstood mother by the daughter. Adrienne Rich lamented the loss of the daughter to the mother and the mother to the daughter as the essential female tragedy (1976, p. 237). Mutual understanding and the daughter's ability to reconstruct her mother's identity beyond the trappings of conventional motherhood can set in motion a discovery of connection between mother and daughter that would empower each other. Negotiating motherhood and sexuality sets a precedent for the daughter to not accept claustrophobic mothering practices and rigid gender identities. As the engagement with the select novels have tried to show, the acceptance of mother's sexual identity by her daughter carries immense potential to destabilise the institutionalised notion of motherhood which celebrates and glorifies the mother figure but recoils from her sexuality which is largely a middle-class construct. Similarly, the daughter's ability to recuperate the vulnerability of the mother and deconstruct the logic and the larger problem behind the mother's role of arduous custodian of patriarchal heritage, can usher new paradigms of mother-daughter bonds.

Thirdly and most importantly, motherhood could be seen as a source of emancipation and social change. Subverting the conventional dictates of motherhood resonates with increasing political connotations because Sumathi Ramaswami argues that bourgeois nationalism has reinforced a new sexual division of labour in which man presides over the public realm of politics and power, while woman is put on a pedestal as the anthropomorphised essence of the nation, generally a Hindu goddess and as a consequence of this, caste, class, religious and gender ideologies have come to inter-animate in varied ways, even as the woman is firmly put in her place, in the home, as the mother of sons who would strengthen the nation by supplying the future workforce (2010). Therefore, through the reading of these select novels, the attempt has been to show how the transgressive representations of motherhood mount an attack on the patriarchal imperative of maternal selflessness and martyrdom and embody the very core of feminist ideology - that the personal is political.

Historical evidence bears testimony to the reconfiguration of motherhood across time and space and foregrounds that there is nothing natural and innate about contemporary institutionalised notions of motherhood. The paper can be concluded by re-looking at how the very understanding that the experience of motherhood is a historical construct and amenable to change, imbues it with a sense of possibility of subversion.

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## Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and the Problematic Criminal Justice

AKASH DAS

### Abstract

*Crime and Criminal Justice are two extremes that go simultaneously with the social set up. Crime is a phenomenon that has enrooted itself into the core of human existence. It is an obvious truth that society must encounter. On the contrary, the criminal justice system is a social remedy which serves to pay justice to the victims by ordering punishment to the offenders. Detective stories are the fictional representation of a society that is chiefly concerned about crime and criminal justice. The fictional detective figures usually emerge due to their reasoning, intuition, and scientific observations that methodically establish proper justice under the predetermined legal criteria. However, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, in his works, has deviated from the traditional practices to create a distorted version of justice. This paper attempts to focus on *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, *The Adventure of the Speckled Band* and *A Case of Identity*, as they present three respective definitions of justice that consequently form the problematic criminal justice.*

**Keywords:** Detective fiction, Crime, Criminal justice, Arthur Conan Doyle, Sherlock Holmes.

‘Crime’ usually refers to the activities, which due to social unacceptability are subjected to be punished, guided by legal customs. According to Paul Wilbur Tappan, “Crime is an intentional act or omission in violation of criminal law committed without defense or justification and sanctioned by the state as a felony or misdemeanor” (Tappan: 10). The most obvious truth about the crime is that it deepens its root into the core of human existence. It is a phenomenon that goes simultaneously with the social set up. “Crime, then, is an inescapable truth of human existence as we know it” (Roberson and Birzer:4). It is a social discourse. Just like any object finds its significance only when it associates itself with a particular discourse, any social activity is defined by the predetermined social and legal systems. However, if certain activities cannot be defined by those systems, they are ascertained to form another discourse called crime. There is another possible definition to explain crime. It is simply a state of mind. It is the individual psychological state that is responsible for committing a blunder, and society’s preconceived notions about right and wrong drive us towards an acceptable conclusion about that particular act. Considering the legal systems of contemporary society crime is a category established by the law itself. There are certain legal limitations in the society proposed by the government, and one will fall into the category as a criminal if he tries to violate those limitations.

Crime is a contagious social malady spreading over every sphere of life. On the contrary, the criminal justice system functions as a remedy to control the desperate march of illegal activities. It operates under the legal procedure to control crime. The authority always holds the power to control one’s attempts to commit any unsocial acts by prosecuting him under legal instructions. This delivery of justice to the criminals is called criminal justice. Chiefly the motive of the justice system revolves around to pay justice to the victims by ordering punishment to the offenders. It focuses on “the

criminal law, the law of criminal procedure, and the enforcement of these laws, to treat all persons accused of a crime” (Purpura: 3). The scientific process that determines the exposition of a crime is identified as a criminal investigation. It is a scientific and minute study of criminal cases to accomplish the purposes of the justice system.

Crime and investigation often find their ways through literary texts. The author frames his imaginative exposure with some fictional storylines. But very often those fictional stories become so lively and realistic that they start threatening the readers’ nerves to the utmost level. The crime involves activities of absolute psychological crisis. Therefore, crime fiction affects the mental state and makes the readers plunge into the depth of the story in search of the desired conclusion, an acceptable criminal justice. However, when the plot deviates from reaching that end, it leaves the readers in a dark and mysterious dungeon. That occult mystery sometimes pervades the Moor of the Great Grimpen Mire and sometimes the estate of Stoke Moran. A detective story is the fictional representation of a society that primarily highlights some illegal affairs, while the major concern of the story is to depict an ideal pattern of society by establishing criminal justice. Yet, the author sometimes willingly deviates from the way of traditional ending to draw something unexpected. In one way, it enhances the suspense of the bewildered psyche which partially fulfills the demand of the text being called a psychological thriller. While at the same time, it creates a problematic criminal justice. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle through his engaging detective storylines has several times projected a variety of problematic conclusions that are chiefly reflected through his distorted version of criminal justice. The novel *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and the stories like *The Adventure of the Speckled Band* and *A Case of Identity* devise three respective definitions of justice as the stories reach their conclusions. Probably, Doyle has tried to go beyond the established social norms by discovering the unexplored world represented by crime.

Detective fiction focuses on crime and “a detective collect [ing] information and eventually reveal [ing] who the real criminal is” (Danyte: 8). The emergence of the detective genre lies in the fact that the readers are prone to identify themselves with the detective figure whenever the plot requires solving a mystery. This also relates to the concept of criminal justice, which drives the plot of crime fiction to ensure that justice always prevails with the execution of the criminals. To talk about detective genre one needs to consider the first exponent of the detective story, Edgar Allan Poe. However, Poe’s stories also conclude with a note of ambiguity. *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* is the first-ever detective story in the modern sense and is “the first indication of a new genre, born and nourished in a new era of world history” (Frank: 30). With this story, Poe has introduced his eccentric detective figure, C. Auguste Dupin who is appointed to solve the mysterious murder of Madame and Mademoiselle L’Espanaye who are brutally killed by some intruder in their room. With the gradual progression of the plot and revelation of the mystery, Dupin proves that the criminal is an Orangutan. The story here does not necessarily end to portray any criminal justice since the crime has been committed not by any human being but by a savage creature having no deliberate intention behind the murders. Similarly, in his *The Purloined Letter* there is no presentation of crime for which the accused must be legally condemned. In this case, the offender is rather known to the police officer and Dupin uses his caliber only to recover a stolen letter. The plot essentially refrains from involving any brutal criminal activity and a damned criminal mind being outwitted.

In *Crime Fiction: A Very Short Introduction*, it is said that “the classic crime novel is made up of two stories. Story one usually occurs before the narrative opens with murder or some other criminal act,

while story two involves characters who disclose aspects of story one to the reader, either through their methods of detection or via unwitting revelations” (Bradford: 2). In another way, the detective story is also governed by two motives; explicitly it leads towards the revelation of the crime mystery, while the implicit one aims at establishing justice at the end of the story. In Poe’s stories, however, there is no deliberate attempt to create a frame of justice at the end. The readers are left with a sense of dubiousness. Michelle Miranda also, in her essay, has manifested the languid role of police in Poe’s works: “What does remain consistent in the series of Dupin tales is the attention to the police ineptitude” (Miranda: 5). This indirectly hints at the decline of the established legal system.

This ambiguity becomes more pertinent in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and *The Adventure of the Speckled Band* giving rise to problematic criminal justice. Detective investigation is a part of criminology, which is a thorough scientific process advanced with ratiocination, logical implementation, and legal enforcement. According to Nils Clausson, “Detection is, or ought to be an exact science...and should be treated in the same cold and unemotional manner” (Clausson: 61). *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, however, is not only a detective fiction happening to solve a mystery. The story develops in a situation that chiefly invites a nerve-racking gothic sensation, which is “molded by human nature and fear of the unknown” (Miranda: 2). It not only describes a murder or some murderous attempts by the offender but the murders occur in a place that supplies the spine-chilling horror for the readers. The murder of Sir Charles Baskerville is subjected to mystery primarily because of its association with the supernatural presence. When Dr. Mortimer comes to tell Holmes the entire story, he reads out a letter that conveys the family curse of the Baskervilles. Therefore, from the very beginning of the novel, the readers are introduced with a vivid and terrible description of the supernatural presence. The manuscript narrates the story of Sir Hugo Baskerville’s death by the ghostly hound and it induces the great sense of horror in the readers’ consciousness. Therefore, from the very beginning, it is evident that Doyle has negated the traditional ways to frame his crime narrative. Here Holmes has to fight not only against the flesh-and-blood criminal to uncover the mystery but also has to defeat a supposedly supernatural entity. Hence, from the core of the text, there is a struggle between two extremes: Gothic, the dark premonition of the unknown, and Science, the discovery of the unknown. And out of this dichotomy emerges an obscured version of criminal justice.

Michelle Miranda has commented, “Sherlock can dispose of the supernatural hypothesis and arrive at a conclusion based on science, reason and causality” (Miranda: 9). The story, however, concludes with a strikingly ironic note. Holmes and Watson only assume at the end that Mr. Stapleton may have died in the mire. But science does not rely on mere assumptions, neither does Criminology. Even there is no proof of his death and it also raises grave moral questions. If he dies, it is the desolate moor that causes his death and the death remains mysterious. On the contrary, if he is alive the sense of secrecy sustains and remains undiscovered. Even if Stapleton’s death is recognized, it is not the appreciation of the criminal justice system that draws his execution. He rather dies because of himself. Ravi Kant quite appropriately remarked in his essay, “The images that stick in the reader’s mind from *The Hound of the Baskervilles* are not the detection or the logic with which Holmes unraveled the problem. Instead, we remember the spectral hound, the wild moors, and the old mansion” (Kant 58). The novel in a way sacrifices the logical construction of the plot since the end depicts the triumph of the unknown over scientific discovery.

*The Adventure of the Speckled Band* also in a way complicates criminal justice towards the end. It is

one of the famous locked-room mysteries, which has ever been presented in the history of detective fiction. Here Doyle has followed the footsteps of Poe to frame his crime narrative, having an indirect shadow of *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*. However, unlike Poe's story, Doyle has ameliorated the stature of his detection by introducing a heinous criminal mind, Dr. Grimesby Roylott of Stoke Moran estate. He does not want her stepdaughters, Helen and Julia to get married and be away with their shares of the allowance. This drives him to plot cold-blooded murders of the Stoner sisters. After the suspicious death of Julia Stoner, Holmes starts to investigate and with his proficient ratiocinating skills, Holmes uncoils the venomous reason behind her death, a Swamp Adder. Just like *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, in this story as well, the criminal's inclination in employing the beast to arrange a successful cold-blooded murder is evident. Sherlock wanted to catch Dr. Roylott red-handed but ultimately, he finds him dead. Roylott is hoist by his own petard as the snake out of its wild instinct bites its master to death. Holmes' adventure ends with a positive note as Helen is saved from her impending disaster. Yet again it confuses the justice system. Primarily, it is rather a divine punishment that the perpetrator has received than a legal one. Secondly, this punishment in some way accuses Holmes to be responsible for Roylott's death. Holmes attacks the snake in the darkroom, which awakens its devious temper and it stings back Dr. Roylott. This involves Holmes into an unwitting act of crime. This complication lurks from the supposedly satisfying ending of the story. Law does not promote another crime to solve one and this is not how the justice system functions. Holmes has never intended to conclude his investigation in this way. However, Doyle's treatment of criminal justice in the story might invite criticisms. Therefore, it is satisfactory yet not justifiable.

The third story, *A Case of Identity* presents an altogether different version of problematic justice. This story completely deviates from Doyle's usual propensity to develop a crime fiction plot. Just like Poe's *The Purloined Letter*, *A Case of Identity* does not involve any story of murder or some brutal criminal activities. It is the story of Miss Mary Sutherland and her love affair with some Mr. Hosmer Angel. Mr. Angel is identified with his physical presence, yet this presence does not correspond to any real entity. Holmes's responsibility here is to unveil the mystery behind this complicated identity when Miss Sutherland appoints him to investigate the sudden disappearance of Mr. Angel. The story is far removed from the traditional detective plots since the beginning does not necessarily highlight any criminal activity that the crime fiction usually deals with. Yet, as the mystery gradually reveals itself to find a conclusion, the readers find the disguised secrecy that was meandering over the plot from the start. The case appears so predictable that Holmes does not even step outside to investigate the matter and within a day he finds out the root of that disguised mystery. The overview of the story also presents no legal inclusions that might lead to establishing any criminal justice. However, justice is questioned in an altogether different way. Holmes, in the end, reveals that it was Sutherland's Step-father, Mr. Windibank who disguised himself as Mr. Angel to relish on her property. He entangled Miss Sutherland with his false affection and finally disappeared. Her devotion pushed her back from marrying someone else and fulfilled Windibank's motive. However, Mr. Windibank has not committed any crime that might cause his legal punishment. Doyle, in this story, has portrayed the limitation of the justice system. The level of treachery by Windibank shows the level of moral degradation that a man can descend to fulfill his objective. Yet, the law cannot perform any duty to offer proper justice to someone like Miss Sutherland. Holmes himself refers to the utter failure of law as he regrets that no law can ever touch the criminals like Windibank: "The only drawback is that there is no law, I fear, that can touch the scoundrel" (Doyle: 64). The sense of unfulfilled justice permeates the entire plot when Windibank finally escapes, which significantly highlights the loose ends of legal procedures that

cannot get firm control over some unlawful acts. Holmes, on the other hand, decides to pay justice to the victim in his way by keeping this criminal conspiracy a secret forever. The story ultimately ends with Holmes' anticipation about the inevitable doom of the criminals like Windibank who will be executed someday. However, problematic justice emerges since Doyle refrains from establishing a boundary of justice within the story, and he reaches the conclusion with an empty note of consolation.

According to Munt, "Holmes was based on Dr. Joseph Bell, a consultant surgeon at Edinburgh, but the mythical Holmes transcended his human prototype, becoming a representation of the 'Nietzschean' superior man." (Martonova: 12). Hence the appearance of Holmes, as well as other detectives, is perceived to be superior to normal human weaknesses. Its implication lies in the fact that the detectives are capable of bringing justice. However, the pattern of justice being represented in *The Adventure of the Speckled Band* and *The Hound of the Baskervilles* is moral justice rather than a legal one. No legal issues are found with active participation in the storylines to draw logically acceptable conclusions. The former story ends with a distracted version of the truth that gives rise to another crime in its way to solve one. While the latter partially suspends the scientific process of discovery and the logical strain of thought is overshadowed by the dark apprehension. And in *A Case of Identity*, Doyle has completely desisted himself to convey any kind of Justice, neither moral nor legal. Rather, he emphasizes the limitations of the justice system.

John Scaggs commented on criminology that it is "A sort of chess in reverse if u like. It is all done by induction. You begin with the result and work backward to the causes" (Scaggs: 33). The detective starts from an immediate end and gradually advances backward to the root of the incident. This reverse process is marked with the progress of a scientific investigation. However, Doyle's attempt to portray something different has placed the concept of criminology before a question mark. He has tried to address the discourse that dwells in the subconscious realm of the human psyche. The gothic setting, the supernatural apprehension, the undefined identity and the bestial appearance to a major extent affect our subconscious state. And the subversion made by Doyle consequently compels the readers to think from different perspectives. Holmes, through a scientific journey, has finally reached the causes, but that journey ultimately ends with an ambiguity. Just as the human subconscious state cannot be explored, crime also remains unexplained by the established legal limitations.

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## **Determinants of Spatial Diffusion of Orchards in Himachal Pradesh**

NAVNEET KAUR

### **Abstract**

*Himachal Pradesh is a hill state in north India and the suitable agro-climatic conditions prevailing here have been responsible for the growth of Orchards. These Orchards have contributed positively to the economy of the state and their diffusion has been caused by the various physical, social, economic and political factors operating in the area. Physiography, climate, soils, technology, population and infrastructure are a few important physical and non-physical determinants operating in the state in this regard. These factors influence the kind of fruits that are cultivated in different parts of the State in different intensities. The importance of these determinants comes into light on the basis of the fact that there are variations in the physical environment, which limits the distribution of fruit orchards. But the actual distribution of the same depends on man's willingness and ability to ameliorate physical limits. The variations in the non-physical determinants are to a certain extent in the hands of man. These can be modified according to man's needs and desires depending upon the availability of resources. The capital plays a major role in the modification of economic determinants to a large extent. The retentions put up by the natural conditions can also be minimized by the management skills with the available resources. This paper attempts to evaluate the role of various physical and non-physical determinants which have been responsible for the diffusion of orchards in the state.*

**Keywords:** Orchards, Diffusion, Determinants

### **Introduction**

Fruits in Himachal Pradesh have experienced a spatial spread after 1951. There has been a visible major transformation in the agriculture landscape of the state over the years whereby area as well as production of different fruits cultivated in Himachal Pradesh has increased manifold. There has been a shift from traditional crops to fruits and Himachal has earned the names like 'Apple state' and of 'Fruit bowl' of India.

Apple has always been the dominant fruit grown in the state and has experienced maximize rise in area as well as production. The area covered by apple in 1951 in Himachal Pradesh was approximately 134 hectares which at present is about 11,3154 hectares. However, the other fruits grown in the state too displayed spatial spread whereby the area covered increased from 1449 hectares in 1951 to 1,18,985 hectares lately. However, the physical environment in Himachal Pradesh, has put forward numerous constraints on the diffusion of orchards of some fruits while it has been a boon for the diffusion of some others. The undulating terrain, extremely cold climatic conditions, stony and shallow soils have made the extension of cultivation of orchards quite difficult especially in the higher altitudes. Due to

the uneven terrain, accessibility becomes difficult; hence there is a problem in transporting saplings, chemical inputs, fertilizers to the orchards located at such altitudes as well as disposal of crops to the market. Kinnaur and Lahul & Spiti comprise such areas of difficult terrain. These regions experience cold climatic conditions throughout the year, which become extremely cold in the peak winter months from November onwards till about mid-March, restricting the cultivation of many types of fruits. The soil conditions also pose a problem for planting more of fruit trees. Certain areas of Una, Kangra, Hamirpur and partly Solan suffer from soil erosion. This results in loss of the valuable land present here.

Besides the physical determinants, the non-physical determinants have also impacted on the expansion of fruit growing activity in Himachal Pradesh. The scales of orchard operations vary from region to region and orchard to orchard. This is basically dependent upon the capital investment, management skills of the individual growers, market, orchard size, system of tenure, government policy as well as the infrastructural services such as marketing, size, system of tenure etc.

The infrastructural services such as marketing facilities, transport costs, road accessibility, price incentives have influenced the spread of fruit orchards in Himachal Pradesh. The transport costs are higher in areas of difficult terrain and wherever road accessibility is poor. It is very difficult to maintain orchards in these areas and also problems arise when it comes to disposal of the fruits to the market. The orchard cultivation is an unpredictable venture where by the production is unstable and varies from season to season. In a such situation, the minimum support price gives a big relief to the growers.

### **Data and Methodology**

Primary as well as secondary data has been used in the paper. The primary data has been collected using a well-structured and pre-tested questionnaire through fieldwork by interviewing 100 orchardists belonging to different parts of the state. Secondary data has been collected from the Directorate of Horticulture, Shimla.

### **Determinants of Diffusion of Orchards**

The various determinants of diffusion of orchards have, however, been classified into two broad categories for a better understanding and comprehensive analysis as follows:

(A) Physical Determinants

(B) Non-Physical Determinants

#### **A) Physical Determinants**

The cultivation of any type of orchard crop depends strongly on the physical environment of the region where it is being cultivated. Nature in its diverse manifestations namely soil, water and climate provides man in different areas with a variety of possibilities for development. Thus, the physical determinants would include terrain, climate, soil and water resources (Kaur, 2019: 84).

#### **(I) The Terrain**

The relationship between terrain and orchard cultivation in Himachal Pradesh can be seen clearly in the

following table:

**Table 1**  
**Fruit Zones in Himachal Pradesh**

S. No	Zone description	Elevation range (meters AMSL)	Rain fall (CMS)	Suitable fruit crops
1	Low Hill and Valley Areas near the plains	365-914	60-100	Mango, Litchi, Guava, Loquat, Citrus Fig, Ber, Papaya, Early varieties of Grapes, Jack Fruit, Banana, Low chilling varieties of Peach, Plum and Pear, Strawberry.
2	Mid Hills (SubTemperate)	915-1523	90-100	Stone Fruits (Peach, Plum, Apricot, Almond), Persimmon, Pear, Pomegranate, Pecan nut. Walnut, Kiwi Fruit, Strawberry.
3	High Hills and Valleys in the interiors (Temperate)	1524-2472	90-100	Apple, Pear (Soft), Cherry, Almond, Walnut, Chestnut, Hazel - nut. Strawberry.
4	Cold and Dry Zone (Dry Temperate)	2473-3656	24-40	Apple and Hops, Grapes, Prunes, Drying type of Apricot, Almond, <i>Chilgoza</i> , Pistachionut, Walnut, Hazel-nut.

Source: Department of Horticulture, Himachal Pradesh, Shimla.

There exists a marked altitudinal, zonation of fruitcultivation in the state, according to which four zones of fruit cultivation have been marked (Table 1).

The lowest zone named the Low Hills (365 to 914 meters) is suitable for growing sub-tropical fruits such as mango, litchi, loquat, guava, citrus, papaya etc. Above this zone is the Mid Hills (914 to 1523 meters) comprising of stone fruits, (peach, plum, apricot, almond), persimmon, pear and pecan-nut etc. Further high up is the High Hill and Valleys (1524 to 2472 meters) where apple, pear, cherry, walnut, almond and chestnuts thrive well. The highest of all is the cold and dry zone (2473 to 3656 meters) in which apple, hops grapes, prunes, almond, *chilgoza*, etc. are cultivated.

Clearly, terrain influences the types of fruit that can be cultivated in a particular area, their growth and distribution. It further has three important aspects namely altitude, slope and drainage pattern. These affect the orchard farming in a big way and are responsible for determining the price of cultivation, level of accessibility and flooding.

The higher reaches of Himachal Pradesh have steeply falling cliffs and only the gentle slope or terrain occurring occasionally offer the opportunity to cultivate fruit orchards. The Kinnaur district falls under such a topography and fruits grown are mostly nuts and dry fruits such as almonds, walnuts, dry apricot, raisins etc. Apple is also grown in the area and the fruit is cultivated almost everywhere.

Lahul and Spiti also suffer from such constraints where the agricultural crops over-power the fruits.

The westernmost parts of Himachal Pradesh especially the Una district suffer from the problem of *choes* which bring devastation during floods and large tracts of useful lands washed away. The topography of few parts of the Kangra, Hamirpur and Solan district is such that landslides occur due to the presence of erosional activities. As a result, not many new areas could be brought under orchards. The above-mentioned zonation of orcharding has remained more or less the same over time, indicating the role of physiographic controls in diffusion of orchards in the state.

## **(II) The Climate**

The variations in elevation lead to the presence of diverse climatic conditions in Himachal Pradesh. The altitude ranges between 610 to 6700 meters. The climate varies from tropical to temperate and these variations have resulted in the formation of a variety of climatic patterns in the state. The patterns formed affect the soils, plant growth and fruit production in the state. The hail, drought, rainfall, frost and snow are the important climatic determinants of diffusion of orchards. Hailing has a negative impact on the fruit orchards. The affected crop gets spoilt and goes waste as it is unacceptable in the market. The plum growers of Solan and Sirmaur districts often complain of crop spoilage due to hailing which occurs at an early stage of fruit bearing and when the fruit is nearing the picking process. This particular aspect of climate has adversely affected the diffusion of this fruit in these areas of the state.

The conditions of extreme dryness have a negative impact on the fruits, leading to a reduction in the size; hence very low market value. Drought conditions, if prolonged can even lead to a total crop failure. Such conditions occur some times in the western and southern parts of Himachal Pradesh and very frequently in Lahul and Spiti cold desert. As a result, the expansion of orchards is thwarted in these areas.

It is observed that rain increases from plains in the west to the hills in the east and north according to the relief aspect. The rain shadow effect leads to the decreasing of rainfall beyond Kullu towards Lahul & Spiti and Kinnaur. Lahul and Spiti experience the least amount of rain i.e. below 500 mm. It was reported that the regions of Kinnaur and Lahul and Spiti were not growing the fruits which were dependent on rainfall to a large extent and the drought fruits (dry fruits) were grown here.

Snowfall was sufficient for providing irrigation to the tree crops grown in this part of Himachal Pradesh. Excessive rainfall on the other hand, however, also creates a negative impact on fruit orchards. The peach fruit being the most delicate develops fungus and gets spoilt if packed wet. This is especially true of the central peach growing parts of the state.

The snowfall occurring in winters in Himachal Pradesh is mostly experienced beyond an elevation of 1500 meters, but it does not last long here. Beyond 4000 meters, the snowfall is perpetual. The survey conducted on the apple orchards of the Shimla belt revealed that almost 100 percent of the orchards were snow fed. Among these 100 percent of the sample orchards had no other source of irrigation except the natural snow and rain. The state experiences the lowest temperature in the month of January. The temperatures fall below freezing point in the eastern parts of the state especially Kullu, Lahul-Spiti and Kinnaur. As mentioned before it becomes very difficult to protect the fruit trees in such adverse weather conditions in these regions.

The severe temperature conditions also lead to the shortage of labour force required for performing various orchard operations. This often at times leads to a delay in disposing the fruit hence in lower returns from the market. The fruit regions experiencing warm climate are rich in the cultivation of various kinds of fruit crops. Among these the low-lying regions of Kangra, Hamirpur, Bilaspur, Una, Solan, lower Sirmaur and even Shimla, Mandi and partially Kullu experience optimum temperature conditions. This leads to the cultivation of numerous fruits here ranging from sub-tropical's to temperates.

### **(III) The Soils**

It is believed that fruit cultivation modifies the soils and soils form the base for any orchard enterprise. The soils endowed with a proper combination of texture, structure, salts and humus yield good results. There are a variety of soils required by various fruits grown in Himachal Pradesh. Apple, the dominant fruit of the state thrives best on loam soils, having a good drainage, aeration and balanced nutritivity. These types of soils mostly occupy the central, central- north, central-south and partially eastern parts of the state, where orchards have diffused in a big way during the past few decades.

Among the stone fruits, apricot, almond and cherry require deep, fertile and well drained loamy soil, whereas peach thrives best on sandy, gravelly and clay loams which are fairly fertile. The peach trees do not thrive on water-logged soils.

It was reported that in Rajgarh tehsil of Sirmaur, pear trees are cultivated in the peach orchards in areas where the problem of water logging prevailed. The availability of suitable soils for peach in this tehsil of the state largely explains the maximum extent of diffusion of peach here.

Dry fruits need deep well-drained silt loam, containing abundant organic matter. These types of soils persist in the eastern parts of the state where nuts and dry fruits have strengthened their position. The sub-tropical of the low hills and valley areas require deep, well drained, loamy and fertile soils. The dominant fruits in this category such as mango, citrus and litchi grow best in these types of soil conditions.

Among various soil related problems, which affect the orchards at large, soil erosion is worth mentioning. After survey, it was reported that 50 percent of the orchards in the low-flying areas of the state were suffering from the menace of soil erosion. About 40 percent growers from the higher altitudes suffered from the similar problem and hence they were discouraged to plant more trees in their holdings.

Thus, the physical determinants of terrain, climate and soils have played a dominant role in the diffusion of fruit orchards in the state. This is also evidenced by the analysis of the primary data collected from sample orchards. It has been found that about 30 percent growers of the eastern region reported as suffering from physical constraints. As terrain of this area is very uneven, it has affected the planting of more trees on individual holdings. Around 10 percent growers of the central and western belt also reported this problem. However, nearly 5 percent growers of the south-western belt too reported the same. Whereas in the northern regions very few (1 percent) growers were affected by the factor of difficult terrain. In these areas, the diffusion of orchards has more been influenced by the problems of soil erosion and limited amount of rainfall, rather than elevation.

**(B) Non-Physical Determinants**

Though the physical determinants have played an overriding role in the diffusion process of orchards, yet the influence of the non-physical determinants cannot be under estimated. These have played a contributory role in the spread of orchards in Himachal. The various institutional, demographic, cultural and infrastructural factors combined together furnish the basic material needed for explaining the modifications brought about in fruit culture activities which otherwise are created by the physical forces. The prominent non-physical determinants include technological factors, population, culture and infrastructure.

**(1) Technological Factors**

The technological factors have greatly affected the productivity of fruit crops in Himachal Pradesh. These have been instrumental in making the orchards to come up in many new areas of the state. Assured water supply, good varieties of saplings, chemical inputs, fertilizers and other inputs have been the major contributors in this field.

Assured water supply is very essential in the orchard; be it a natural or a man-made source. The lack or lesser amount than required, leads to lowering of production. Irrigation is an important aspect of fruit cultivation in many parts of Himachal Pradesh. The low-lying areas witnessed an increase in intensity and in sources of irrigation in the form of tube-wells, hand pumps, government and private canals/*kuhls*, government pipeline, lift pumps etc. The orchards in the higher reaches have remained dependent on snow and rain as the only available source of irrigation. It was observed that 100 percent of sample orchards in the sub-tropical low-lying and stone fruit areas had one source of irrigation or the other. However, in the apple belt, about 10 percent orchards are dependent upon a natural source of irrigation other than upon snow falling in winters. The sample growers reported lower yields in correspondence with the lack of assured irrigation.

The use of electrically driven lift-irrigation scheme and tube-wells/bore-wells have increased in Himachal Pradesh. This has provided a boost to the expansion of orchards in Himachal Pradesh especially in the stone fruits and sub-tropical fruits growing areas. This proves the role of irrigation in dispersal of orchards in the state.

Besides irrigation, the high-yielding varieties of saplings, chemical inputs and fertilizers also constitute the inputs of fruit farm technology. Various nurseries established by the government right from early 1950s till the present, have been supplying high yielding plant saplings to the growers. These are of good varieties and are disease free.

Undoubtedly, they grow up to be healthy trees with good quality produce, thus fetching high returns from the market. The Directorate of Horticulture, Shimla and Y.S. Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry, Solan have also been providing good variety saplings to the growers, since their establishment in 1970 and 1986 respectively.

The chemical inputs and fertilizers provided by the government at subsidized rates have been of crucial importance. The application of these inputs in the orchards has increased the production. All the sample growers were reported to have been using these inputs in their orchards and claimed that these brought high returns due to improvement in quality of produce. Sprays as the plant protection chemicals have also been used for combating diseases and destroying pests. These have positively affected the production of fruits.

## **(II) Labour**

The labour derived from humans and draught animals is another input included in the non-physical determinants of diffusion of orchards. It's availability during peak seasons has been the major question with almost all growers in all areas of fruit cultivation. The planting of saplings, spraying, pruning, applying fertilizers, grafting, plucking, carrying, packing, putting stencils and carrying fruit boxes / baskets to the road head, are the various functions performed by the labour force in the fruit orchards of Himachal Pradesh. No wonder the labour force involves the maximum expenditure.

The survey conducted on the orchardists of Himachal Pradesh concluded that in all the orchards, labour was reported as the most expensive input. Expenditure on it was almost double than that on chemicals and fertilizers in 80 percent of the cases and 1.5 times in the rest 20 percent. The family members were involved in performing various orchard operations by about 20 percent of the growers. The migrant labour was being employed along with the local labour by 100 percent apple orchardists of Himachal Pradesh. The practice of hiring migrant labour was absent in the lower hilly areas where only about 30 percent growers recruited the same. Migrant labour was mostly employed during the fruit season in these orchards. The high cost of labour has been reported as a major consideration of most of the sample growers in determining the expansion of their orchards.

Besides the human force, animals have continued to be associated very strongly in transportation of fruits within the orchards in Himachal Pradesh. The mules are quite common in the higher reaches of the state for carrying boxes of fruits from interiors up to the road heads.

## **(III) Population**

The physical attributes of an area become resources only when its people are able to use them. There is a very close relationship between population and land use because it is the people who put the land to various uses.

The population of Himachal Pradesh according to the 2011 census was 6,864,602 persons. It is a moderately populated state of India with a density of 123 persons / km. The migrant labourers from Nepal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh mostly add to the population pressure on the state. The population number increases during the peak fruit season when the requirement for labour is on a rise. The industry of fruit growing generates around 900 lakh man days of employment every year.

The distribution of population is largely controlled by the physical landscape. The lower and mid hills in the state are more populated due to the higher proportion of nearly plain topography. Accessibility is convenient for the people residing in and around such areas. The land area where fruit cultivation has been successful also has a higher concentration of people. The fertile lands or lands appropriate for growing fruits are being utilized by a majority of the people of Himachal Pradesh. The Kinnaur, Lahul & Spiti and higher reaches of Chamba are not one of the major areas producing fruits. It has been analysed that population is very scanty in these areas. On the other hand, Kangra, Hamirpur, Bilaspur, Una, parts of Solan and Sirmaur have a large concentration of population.

The literacy rate of the sample growers of Himachal Pradesh was 90 percent. Among these educated individuals many were post-graduates, maximum number were graduates, followed by matriculates and senior secondary school pass outs. The education was utilized by these growers for gaining knowledge regarding the latest technologies which are being used in orchard farming. The knowledge

regarding the price incentives, prevailing wage rate, kinds of sprays, types of fertilizers to be used come only to the educated growers like the ones found in the sample.

Closely related to it is the living standard of the growers of the state. The regions with high productivity have provided the growers with high income. The study revealed that in Himachal Pradesh all the 100 sample orchardists who have shifted from food crop growing to fruit crop growing, have experienced an improvement in the standard of living. The homes of these growers are now more spacious, properly ventilated and comprising of modern furniture, utensils and amenities such as Led T.V. sets, microwaves, refrigerators etc. These growers are still in the race for purchasing more household items and are now spending a much larger proportion of their savings on the education of their children.

The population characteristics have expedited the process of spatial diffusion of orchards. The improvement in literacy rate helped the grower to gain better awareness about carrying out orchard related activity. Also, educated growers implemented latest technologies in their orchards. The rational use of inputs and fertilizers done by an educated grower certainly has a positive impact on the production of fruit.

#### **(IV) Cultural Factors**

The cultural factors are also important determinants of diffusion of orchards in Himachal Pradesh. Under these factors the ownership of the land holding and fragmentation are mainly considered.

The orchards in Himachal Pradesh are largely owner operated. However, in some cases the ownership is also joint. Eighty percent of sample orchards are operated by the growers themselves while the rest 20 growers have leased out their orchards on contract. There are also growers who have kept permanent labourers for performing various orchard operations and are absentees themselves. The profits earned by these growers are lesser as compared to the ones earned by the growers who operate their orchards themselves.

The orchards, like the farms agricultural crops are fragmented into many parts. It was observed that a majority of sample orchards were fragmented into as many as five parts of different sizes. In a number of cases these had two to three separate parts. Only 10 percent of the orchards consisted of one single fragment. Such a high fragmentation is largely ascribed to the uneven terrain which controls the availability of favourable areas for establishment of an orchard. The management of these small and scattered pieces of land is a very difficult task and the scope of mechanisation of fruit cultivation in Himachal Pradesh is restricted by these. The extra labour force is required for keeping a vigil on the scattered orchard. The fragmented orchards prove detrimental to the expansion of orchard. It increases the cost of cultivation of the fruit. Also, the owner occupying orchards have been found to be fetching higher profits.

Such orchards have enabled the farmers to shift from grain crop farming to fruit crop farming, resulting into diffusion of orchards.

#### **(V) Infrastructural Services**

Infrastructural services comprise of the whole system of basic services and training establishments provided by the government, public and private agencies. The framework of infrastructural fruit

culture services in Himachal Pradesh consists of transport facilities, Progeny- cum Demonstration Orchards in the public as well as private sector, setting up of processing and marketing corporation, fruit canning units, fruit plant nutrition laboratories, nurseries etc.

Transport has been the most important in infrastructural determinant of diffusion of orchards in Himachal Pradesh. The development of road network over the years has increased the efficiency of transporting the fruits to the market. That is why most of the orchards could be established in close proximity to motorable roads, State and National Highways. The density of road network varied from region to region overtime. It was reported that 95 percent of the fruit orchards were located within a distance of 5 kilometres from the motorable road. Their produce, obviously was transported by road. However, 5 percent of sample growers reported use of railways for the purpose. The government has been spending half the amount allotted to it under various plans on the maintenance and extension of road length in Himachal Pradesh. Many villages have been linked by link roads and development in this regard is continuing.

The government also established Progeny-cum-Demonstration Orchards /Nurseries in all the districts of the state of Himachal Pradesh. The state now has 113 such orchards. These provide saplings to the growers and give demonstrations with regard to the performing of various orchard operation. Besides, there are about 836 private registered nurseries which produce saplings. New nurseries are also being established in the lower hills for propagation of sub-tropical fruits.

The establishment of 354 plant protection centres in different fruit growing regions of the state serve as supply/sale centres for plant protection chemicals and equipment and extension units for the dissemination of technical information to the local farmers. These centres are acting positively in the process of diffusion.

Further, the establishment of Himachal Pradesh Horticultural Produce Processing and Marketing Corporation (HPMC) in 1971 opened new vistas for marketing of orchard produce (Azad, Swarup & Sikka: 84). It has established a chain of Packing House, at Gumma, Rohru, Jarol-Tikkar, Oddi, Bhunter and Patlikuhl, Grading Houses at Rajgarh, Chindi, Rekong Peo and Chilchowk. Cold Storages in producing area at (Gumma, Rohru, Jarol-Tikkar, Oddi and Patlikuhl). At present HPMC has established Cold Storages in terminal markets at Parwanu, Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai. It has Transshipment Centres, Canning Units and Sales Offices in all the principal fruit markets of the country. Since the shelf life of the produce stored in these increases, these played a notable role in encouraging the earlier growers to bring more area under fruit cultivation and also the potential adopters to adopt this activity.

Fruit canning units are functioning in Department of Horticulture in different districts i.e. Naubahar (Shimla), Nagrota Bagwan (Kangra), Shamshi (Kullu), Dhaulakian & Rajgarh (Sirmour), Nihal (Bilaspur), Reckong Peo (Kinnaur) and Rajpura (Chamba) of the state. The canning units of Rajgarh tehsil proved especially beneficial for diffusion of peach. The state has now 8 fruit canning units that provide community canning services.

Further, H.P. Horticulture development project is being implemented in the state (2016-17 to 2022-23) with assistance of Rs.1134 crores from the World Bank. The focus is on increasing the productivity of fruit crops, profitability and access to market for fruit growers. About 7.50 lakhs of plants of different varieties have been imported so far.

The political policies of governments of Himachal Pradesh from time to time have always been in favour of the apple orchardists. Support prices have been- given to the growers by the government from time to time. They have been given special subsidies in case the crop gets spoiled due to adverse weather conditions or apple scab disease. The orchardists of the apple belt got elected and held important berths in the government. They have made notable contribution to the development of orchards in the state. The political leaders representing the state at the centre are now favouring the imposition of import duty on apple to save the interests of growers due to imports of apple from other countries.

### **(VI) Marketing**

The present marketing system prevailing in the state has developed over many years. It is almost a private sector operation with partial involvement of the government. The orchards are often given on contract by the owner (Azad, Swaroop & Sikka:94-95). But generally, the contract is only for one season and the amount is mostly paid in two installments. The contracts are normally finalized in the month of May or June. This is done basically to avoid hassle arising out of labour shortage and unpredictable weather.

It has been noted that Delhi is the main market for disposal of fruits of Himachal Pradesh. About 80 per cent produce from the peach belt, 70 percent from apple belt and 30 per cent from sub-tropical belt is sold at the Delhi market. Some part of the produce finds its place in the markets of Punjab such as Khanna, Morinda, Ropar etc. A little part is sold even within the state itself. HPMC is also making Himachal Apples available to world community through exports. The quality of Himachal Apple meets the entire export standards. In the past HPMC has exported quality apples to Iran, UAE, Sri Lanka, Singapore and U.K. Fresh apples are available from August to November on firm demand.

The commission agents have a dominant position in the market and the entire fruit crop is sold to these people. These agents are capable of exploiting the not so aware growers. The small growers suffer the most and at times they have to bear heavy losses instead of profits while selling their produce. There is, therefore a need to strengthen the marketing system by creating co-operative societies which are particularly of help to small growers thus helping them to earn profits.

Thus, various non-physical variables have also acted as determinants of diffusion of orchards in the state. The increased use of better technology such as chemical inputs, fertilizers, good varieties of saplings and irrigation, have been responsible for the spatial diffusion of orchards to a large extent. These aspects increase the productivity of fruit crops. The population of an area affects its land use to a great extent. The fruit rich areas in Himachal Pradesh are more populated than the areas like Lahul & Spiti which is not known for any type of orchard farming.

The government agencies, transport, markets and political factors have also contributed to the diffusion of orchards in Himachal Pradesh.

### **Conclusion**

Nature in its diverse manifestations such as physiography, climate and soil offers in different areas completely different possibilities to which man cannot think himself superior. Even the slightest modification would involve huge costs. The marked differences in the physical conditions within an area gives an explanation as to why in most regions fruit crop farming is becoming complex day by day.

The land cultivated is directly related to the physical environment which affects it in a number of ways. Rainfall and temperature are two such factors which have the maximum impact on the economy. The terrain, climate and soils are the essential physical determinants operating in every orchard site. The terrain is un-even in the eastern regions of Himachal Pradesh hence resulting in poor accessibility in the area. The climate also determines the spatial spread of orchards. Extremely cold temperatures are experienced by the upper areas of the state where fruit trees are planted on a limited scale.

In Himachal Pradesh, ridges and slopes are mostly occupied by temperate fruit orchards where clay and sandy loams are prevalent. The low-lying areas grow sub-tropical. Alkaline soils where ever prevalent do not allow any crop to grow. The problem of soil erosion, *choes* and landslides leads to wastage of land which could otherwise have been put under fruit crops.

The non-physical determinants, also have affected the spread of orchards in Himachal Pradesh. The technological factors, population characteristics, market, transport and government agencies have displayed their impact from time to time. Irrigation, chemical inputs, fertilizers and sprays that form a part of the technological factors have contributed positively to the dispersal of orchards to many new areas. Labour has been a very crucial part of orchard cultivation in the state. There are areas, especially the higher reaches, where the migrant labour is quite relevant whereas the low-lying plains mostly involve local labour. Humans and animals both are being utilized for transportation of fruit within the orchards. Further, the population characteristics involving the growers of Himachal Pradesh show that the population pressure is maximum on lands where, fruit orchards have concentrated. The growers are able to educate their children and are experiencing an improvement in the living standards. The educated growers having adequate knowledge of the prevailing market prices, wage rates of the labourers, sprays and fertilizers required in the orchards could utilize the same and hence helped in diffusion of orchards. Besides, the various subsidies provided by the government could be utilized properly by these growers.

The cultural factors, including joint/single ownership and land fragmentation have also played their own role. The orchards are largely operated by the owners while some are being operated by tenants. A large number of orchards are fragmented due largely to uneven terrain.

The infrastructure has also been of utmost importance. The availability of roads in the entire state and concentration of these in rich apple belt and sub-tropical lands has led to an efficiency in the disposal of fruit crops. These have enabled the growers to market their produce at far off places such as Delhi, Mumbai etc. The research stations and nurseries established by the government have been useful in providing good variety saplings resulting in higher production.

Finally, political factors have also played an important role in the spatial spread of orchards. The politicians own apple orchards in the prominent apple belt of Himachal Pradesh. These politicians while in power contribute greatly to the uplift and development of the apple belt, hence acting as positive determinant of orchard diffusion.

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## Secularism: Gandhi's Critique of Religious Intolerance

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### Abstract

*Secularism is a term having different connotations in India from the Western world. It is primarily developed within a religious context in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century as a part of the enlightenment movement. The conflict between religious faith and human reason led to the emergence of the modern ideology of secularism. The ideology emerged as a social and political movement. It intended to establish an autonomous political and social sphere as opposed to the religious sphere, while emphasizing free thinking independently of religious dogmas, separation of religious institutions from political affairs and separation of human reason from religious faith. The notion becomes debatable among the socio-political-religious theorists. The paper intends to study the notion of secularism in Indian context from the perspectives of Gandhian Philosophy.*

**Keywords:** Secularism, Sarvadharmā sambhava, Religious tolerance, Ethico-religious principle, Secularism, Communal harmony.

*In the India for whose fashioning I have worked all my life, every man enjoys equality of status, whatever his religion is. The State is bound to be wholly secular. I go so far as to say that no denominational, educational institutions in it should enjoy State patronage (Rao, 2008: 394).*

### Introduction

Secularism in the West primarily developed within a religious context in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century as a part of the enlightenment movement (Madan, 1998:10-12). The conflict between religious faith and human reason led to the emergence of the modern ideology of secularism. The ideology emerged as a social and political movement. It intended to establish an autonomous political and social sphere as opposed to the religious sphere while emphasizing free thinking independently of religious dogmas, separation of religious institutions from political affairs and separation of human reason from religious faith.

Secularism did not reject religion completely yet it was sought “to bind within the limits of reason alone (Kant) as natural religion (Hume, Locke, et al.) rejecting ‘revealed’ religion and a transcendental justification for religion” (Madan, 1998:10-12), to displace from the centre of life to its periphery, to rely on human reason, to give a scientific explanation of events rather than to recourse to religious faith and otherworldly or the sacred things beyond, to confine here and now.

Secularism focuses on the primacy of human reason and the growth of science. It attempted to construct a rational explanation of the universe based on science and experimental knowledge. The secular view aims to avoid any extreme, authoritative, exclusive and totalitarian outlook that hamper the growth of man's scientific temperament. It seeks to strike a balance between man's religious lives

with that of public life. It was not formulated in the sense of equal respect to all religions as it is understood in the Indian context.

### **The Place of Secularism in India**

In a country like India where culture is deeply rooted in ethico-religious values and philosophy is intensely spiritual due to pervasive influence of religion, the term secularism is interpreted in religious terminology as equal respect for all religions– “*Sarvadharmā Sambhava*”. In India, secularism as equal respect to all religions is not a new concept. It is inherent in the country’s ethos and culture. For instance, some of the secular elements were even found in the socio-political programmes and policies of King Akbar (Sen, 2005:16-21).

In a multi-religious society like that of India secularism is important as State and citizens can be brought in a democratic framework despite the diversity of religions. Amartya Sen pointed out two principal approaches to secularism that is neutrality between different religions and the prohibition of religious associations in State activities (Sen, 2005:19). In a secular State, all religions are placed on the same footing. No religion is given the status of superiority or inferiority through official endorsements. Secularism in Indian context has to be understood in a multi-religious framework, wherein the nature of the relationship between the State and the diverse religions are such that there is equal respect for all religions by the State – an imperative to bring national unity amongst the diversities without any discrimination of caste, creed, and language.

The concept of secularism in the Indian context is often paradoxical concerning its use and actual practice. T.N. Madan referred to secularism in India as a ‘multi-vocal word’, and he writes, “What it means depends upon who uses the word and in what context. There is, therefore, no single or straight answer to the question as to why Secularism in India has run into difficulties” (Madan, 1998:235). Secularism requires deep religious understanding and the cultivation of religious tolerance. In the absence of this, the dream of a secular and rational society would remain a far-fetched one. The Indian model of secularism is different from that of the Western model. Secularism in the West is defined in terms of separation of State and religion, secular and sacred and is associated with the growth of reason and scientific temperament towards man’s material progress. While in India religion remains a pervasive component in the society, where spirituality forms a part and parcel of the Indian ethos, secularism is defined in the sense of non-interference or non-discrimination and protection of one’s faith on the part of the State and showing equal respect to all religions on the part of its citizenry. Some instances of religious unrest have caused serious damage to the secular fabric of our country and the spirit of national integration. These not only threaten the religious life of an individual but also the cultural fabric of the nation. The pertinent question here is how to counter the challenges posed to religious tolerance by extremist elements that have surfaced across all religions.

The issue is to safeguard the principle of religious tolerance from political vested groups, and how to meet the challenges caused by religious intolerance. If a way out is not found out then the concept of inclusive communal harmony would remain a far-fetched idea. It is in this context that one needs to look at Indian secularism from the Gandhian perspective through the angle of his conception of religion and morality to deal with challenges to secularism and the questions of religious intolerance. As long as atrocities and acrimonies in the name of religion continue to take place in the country, the secular democratic credentials of India would be questioned. One of the ways to come out of this dilemma is to show real commitment to political activities, in Gandhian sense which is service and

sacrifice for the good of humanity. Only then, the principle of secularism would be able to attain its full potential in India, and social tensions, unrest, violence, communal riot will vanish from the soil of India.

### **Gandhi's Understanding of Secularism**

Gandhi was often regarded as the spiritual father of Indian Secularism (Madan, 1998:235). He pleaded for peace and communal harmony in the spirit of service, unity and love of mankind. He attempted to bring cultural unity and promotion of religious tolerance through his understanding of religion. At a time when India was under British rule and communal tensions between Hindu and Muslim were in its peak, Gandhi felt that it was his duty to act in such a way that he did not side with any community. Rather he encouraged the Hindus to appreciate, tolerate and show reverence to religions other than his own. His approach was experimental and scientific. Through the medium of religion, Gandhi wished to bring a transformation in India's consciousness towards the attainment of *swaraj*. In the process, he intended to reconcile "the old religious consciousness and the new civic consciousness" (Anthony, 2009:xvi-xvii) in such a way that religious consciousness goes along with the secular civic consciousness. He wanted to bring reconciliation between the purely religious life and the secular world view in public life. In his life, he had encountered numerous conflicts of communal nature. Given the pervasive and diversity of religions in Indian society, he knew very well the dangers of mixing religion with the State as a law enforcement agency. Thus, he wanted independent India to be secular and democratic.

Gandhi says "if I were a dictator, religion and state would be separate. I swear by my religion. I will die for it. But it is my personal affair. The State has nothing to do with it" (Gandhi, 1946: 321). He clearly stated that the State should confine only to secular welfare while religion should remain as personal affairs. He was deeply concerned with the maintenance of inter-religious harmony. He believed that this could be achieved only when there is equal respect for all religions. To show equal respect to all religions he emphasized the virtues of tolerance, selfless service and love in his conception of religion. He focussed on the principle of religious tolerance and inter-religious understanding for a secular, harmonious and rational society. Although he had an unshakable belief in God as all-pervading and infinite, and even cherished the kingdom of God in his heart, he did not go for a theocratic state. He preferred a secular state and considered religion as a personal concern.

According to him, religious affairs should remain confined to an individual personal domain and the State should concentrate on secular affairs in the public life for inter-religious harmony. He states, "it must be a matter of pride to us, whether we are four-anna Congress members or not that we have in our midst an institution without a rival which disdains to become a theocratic state, and which always believes and lives up to the belief that the State of our conception must be a secular, democratic State, having perfect harmony between different units composing the State" (Rao, 2008: 396).

The principle of secularism is intended to regulate the lives of the people in the public domain irrespective of the cultural differences. What is important to explore here is that on the one hand, Gandhi talked about the intimate relationship between religion and politics while on the other hand, he said that there should be a separation between religion and state; that he opted for a secular, democratic State. This appears to be inconsistent. It is pertinent to examine what Gandhi meant by secularism and the place of religion in public affairs, as to how his religious outlook in life and his thinking on secularism would go together.

Gandhi's understanding of secularism was different from the Western pattern. Parel observes that Gandhi was apprehensive that if India adopted the Western pattern of secularism then it would undermine the very idea of religion itself (Anthony, 2009: 42, 2008:116). Gandhi intended to show that there is a moral link between contemplative life and the modern secular life as it was lived in the fields of economics and politics (Anthony, 2008: ix). There are three things that Gandhi seemed to have in his mind when he talked about secularism.

1. Religion not divorced from politics.
2. Equal respect for all religions.
3. Separation of State and religion.

### **Religion not Divorced from Politics**

For Gandhi, religion encompasses the whole of life and all life's activities derive their sources from religion. He conceived religion as the foundational basis of all life's activities. The true spirit of religion manifests in all aspects of our practical lives – socio, political, cultural and economic spheres. Political life is not independent of the religious life of a man. Political life is a life of service, sacrifice rendered for the good of humanity. This service to humanity is part and parcel of man's religious life, his quest for truth, order and harmony. Gandhi believed man's life as primarily a religious one, striving relentlessly for truth. Hence, taking part in political activity becomes imperative in the quest for truth.

For Gandhi, to be a religious being means being bound to truth. To be bound to truth means to tread on the path of non-violence. And to be non-violent is in a positive sense to be able to love and serve humanity. While in the negative sense, it is not to cause any harm to others in thought, words and deeds. Thus, to be religious is to be pure and sincere in one's dealing with fellow beings. To lead a religious life means to be actively involved in those activities which are for the well-being of all. Politics is one such area where one could participate actively in the service of humanity. In other words, politics is a logical extension of his religious world view. Gandhi wished to have a transformed society which is founded on the twin principles of truth and non-violence. He developed his social, political and economic constructive programmes based on these two principles. For him, the country's *swaraj* is one of his primary concerns.

As he writes, "my national service is part of my training for freeing my soul from the bondage of the flesh. Thus considered, my service may be regarded as purely selfish. I have no desire for the perishable kingdom of earth. I am striving for the Kingdom in Heaven which is *Moksha*" (Gandhi, 1924:114). Gandhi had no interest to take an active role in the actual governance of the country as he left these tasks to others and he did not use his political power to create an India for himself. Thus, for Gandhi, all political activities are rooted in his religious outlook. He took part in politics with an immovable faith in God, with a sense of duty and sacrifice. He never considered religion as an obstacle in public life.

Gandhi's understanding of politics had a very deep spiritual content. He did not conceive politics as a struggle of power and domination over others. Rather, he conceived politics as service and sacrifice rendered to humanity in the quest for truth and freedom. He offered harmony between politics and

spirituality. As Parel observes, “that is to say, the maintenance of the relationship between the spiritual and the political may not lead to the establishment of state religion, persecution, tyranny or theocracy of any kind. On the contrary, the harmony between the political and spiritual is possible only in a free society—a civic nation presided over by a secular constitutional state. The spirituality that Gandhi has in mind has nothing to do with sectarianism coming from any quarters. Any spirituality that promotes justice, non-violence and peace is compatible with Gandhian politics” (Anthony, 2008:197).

What he strongly condemned is the politicization of religion, the use of religion for petty personal gain. He wanted that religion should remain as religion. Greatest harm would occur to mankind when religion is used to serve political ends in the hands of political parties, and when used as a tool to manipulate politics, to grab political power or just to garner votes. Thus, for Gandhi religion and politics in the sense of service are inseparable. To him, religion does not mean mere rituals or professions of a set of doctrines and dogmas but the moral dimensions, the spiritual discipline, the inner strength, its basic universal values. It is this consideration of religion that politics is intimately grounded on.

### **Equal Respect for All Religions**

Gandhi conceived religion as something that has evolved out of us, inherent in human nature. He considered life as a relentless pursuit of truth. In this journey, the diverse religions offer external assistance to awaken the religious instinct in man in the forms of rites, rituals, dogmas, creeds, etc. But these external aids are secondary. What is primary is one's intense commitment to the interior journey of truth realization. It is to do with the way one lives, not what one merely believes, something to be practiced in one's life. Thus, for Gandhi religion is not merely believing but living under the principle of truth—to be consistent in thought, word and deed, to maintain personal integrity, to be able to love and respect others way of life, to be tolerant of the differences, to cultivate goodwill to all. Thus, this understanding of secularism is an extension of his religious outlook towards life.

Gandhi envisaged for a society that provides room for equal reverence to all religions where the State confines itself to secular matter and abstains from interference in the religious life of the people. He believed that true religion is concerned with altruistic attitude—purity, justice, truth, non-violence, love and respect. Thus, his conception of religion involved equal respect, acceptance and understanding as part and parcel of man's spiritual journey. He conceived the diversity of religions in terms of inter-religious understanding and mutual respect through the cultivation of tolerance, appreciation of the commonalities and acceptance of the differences. The spirit of fraternity, solidarity amongst all people transcending the barriers of caste, creed, language and reason could be maintained only when the principle of tolerance and equal respect is maintained. Acceptance of variation of religious beliefs and practices, a tolerant pluralistic approach as deeply ingrained in the history of Indian culture should be respected. Any attempt either to rewrite or re-invent the history of Indian culture in favour of any particular religious traditions would adversely affect Indian secularism. India is home to varied religions and there is diversity in every aspect. What is unique to India is the synchronization of these diversities and respecting the differences.

Margaret Chatterjee had raised doubts about the workability of secularism in Gandhian sense in present-day India. She writes, to expect the rank and file to have equal respect for their own and others' religions is to ask a lot, for even within the same religious tradition there can be radical diversities of belief and observance. Gandhi seemed to expect a degree of human development which even today is still far from us (Chatterjee, 2013:164).

Gandhi's conviction of the essential equality of all religions at the fundamental level enabled him to uphold the notion of equal reverence to all religions. He emulated all the good qualities found in all religions into his conception of religion and morality and translated these ethical ideas into practice in his personal life as well as in all his social dealings. What is significant is how he extended the principle of tolerance and mutual respect which are basically Hinduism in essence to the larger context. Gandhi by interpreting secularism in terms of equal respect for all religions wished to unify Indian society for a bigger national cause of attaining *swaraj*. Thus, with an effort to create a cordial and peaceful environment he interpreted secularism as *Sarvadharmā Sambhava*, which seeks to promote harmony, solidarity and peaceful co-existence amid diverse religious faith.

### **Separation of Religion and the State**

Gandhi did not believe in the State religion even when the whole community had one religion. He did not welcome the State interference in one's religious life. To him, religion is purely a personal matter. He believed that in reality there are many religions, there are different conceptions of God and different modes of expression of one's relation to God. His thought on secularism in terms of separation of religion and state, is also a logical extension of his religious outlook, in conformity with the spiritual process in the quest for truth realization. He opted for a secular democratic State where its task is to ensure that man's religious life is protected and to confine its jurisdiction to secular matters. It is not in the sense of keeping all religious considerations away from the State's purview. Rather it allows one's freedom and choice in religious life. The State confines its task as law enforcement institute only and only to secular activities in terms of public welfare, health, communication, etc.

Concerning this, Gandhi conceived religion in the sense of an institution, one which is defined by certain socio-historical, cultural context. Here, his secular outlook is that the State and religion should be kept separate. The State should maintain neutrality in the religious matter and ensure the peaceful co-existence of all religions. He considered religion as a personal affair, something that evolves out of man's inner being. He did not entertain the idea of a state-sponsored religion or a theocratic State. He writes, "I swear by my religion, I will die for it. But it is my personal affair. The State has nothing to do with it. The State will look after your secular welfare, health, communication, foreign relations, currency and so on but not my religion. That is everybody's personal concern" (Tendulkar, 1991:223). Thus, other than *Sarvadharmā Sambhava* by secularism Gandhi seemed to have also the following things in mind.

- Separation of religion and the State
- Neutral attitude on the part of the State in the matter of religion.
- Ensuring peaceful co-existence of all religions by the State.
- Confinement of the State's purview in the secular welfare of the people.

Thus, secularism works in two ways—one is in terms of non-interference in religious affairs by the State, such that the State focuses on the secular welfare of the people. Secondly, there should be non-discrimination of people by the State on grounds of religion, caste and creed. The State as a law enforcement institution should ensure that fundamental human rights are safeguarded irrespective of religious affiliations. His thought on secularism is to be understood in the context of the diversity of

religions. To Gandhi, the conception of religion is a socio-cultural entity with a set of doctrines, dogmas, rites and rituals. When Gandhi talked of secularism, he had in his mind the nature of the relationship between the State and the diverse religious faiths.

He was very clear that any rule of law should be based on truth and there should be equality and justice. By secularism, he meant equality in the eyes of the law that every single individual would be free to pursue his or her religions without let or hindrance so long as it does not transgress the common law (GOI, 1958:112). It implies that every single citizen has the freedom to worship or profess any religion without posing any hindrance to the political life of the country. As Gandhi writes, "I do not believe that the State can concern itself or cope with religious education. I believe that religious education must be the sole concern of religious associations. Do not mix up religion and ethics. I believe that fundamental ethics is undoubtedly a function of the State" (Tendulkar, 1991: 340).

Gandhi contends that in a multi-religious country like India, the State should have a minimal role and remain secular. The State should not be identified with any particular religion. That is why Gandhi favoured a secular democratic State over a theocratic one. However, this did not amount to undermining anyone's religious outlook. Rather, it is intended to bring a balance between the secular and the religious world-view. Secularization as a process is a mark of man's emancipation from the domain of dogmatism and irrationality, not necessarily from religion and faith as such. For faith is the basis of religion and inseparable from life.

Gandhi's thinking on secularism, however, has certain misgivings. As Margaret Chatterjee questions, "was secularism a cloak for Hindu domination?" (Chatterjee, 2013: 162). Gandhi never intended to establish a Hindu Raj or Hindutva. Though he talked of Rama Rajya which basically is a Hindu concept, by Rama Rajya he did not mean Hindu Rajya. He conceived it only as a model of an ideal society. By Rama Rajya, he did not refer to the historical Rama. He meant only the establishment of peace, justice and moral authority. Though he used many such Hindu concepts, he neither intended to impose Hinduism nor did he propagate Hinduism. He was only employing those concepts as a model for the good of mankind in general.

Gandhi's understanding of secularism is in terms of religious tolerance and equal respect to all religions. He developed this line of thinking from his exposure to the essential teachings of the principal religions of the world. He sacrificed his life for the cause of communal harmony and unity of the nation. He appealed to the people to establish relationships based on love, sacrifice and trust irrespective of their differences in religious affiliations. Despite being deeply rooted in Hindu religious traditions, and a *Sanatana Hindu*, his outlook remained rational and liberal. He neither wished to impose the essential teachings of Hinduism upon others nor did he encourage people of other faiths to convert to Hinduism. Rather he encouraged people to be faithful adherent to their faith and show equal respect to all religions.

The ideal of secularism does not permit any kind of coercion or imposition of one's religious practice over another. It implies that there is a law in the public sphere over and above the religious matter that does not permit any injustice to be done to the man in the name of religion and to enforce one's religious practice on those who do not share that religion (Rao, 2008: 97). He considered religion not as a dogmatic belief system but as a matter of rational choice that should appeal to reason and justice, truth and love.

Gandhi's thinking of secularism does not separate religion from politics. This was criticized by many. Gandhi's best critic is found in none other than Jawaharlal Nehru. Their views on religion are poles apart and so is their thinking on the relationship between religion, politics and State. Gandhi had a firm commitment to religious life. However, Nehru did not have such a commitment. Gandhi's thought was essentially religious with an unshakable belief in the truth (God). Secular minded Nehru was a self-proclaimed agnostic (Tendulkar, 1998: 245). Nehru did not like the idea of mixing politics with religion. He did not favour any institutionalized religions, rituals, dogmas and doctrines. He criticized Gandhi's religiosity and frequent references to God in connection with political issues. Nehru was annoyed with Gandhi's "religious and sentimental approach to a political question and his frequent references to God in connection with it" (Tendulkar, 1998: 239). Even Tilak considered politics a game of worldly people but not of *sadhus* (Srinivas, 2015: 109-110).

### **Gandhi's Critique of Religious Intolerance**

Amartya Sen succinctly sums up the India's long history of liberal, tolerant and receptive tradition in the following words: the tolerance of religious diversity is implicitly reflected in India's having served as a shared home—the chronology of history—for Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, Jews, Christians, Muslims, Parsi, Sikh, Bahai and others (Sen, 2005:16).

Despite this picture of India having a tolerant and receptive tradition, in Indian sub-continent sectarian violence and caste oppression has become a common phenomenon. Incidents of religious intolerance occur very often. On the one hand India's secular and liberal history is evident in the remarkable contribution made by the great emperor Akbar, for instance, his formulation of religion which gives equal reverence to all faiths. Dara Shikoh's commentary of the *Upanishads* is also a glaring example of India's receptive tradition. On the other hand, we have had many incidents of communal riots before and after the country's independence. This shows that all is not well as far as secularism is concerned in India. Despite Gandhi's commitment and strong advocacy to maintain communal harmony and to bring mutual respect's faith towards a harmonious and peaceful nation in religious diversity, he had to witness the country's partition along religious lines and at the same time a series of incidents of violence in the name of religion. Such instances of communal violence seem to bring out the glaring gap between Gandhi's ideal and its practice.

Tolerance lies at the root of every religion. No religion in its true spirit can nurture the desperate desire and hatred to destroy others and oneself. It is not religion per se but irreligion that fills the heart with fear, insecurity, hatred and distrust. For religion is not to divide mankind. It is to unite them with a common goal in the quest for truth. Religion is to give solace, comfort, security and consolation to the heart. Thereby a sense of unity and boundedness to truth and all its creations will emerge. Religion has no place for violence. Religion is for truth realization. Truth realization is through the cultivation of certain moral values by upholding love as the law of life. Gandhi had the conviction that the law of love is inherent in humanity.

To be religious is in the Gandhian sense to be considerate, humane and compassionate to God's creations. As such one is serving God through the service and love to the fellow beings. Intolerance is unacceptable and inconsistent with Gandhi's twin ethico-religious principles of truth and non-violence. It is a crime against humanity if one does not accept the reality of life and its corresponding diversities. One-sided fanatical attitude, the imposition of one's view upon another and not respecting

and accepting the differences are signs of inability to rationalize and accept the heterogeneity in man's approach to reality. These could give rise to destructive forces like war and bloodshed threatening the very existence of human survival. These are irreligious in the name of religion and immoral in the name of morality.

According to Gandhi religion forms the constitutive principle of our existence. Man cannot live without religion. Religion is indispensable to life. Gandhi said that we cannot live without the living faith in God (Truth). Where there is religious zeal, there is peace, harmony and love. All the wars, terrorist activities and genocides that are carried out in the name of religion are from Gandhian perspective irreligious and immoral. For religion has no place for destruction. Religion is for the preservation of life. Where there is intolerance and violence, there is no religion. Religion and violence cannot go together. They are diametrically opposed to each other. Religion cannot accommodate any form of violence, war, terrorism and communal conflict. Religion does not promote terrorism. But it seems that in the name of religion some fundamentalists create terror in the minds of the people. These are due to misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the true spirit of religion. Gandhi by focussing on the centrality of religion and its teaching in man's life wanted to highlight that religion is a positive force that leads to an awakening of the spirit as love force, truth-force and soul force, the spiritual discipline towards the quest for truth.

Gandhi did not consider secularism in terms of separation between religion and faith. He did not see religion and faith as opposed to each other. Although he conceived faith as a source of religion and religion as having a living faith in truth, he did not see faith as contradictory to reason. He considered faith as supra-rational. Faith also shows the limits of reason. Since there is a limit of reason, he took religion as the basis of morality and held religion and morality as convertible terms, inseparably bound to each other. The religion which is in contravention with morality is not a religion, but irreligion. For Gandhi morals, ethics and religion are convertible terms. Gandhi writes, "True religion means good thought and good conduct" (Rao, 2008: 397). No religion teaches enmity to any man. "No religion teaches man to kill the fellow man because he holds different opinions or is of another religion and yet this is what is being done. No one can look upon another as his enemy unless he first becomes his own enemy..." (Rao, 2008: 297).

Gandhi adopted the technique of *satyagraha* as a way of settling differences, either communal or otherwise. The technique of *satyagraha* takes cognisance of the fact that every man had the right to hold his view of truth, and insistence upon the manifoldness of truth. He emphasized the commonality of all religions in their core moral teachings. To him, religion is to facilitate the process of realization of fundamental unity underlying the diversity (Rao, 2008: 38). Religion is a personal concern and the matter between God and man, a relation between me and my Maker. It is something that comes out of us from within. It is not something to be imposed from without. When religion is conceived in the sense of imposition, its beauty and charm get obscured. Authoritarianism and compulsion are the way to corrupt religion, not to advance it (Rao, 2008: 60). Religion is that which allows man's progress towards truth and as something that ever purifies man. Gandhi had a conviction that religion can be defended by only good deeds and never by quarrel and violence.

In Gandhi's conception of religion in general and Hinduism in particular there is no room for sectarianism. Truth is his religion and ahimsa is the only way to its realization. Truth and ahimsa are the common factors of all religions. "True religion transcends language and scripture. I do not see any reason why I should not read the *Kalma*, why I should not praise Allah and why I should not acclaim Muhammad

as His Prophet. I believe in all the great prophets and saints of every religion. I shall continue to ask God to give me the strength not to be angry with my accusers, but to be prepared even to die at their hands without wishing them ill. I claim that Hinduism is all-inclusive and I am sure that, if I live up to my convictions, I shall have served not only Hinduism but Islam also" (Rao, 2008: 45). As Manisha Barua has rightly observed that for Gandhi the name by which we call God and the rite by which we approach Him do not matter much (Barua, 2002: 203). Thus for Gandhi what is important is inner purity, a committed life to truth and non-violence.

Gandhi writes, "You ought to remember Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah's advice and act up to it; for it is advice confined not to any particular community but is of universal significance. The qualities which he had advised people to develop are not combativeness but a sense of justice and truth; and this implies that, whenever justice is at stake, people ought to appeal to reason instead of taking recourse to barbarous methods of settling disputes, whether private or public" (Rao, 2008: 20). So, if people recourse to such brutal and fanatic acts like desecration of places of worship, slaughtering people, causing violence in the name of safeguarding religion then we are only destroying the beauty and spirit of our religion, rather than protecting it. Such acts are narrow, selfish and barbaric. These would only bring chaos and discontent in human society and bring ill-will among ourselves. This would lead us towards darkness, only slavery of irredeemable type (Rao, 2008: 20) towards a psycho-social moratorium. Mutual toleration is the need of the hour.

As Gandhi writes, "Mutual toleration is a necessity for all-time and for all races. We cannot live in peace if the Hindu will not tolerate the Mohammedan form of worship of God and his manners and customs, or if the Mohammedan will be impatient of Hindu idolatry or cow-worship. It is not necessary for toleration that I must approve of what I tolerate. I heartily dislike drinking, meat-eating and smoking, but I tolerate all these in Hindus, Mohammedan and Christians even as I expect them to tolerate my abstinence from all these although they may dislike it. All the quarrels between the Hindus and Mohammedans have arisen from each wanting to *force* the others to his view" (Rao, 2008: 21). Gandhi appeals for mutual respect and tolerance, for instance, one should observe silence when others say their prayer (Rao, 2008: 82). Gandhi was against any form of intolerance and acrimony in the name of religion.

For Gandhi, the essence of religion consists in right conduct, observance of truth and non-violence. "Many a man-eating meat and observing the cardinal virtues of compassion and truth and living in fear of God is a better Hindu than a hypocrite who abstains from meat" (Rao, 2008: 90). One is a religious man as long as one observes the cardinal virtues of compassion and truth, and has a living faith in God. Quarrelling with people of other faith or killing them is not the way to protect one's faith. Only by bringing about a change of heart in them which can be brought by our right conduct towards them and by our personnel example that our religion can be defended.

Gandhi's thought on secularism in terms of religious tolerance implies the doctrine of equal and free partnership (Rao, 2008: 99). According to him, by cultivating tolerance and respect, one will be able to learn from all. Gandhi further moved from the principle of religious tolerance to the principle of equal respect for all religions. This doctrine of equality and freedom in a matter of one's religious life is what the word secularism in the Indian Constitution envisages. Secularism rules out any room for intolerance, thereby any conflict and violence in religious matter. For conflict, violence, intolerance is against the spirit of secularism. Gandhi intends to maintain peace and harmony, establish a social order based on devotion to truth and non-violence for the welfare of humanity, for the preservation of human species.

His firm conviction is that unity can be best promoted by co-operating through a common goal, by sharing one another's sorrows and by mutual toleration (Rao, 2008: 14).

### **Conclusion**

Gandhi's vision of India is of a secular country where the State should not make any undue interference in one's religious life and even if the State wants to give religious education then it is not to be subversive of law and order or morals and shall confine to the main principles common to all religion (Tendulkar, 1991: 383). Gandhi wanted the masses to be religious not in the sense of mere observance of rites and rituals that one follows on specific occasions but to be as a way of life, constantly in the quest for truth as the inner yearning to be one with the Truth that permeates all activities of life and is lived in every moment of one's life. He further wished that such religious spirit dominates the world.

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