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Dr. N. Muhammadali



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Editorial

The ideas and data generated through research and studies in social science offer clarity to our understanding of the past and present and help to formulate effective strategies to shape a finer future. But, social science research is not viewed in this perspective by policy makers and research circuits in many parts of the world, especially in developing countries. India is also not an exception. As debated often, the reasons for this lethargy and passive attitude towards social sciences may be attributed to various factors including the lack of fund money and human resources. But, the most important aspect always neglected in the discourses is the absence of a comprehensive national policy of research based on in-depth analysis of our strengths and weaknesses and needs and priorities.

The situation calls an urgent attention of the universities and research institutions to redefining the whole concept of social research and professionalizing the research systems in the country. Newer methods of impact factors and credibility measures are still alien to a vast majority of Indian social science researchers. Plagiarism has been a common scene in our academia, though a plenty of mechanisms are available to detect and prevent the intellectual theft.

Since its inception, University of Calicut has a impeccable track record of genuine research in social sciences. Calicut University Research Journal (CURJ) is the commitment of the University of Calicut to social science research that generates solutions to social problems. This peer reviewed journal publishes high quality articles on subjects come under the broader purview of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts. The current issue of the journal covers diverse areas from Indian History to e-Learning and Science Communication to English Literature. And, I hope the issue will be an authentic read.

Dr. Muhammadali

Editor

Religion and Popular Culture: Locating Popular Islam in Kerala

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Introduction

The preset paper is entitled as 'Religion and Mass Culture: Locating Popular Islam in Kerala' tries to examine some of the aspects of Islam and Muslim society in Kerala in the broad frame work of religion and popular culture. Islam took root in Kerala well before the waves of invasion from Central Asia which gave rise to the medieval Muslim sultanates of North India. The flow of information from Arabia about Islam reached in Kerala was basically through the Arab sailors and traders who were traversing towards South Asia and beyond from time immemorial which they maintained with Kerala till the advent of the Portuguese. Therefore, the historians assume that during the time of Prophet Muhammad or soon after his death Islam must have become familiar in Kerala. However, the process of Islamic intervention during the early period in Kerala has not adequately been subjected to the scholarly attention so far. At the same time the historians have put forward many interesting arguments about the growth and expansion Muslim settlements in Kerala. So it would be interesting to locate and analyses Islam in the wider context of Popular religious tradition of Kerala. It may enable us to understand how the adaptation, accretion and syncretic form of belief and practices developed in the social and religious life of

Kerala Muslims. In order to maintain Islam as a popular religion in Kerala, the Sufis had played a very important role. So, the organic expansion of Muslim settlement is contextualized in the wider frame work of Sufism in this paper. The Muslims in Kerala have developed their own popular culture which has greatly influenced by the indigenous beliefs and practice. Till the beginning of 20th century one of the main undercurrents that worked as a catalyst of the expansion of the Muslim settlement was obviously the shared sacred spaces centered on the Sufis, *Auliya* and other Gnostics. So, the religious manifestation of Muslims in Kerala found the popular aspects of Islam such as the veneration of Sufis, *Auliyas*, and cult of *Shuhada* (Martyrs) and Dargahs etc.¹ The reforming attempt spurred on in the particular socio cultural milieu of 'colonial modernity' also had an impact over the Muslim society in Kerala during 20th century. As a result, the popular syncretic tradition of Muslims in Kerala was, to an extent, dismantled by the reformers who advocated the so called 'scriptural Islam.'

Popular Islam and Sufism

The historians and sociologists have persistently used binaries of 'Scriptural Islam' and 'Popular Islam' to demarcate the features of the two phases- Popular and Scriptural Islam- in the growth and expansion of Islam in the sub-continent. The term 'Popular Islam' denotes a multiplicity of meanings across different field of discourse. So it has prompted considerable debates over its definition and its usefulness. However, in most classical contexts, referring to the beliefs and practices as 'popular' usually denotes complexes held to be aberrant, such as the veneration of saints, the use of amulets, charms and oracles or the spectacular performance of 'holy men.'² As an analytical category the term 'Popular Islam' is essentially neutral, conveying empirical facts. Moreover it alludes to the derivative and synthetic patterns of the 'Little Tradition' characteristic of communities on the periphery rather than at the center of a putative Islamic civilization. Therefore the concept of Popular Islam presumably reflects the adaptation of localized social structures and indigenous cultural values.³

It could be assumed that the Kerala experience of Islam

during its very inception to the beginning of 20th century had been distinctive with its capacity of accommodating the indigenous pattern of life. The indigenous society was also receptive to the message of 'Islam' from the beginning itself. Moreover, the historians are of the opinion that Sufis who came along with the traders from West Asia and Yemen had been at work in Kerala during the period after 8th and 9th centuries onwards that accelerated spread of the basic Sufi principles in Kerala⁴. However, only after 12th century AD we get information regarding the direct influence of Sufis in Kerala. There were two streams of Sufism in Kerala namely 'the formal sophisticated Sufism' mediated by the theologians initiated to the Sufi Tariqas and the 'Popular Sufism' consisted of various syncretic elements and folk practices which must have prevailed long before the arrival of Makhdums in Kerala. All the important Sufi Tariqas like Qadiri, Chisti, Rifai, Suharwardi, Naqshabandi, Shadili etc. have been active in Kerala during the 13th century AD onwards. The manifestation these Sufi Tariqas in the society could be seen in the form numerous rituals and devotional practices.

Veneration of *Auliyas*, *Shaheeds* and *Dargah* Cult:

The veneration of *Auliyas*, *cult of Shuhada*, emergence of *Dargah cult* etc has been observed as the indication of the popular Islamic practices of the Muslims. Hence, these practices have been analysed by the social scientist in the wider canvas of 'popular culture.' In the particular social milieu of Kerala also such practices are very much visible among the Muslims. The Sufis, gnostics, *Shahids* and even *masthans* were considered as patron saints and were venerated by the people themselves due to the deep influence they had made in the everyday life of the people. So, naturally, after the death of those 'holy men and women' their graves also became a center of attraction. The presence of numerous *Dargahs*, *Jarams* and *maqbaras* and the rituals, practices etc. attached to venerated *Auliyas* and other holy men are also points out what has been termed as the lived Islam and its practice in Kerala. Each and every village in Kerala share the venerated Sufi or Auliya and their *Jaram/ Dargahs* where annual commemoration takes place every year with great pomp and

passion. These festivals are popularly known as *Urus*, *Andu Nercha* or *Chandanakkudam* etc. Since these sacred spaces are accessible to all the people irrespective of their class, caste or gender, the whole population living around the local Darghas participate in the festivities like *Urus*. It was a common practice of the Muslims in Kerala to go for a ritual visitation to the Shrines or graves of the venerated Sufis or Auliyas. This ritual visitation towards the tomb or *dargah* of a venerated Sufi is popularly known as *Ziyarat*. The main objective of the *ziyarat* is to obtain the special grace (*Baraka*) of the Auliya/Sufi/Shahid/mastan or gnostics. The belief in special grace of holy men and women also paved the way for making vow at the Dargah and submitting offering for obtaining *Baraka* as well as accomplishing mundane wishes of seekers. Thus *Dargahs* turned in to an object of popular devotion and series of rituals subsequently attached to the *Dargahs* of *Sufis* and *Auliyas* among the Kerala Muslim also. The annual commemoration (*Urus*) of *Sufis*, *Auliyas*, *Shuhada* etc would also be taken place at the sacred premises of the *Dargahs*. The manifestation of local culture and practices in the festivities of *Urus* celebration has been viewed as a typical example of *Dargahs* as a shared sacred space for different sections of the Kerala society.

Ratheeb Cult

One of the popular Sufi rituals widely practicing in Kerala is *Ratheeb*. Each Sufi Tariqa has their own *Ratheeb* which is a collection of *Aurad* or *Adkar* composed or compiled by concerned Shaikh or Khalifa of Tariqa intended to be repeated in an appointed time with a group of people.⁵ The gathering for *Ratheeb* or for *Adkar* is also known as *Hadra*/*Halqa*/*Majlis* etc which would be held under the leadership of Shaikh or an appointed Khalifa. The *Ratheeb Pura* or *Khanas* / *Hadras* became popular when the organised Sufi Tariqas were active during the 15th and 16th centuries in Kerala. *Mohiyiddin Ratheeb*, *Rifai Ratheeb*, *Shadili Ratheeb*, *Haddad Ratheeb*, *Jalaliya Ratheeb* etc are still very popular in Kerala⁶. The main item in the *Ratheeb hadra* (Congregation for reciting *Ratheeb*) is to recite the *Dikr* loudly and full involvement in it. There would be a leader who would recite the *dikr* first and those who gathered in the *Majlis* (Congregation) would repeat it and would complete the numbers as per the advice of the Shaikh.

There are two types of *Ratheeb*- *Ratheeb* consisting only of *Adkar*(*sing dīkr*) and *Aurad*(*sing wīrd*) and the second type is *Daffu Ratheeb* and *Kuthu Ratheeb*. In the *Daffu Ratheeb*, a group of people stand in two rows holding *Daffu* (a kind of drum) in their left hand that would be beaten rhythmically accompanied by reciting the *adhkar*. The *adkar* in the *Daffu Ratheeb* is composed in the verse form. So the *adkar* is also known as *Byth*. Singing the *byth* and beating the *Duff* with speedy movement of the participant would be a spectacular experience for the beholders. Likewise in the *Kuthu Ratheeb*, sticks, knives, dagger and swords would be used and this ritual consists of acts like piercing parts of the one's own body like tongue, the ear, and the stomach with knives and sharp-edged steel tools.⁷ Hymns known as *Byths* (There are more than twenty different *byths* being used) are sung during the *Ratheeb*. The followers and protagonists of the ritual believe that even though injuries are inflicted on the bodies of the performers by weapons do not cause pain or damage to the body since the ritual is performed by *mureeds* (disciples) who have received "*ijazath*" (permission) from their Shaikh (Master). It is the followers of *Rafai Tariqa* popularised the *Kuthu Ratheeb* in Kerala. During the 17th century Muhammed Qasim Waliyullah, the Rifai Shaikh who had reached at Kannur in the court of Arakkal Dynasty as a royal guest and stayed at Hydros Mosque near Arakkal Palace. His presence must have given impetus to the propagation of *Rifai Tariqa* and its rituals like *Ratheeb*. Shaikh Muhammed Qasim Waliyullah had got a special permission to lead *Daffu Ratheeb* and *Kutthu Ratheeb* from the renowned Sufi Master named Shaikh Sayyid Sa'aban Waliyullah. Afterwards, there were many people from Lakshadweep who got the permission to lead *Rifai Ratheeb* had occasionally visited Malabar and other areas of Kerala and had established "*Ratheeb Pura*" (*Khanas*) here.⁸ These people were popularly known as *Dweepu Thangals* (Thangal from Island). One of these "*Ratheeb pura*" is still active at Azhiyur near Mahe in the Northern Malabar but it has been transformed in to a small *niskarappally* (*Taikkavu*) now. However, the *Rifai Ratheeb* has been conducting every month with all its festivities here.⁹

One of the most striking features of these performances like *Daffu Ratheeb* and *Kuthu Ratheeb*, is that the performers would

repeatedly call the name of Shaikh Ahmed Kabeer Al Rifai and through the *byth*, which would be recited during the performance; the disciples would praise their Shaikh and would pray for God for blessings throughout the *Ratheeb*. It is believed that the soul of the Shaikh would be present in the *Hadra* or in the *Majlis* where the *Ratheebis* conducted. So the disciples believe that they would be protected from all the harms by the Baraka(grace) of the Shaikh. The *Ratheeb* was prescribed to be performed by the Shaikhs whenever epidemic and other calamities spread in a locality which was believed due to the presence of evil force and in order to chase out those evil forces these rituals had practiced by the Kerala Muslims. Likewise, when there is any incident like snake bite or disturbance with snakes, *Rifai Ratheeb* or *Moulid* would be conducted in the Muslims houses to safe guard the household.¹⁰ There is a practice of vowing animals like goat, bull etc. for *Ratheeb*. These animals would be slaughtered at the time of *Ratheeb* and would prepare delicious food and organise a feast for those who participate in the function. It seems that *Ratheeb* congregations had also functioned as a festive occasion to gather all the family members and the neighbours.

Ratheeb like *Haddad Ratheeb*, *Mohiyaddin Ratheeb* etc. also are being conducted in the Mosques and *Thaikkavus* in Kerala. The recitation of *adkar* in a rhythmic way is the special attraction of these *Ratheeb*. Some of the *dikr* chanted and repeated in the *Ratheeb Hadras* is “*Hu Hayyun Ya Hayyun*”, “*Hu Allahi*”, “*Hu Hu Allahi*”, “*Ha Hi Hu Hayyun*” etc.¹¹ It is interesting to note that the participants in the *Ratheeb* would take different postures while performing it like sitting, standing, jumping etc. When these *dikr* are being repeated the disciples or the participants do move their body hastily as if they feel over joyed or reached in a position of ecstasy and behave like an insane person.

The followers of *Shadili Tariqa* organise a special *Shadili Ratheeb* and their *Hadras* especially in the Northern Malabar is worth mentioning. It has been conducting regularly at Cheruvanoor, Vatakara in the Calicut district Nunjeri, Kuppam in the Kannur district where the *Shadili Tariqa* got large number of followers. The Khalifa of the *Ratheeb* would organise the participants in a circle and he or the one who lead the *Ratheeb* would stand in the centre. Those who are standing in the circle

should hold their hands each other. When the *dikr* starts the participants move gently and the speed of the movement would increase slowly by chanting the *dikr* as per the instruction given by the Khalifa. The rhythmic humming of *dikr* and jumping by holding hands by the participants is an important feature of Shadili Ratheeb¹².

Ritual Recitation of *Moulid* and *Manaqib*:

Like Ratheeb cult, the recitation of *Moulid* or *Manaqib*¹³ of Prophet and his family, *Mashaikhs* (sing: *Shaikh*), *Auliyas*, *Shahids* (Martyrs) and other saint like personalities are also an integral part of Popular Islam in Kerala. The hagiographic literature found both in Arabic and Arabi-Malayalam language shows the fact that the praising of the pious personalities and the emotional attachment of the Muslims in Kerala towards such charismatic figures living or dead and belief in their immense *Baraka* etc. are so deep and pervasive. They do prayer to the God almighty through the intercession of their *Shaikh/Auliyas/Shahid* etc, believing that through the intercession of those holy men and women one could come close to the God. Therefore, in order to praise those personalities separate gatherings have been conducting in Kerala by the Muslims. Moreover, praising and sharing of the virtues of the blessed have also been considered a good deed which would bring prosperity and cure diseases, hardships and so on..

Of the *Moulid* literatures prevailed in Kerala, the oldest one is said to be the *Manqus Moulid* by the Zainuddeen Makdum of Ponnani which was composed to praise the greatness of the Prophet. It is the most popular *Moulid* recited in Kerala and all the *Moulid* composed in the later period followed the structure and pattern of *Manqus Moulid*. All the *Moulids* have two parts: prose section which narrates the personal details and miraculous activities of the person about whom the *Moulid* is composed and the second part is of verses which are rhythmically composed poem intended to sing in the gatherings. *Moulid* starts with the recitation of *Fathiha*, the first chapter from the Holy Quran and offers it as *hadiya* (Gift) towards the soul of all the deceased members from the family and those great personalities like Prophets, *Sahaba* (the companions of the Prophet), *Mashaikhs*,

Auliyas and so on. According to the Popular Islam practiced here the *hadiya* would reach in the presences of the departed soul and would be a consolation for them. One of the notable characteristic features of all the *Moulids* are seeking the blessing of God through the intercession of invoked personalities. This was one of the areas where the Scriptural Islam criticises the practicing Islam in Kerala. There were heated discussion and debates during the 20th century and still open on '*Thawassul* and *Istighas*' which was considered explicitly a polemic area between Scriptural Islam and Livid Islam here. However the *Thawassul* and *Istighasa* have still been practicing by a large section of Muslims in Kerala and numerous *Moulid* and *Manaqibs* have been composed about various pious personalities including Gnostics and *Shahids* (Martyrs).

Ritual Recitation of '*Malappattu*':

Like *Moulid* / *Manaqib* literature and its ritualistic practice in the Muslim society of Kerala, a separate genre of literature in local language called *Mala* had also prevailed by the end of 16th century in Kerala. All these *Mala* literature have been viewed as a continuation of *Malai* tradition of Tamilnadu where the *Malai* was composed by *Pulavar* and orally transmitted in the society. The *Malai* are devotional songs in praise of the miraculous life of the Masters of different Sufi Orders and even *Malai* were composed about various *Auliyas* (Saints). It is to be noted that all the *Mala* and *Malai* are composed in the indigenous language and enormously used the local idioms and similes which accelerated its popularity among the common mass. *Muhyiddin Mala*, the most popular mala, composed by one of the Qazis of Calicut named Qazi Muhammed in 1607 is believed to be the first of this category.¹⁴ It is a devotional song praising the 11th century Qadiri Sufi Shaikh named Abdul Qadir Al Jeelani. This devotional poem clearly narrates all the aspects of the esteemed position of Abdul Qadir Jeelani including his *Karamath* as a Wali. It is certain that *Mohiyiddin Mala* was taken by the Muslim society during beginning of 17th till the interference of the reformist trends in the Kerala society not as a mere poem but as an important liturgy to be practiced in their everyday life. So the *Mohiyiddin Mala* has been reverently recited in the ceremonial

mood in each and every house hold of Muslims in Kerala. Since it was composed in vernacular language and mostly transmitted orally even the illiterate member of the community could memorise and recite it easily. Though the common mass was not in a position to understand the philosophical riddle and the depth of the intellectual realm of Sufism, they simply could experience the spiritual domain which the Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani attained through the verses of Qazi Muhammmmed and they conceived the Shaikh Abdul Qadir Al Jeelani as a torch bearer to follow. In addition, it was very convenient for those who have converted to Islam during that period to practice these rituals in their everyday life because similar devotional practices were common in the indigenous life of Kerala during that period. Thus as early as 16th century onwards the devotional songs about the Sufi figures had an important place in the popular religious life of Muslims in Kerala. In other words *Muhyiddin Mala* had played an important role behind the proliferation of many rituals and practices centred on Shaikh Muhyiddin Abdul Qadir Jeelani, Shaikh Ahmed Al Kabeer Al Rifai and so on among the Muslims in Kerala. So the popular Sufi rituals got great impetus with the composition of *Malashere*.¹⁵

Invocation through Devotional Songs: (*Qutubiyyath, Badar Moulid*)

Another important popular ritual among the Muslims of Kerala is the recitation of *Qutubiyyath*. It is a long litany in the form of a devotional song praising the miraculous life of Shaikh Muhyiddin Abdul Qadir Jilani composed by Sadakathullahil Kahiri, Kayalpatanam (1628 AD-1701AD)¹⁶. During the 17th century many Qadiri Sufis had frequently visited from Tamil Nadu to Kerala and stayed in the places like Kochi, Ponnani and Calicut. Of these Sufis, Sadakkathullahil Kahiri was very famous and popular in Kerala. It was he who composed and popularised the *Qutubiyat* in Kerala. It is believed that those who recite this *byth* and repeat the name of Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani his grievances and problems would be solved by the God almighty. Therefore, the Muslims, especially the Mappilas of Malabar had practiced *Qutubiyat* and attributed a healing power to it. Those who participate in this ritual should perform *namaz* as mentioned in

the preface of the *Qutubiyathbyth* and would sit in a circle to recite *fathiha*, the first chapter from the Holy Quran and then by the *Qutubiyath byth*. When they reach in a particular line all the participants would stand up and put off all the light in the room and repeat the following words loudly at thousand times¹⁷: “*YaGauzYaMuhiyaddin Abdul Qadir Jeelani*” which means “Oh the helper, Oh Muhiyaddeen Abdul Qadir Jeelani.” Then they complete the remaining lines from the *QutubiyathByth*. There is a popular belief among the Mappilas that when the disciples call Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jeelani his soul would be present in their *Majlis*. In the end of the recitation of *byth* all the participant would pray for the well-being by interceding with Shaikh Muhiyiddeen Abdul Qadir Jeelani. It has been a practice of the Mappilas to vow for conducting the recitation of *qutubiyat* whenever the epidemic or any such serious problems affect their life. Likewise, the “*Badireengal*”(participants and martyrs of *Badr*, the first battle between the Muslims and non Muslims of Makkah) is also invoked by reciting their name in congregation. It is believed that the recitation of the name of the *Badairreengal* would keep off all evils and troubles from their life. Therefore it was a common practice among the Muslims in making vow to recite the specific *mala* or *badr Moulid* for bringing prosperity and to keep off all troubles in the life.

The devotional aspect, over emphasise on the concept of *Barakat* and *Karamat* (miracles) of *Auliyas*(sing. Wali) etc. of people has been observed as the indication of *Taifa* Stage of Sufism as per the theory of Spencer.J.Trimingham. However, the devotional aspect was receptive in Kerala where the people from the indigenous society were attracted towards the path of Sufis and Gnostics during the period after 16th century. So it was easy to accommodate them in the popular devotional aspect of Sufism and its practices like *Ratheeb*, *Moulid*, *recitation of Mala*, *reditation of Qutubiyat* and performing rituals like *Daffu Mutt*, *Kolkkali*, *Kuthu Ratheeb* etc. than instructing them to observe the scriptural injunctions of the religion. Moreover the space where all these congregations and ritual performance take place is also very important. Most of these rituals take place before the public either in the houses or specially arranged areas where anybody can come and attend the function. It shows that these popular

rituals are not Mosque oriented activities. Therefore, it could freely communicate with people belonging to different socio cultural background. It made Islam as more convenient and popular religion among the indigenous people of Kerala. It is also to be noticed that the popular texts like *Malas*, *Moulid*, *Ratheeb* etc have played a major role in the propagation of popular notion of the religion. Since most of these texts were circulated orally, it could reach even to the illiterate people very easily. So the popular aspects of religion remained in the Muslim life especially among those who are in the interior/ rural areas of Kerala till the emergence 'reformist' tendencies and organisational frame work to imbibe the scriptural side of Islam here. However the former was much organic and later was mere a mechanical exercise.

Occultism and popular healing- practices

It is increasingly interesting to note that 'popular Islam' in Kerala evokes and shares many common and popular cultural aspects of the people of this land. Sometimes, it seems that certain ideas and even concept of the Scriptural Islam was internalised the Muslims in Kerala by putting them in the particular socio-cultural milieu of this land. The popular traditions of Kerala share the belief in number of evil spirit like *Karinkutti*, *Kuttichathan*, *Parakkutty*, *Odikkutty*, *Kuttubhairavan*, *Chotala*, *Badrakali*, *Dumapali*, *Narasimhamurti*, *Kalabhairavan* and *Odibhairavan*. It shows the fact that the belief in the supernatural celestial beings and its various manifestations were common in the indigenous society during the advent Islam in Kerala. It seems that the occultic practices of Muslims in Kerala must be the result of accretion or accommodation of the shared social locale of Kerala. Therefore, the occultism of Kerala Muslims should be analysed by locating them in the peculiar social, cultural and religious milieu of this land.

The Holy Quran has also mentioned about many supernatural and celestial beings including angels (*Malak*) spirits (*Jinn*) evil spirit (*Shaitan/ibilis*) etc. at different contexts. However, the same scriptural concepts have been practiced in a different way in the particular social context of Kerala. Here, the cults such as "*JinnuSeva*", "*ChekkuttippappaSeva*", "*KanjirakkkoodaanSeva*" etc. were very popular among some of the Muslim families especially in the southern Malabar.¹⁸

It is also argued that after 16th century the Muslims from the coastal areas had started to shift their settlement towards interior regions of Kerala due to various reasons. Consequently, the number of people who embraced the new faith from the indigenous castes group also increased in the course of time. It would be difficult for those people who accepted the new faith to discard all their cultural traits and ancestral baggage. So those who worshipped or propitiated their ancestors must have carried with them but with slight difference in the name and propitiation. Therefore it could be argued that those who propitiated the *Chathan*, *Kuttichathan*, etc. might have given Muslim names like *Chekkuttippappa*, *Kunhirayinpappa*, *Kanjirakkodan* when they became Muslims. Even during the 1930s some of the Muslim families in the Southern Malabar had such belief that if those *Moorthis* were not propitiated would cause harm to the family and family members.¹⁹ It could be assumed that such belief and practices of Muslims must have assimilated from the indigenous tradition of Kerala where the faith in demon was common. The Muslims had approached the *manthradis* or the *moorthisevakkar* and had also sought help from the *Jinn Hadarat* (those who propitiate Jinn to the material benefits).²⁰ Even though the scriptural side of Islam did not support the popular practices of propitiation of '*Jinn*' (the spirits), conducting '*homam*' (A sacrificial ritual done in fire to drive away the devils) to ward off the certain acute problems of the family or individual, to approach diviners and fortune tellers etc. such practices had deep rooted among Kerala Muslims in the past and still the relics of such belief exist among them.

It is to be noted that the art, architecture, music, festivities, food, dress code, language, literature and even kinship and lineage of the Muslims have evolved in the shared socio- cultural milieu of Kerala. In practicing the life cycle rituals like the rituals during the time of birth, naming, puberty, betrothal, marriage, pregnancy, motherhood, deaths, mourning and so on, the influence of local shared practices are visible among the Kerala Muslims. Analysing the different facets popular Islamic practices among the Muslims who live at different areas of Kerala, one can easily identify the sort of dynamism and creativity that once prevailed in the engagement of Islamic doctrines and practices with those of

local culture. Significantly, the spread of Islam in Kerala happened definitely from multiple centres that also meant that there would be multiple engagements with the local traditions, not only with practices but also at the level of social organisation as well.

Conclusion

Since its inception to the beginning of 20th century, it seems that, Islam was practiced in Kerala as a 'popular religion' than as a 'Scriptural' philosophy. So, instead of following strictly the scriptural instructions of the religion, the people of Kerala had embraced Islam by taking/carrying many practices from the indigenous life world as their ancestral baggage. There are few reasons highlighted behind the spread of Popular Islamic practices in Kerala. The first reason may be due to the ancestral baggage of the people who came in to fold of the Islam, secondly, the presence and intervention of the Sufis in the social and religious life of Kerala. The Sufis who had played a vital role in the propagation of the universal spiritual ideas among the people, moreover, they may not have given much attention to the ritualistic form Scriptural Islam. During that period in Kerala, the absence of facilities to textualize and to impart the scriptural instructions to those who embraced Islam, were also seen as another reason behind the spread of popular Islam here. However, all these variant and heterodox practices of Muslims have been questioned during the 20th century by the social reformers. They labelled these practices as un-Islamic and should be eradicated from the life of the Muslims. This attempt has been termed as 'social reform movement' among the Muslims of Kerala. The so called social reform attempts were basically against the popular and practicing Islam and also to transform it in to the scriptural principles of the religion. These efforts had far reaching impact over the socio cultural and religious life Muslims in Kerala. Those who stand for the textual Islam considered what has been practicing in Kerala as only a variant of Islam and also many practices attached to it as un-Islamic and Shirk (polytheism). It had spurred heated debates among the Muslims. The long debates and discourses ultimately paved the way for the dismantling many features of the popular Islam and also tried to transform it in to the scriptural Islam in Kerala.

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11. Muhammedpandavoor K.V. (1992). *Qadiri Tareeqath*. Malappuram. p.37.
12. Personal interview with Abdul ShukkurMuslyar, the present Khalifa of Shadili Tareeqa and Mudaris at Kambasar Mosque, Kannur.
13. Mouldid or Manaqib are hagiographical descriptions of Prophets, Auliyas, Masthan, Shaheed and so on prepared or composed for recitation because those people are considered as blessed one having special grace called Baraka of the God. So according to popular belief among the Muslims in Kerala praising these personalities would

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 15. There are number of Malas available in Kerala. Most of them are of the Mashaikhs of Sufi Tariqas like Rifai, Shadili, Chisti etc. In addition, there are many other Malas of Auliyas and Shahids composed that also recited reverently by the Muslims for various purposes. For Example, Manjakkulam Mala was recited to cure ailments like Asthma and cough. Rifai Mala was believed to be a protector from snake bite; Nafeesath Mala was recited for reducing the pang during the time of delivery.
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Cultural Theory: Deconstructing Essentialisms

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This essay examines modern cultural theories' problematic relationship vis-à-vis what has been termed as essentialist notions concerning race. By primarily focusing on a critique of Paul Gilroy, this essay seeks to analyze the controversy surrounding essentialism in race studies. 'Essentialism,' to be sure, is one of the choicest terms of vilification in modern sociological and cultural studies. To be an 'essentialist' is in modern academic parlance tantamount to being an obscurantist. In this essay I explore the reasons for this term acquiring such notoriety, the merits of the claims made as to its 'definitive' and 'successful deconstruction' by cultural theorists, and the alternative models proposed instead of essentialist notions by theorists like Gilroy. My arguments can be briefly summarized as follows: a) the essentialist versus anti-essentialist controversy cuts across many disciplines and discourses and there is still a lot of disagreements as to its definitive outcome; b) essentialist discourses on race has been multi-layered; while most of them were based on pseudo-scientific evidence and carry a lot of political and colonial charge, there are others whose truth or falsity has not been completely verified by science; it is problematic conflating these multi-layered discourses, for example natural/biological essentialism and cultural essentialism, under the same head and painting them all with the same brush; c) anti-essentialist discourse is a currently fashionable discourse and draws its energy from parallel developments that have been taking place in the wider post-structuralist context; d) the problem of 'race' and racism does not lend itself to a reductive reading of black & white opposition

but is more complex and nuanced; e) on the whole, this debate presents a confused and hazy picture where there seems to be little certainty.

Essentialist notions

European notions of the Other were always colored by a sense of racial superiority. Sardar traces the long history of European colonization in which the other was variously portrayed as troglodyte, irrational, sentimental, feminine and infantile (Sardar, 2002: 13-53). According to him, European encounters with people of Asia and Africa from the dawn of history were marked by this perception of an essentially weak outsider. This can be traced to the earliest travel writings of Sir John Mandeville and the accounts of Marco Polo. The Other presented by these earliest chroniclers were invested with grotesque physical and behavioral traits. One of the recurring tropes is that of the dog-headed native given to cannibalism. These essentialist perceptions did not change much in tone even with the advent of modernity which Sardar describes as the age of 'unreason' because of the skewed and biased notions of the Other it fostered. (Sardar, 2002: 32).

In modern times, it was pseudo-sciences like Phrenology and Eugenics that lend much weight to the essentialist notions. Phrenologists like Samuel G Morton advocated the theory of polygenesis and supported notions of a humanity divided along various intrinsically distinct racial lines. Many of Morton's disciples argued blacks to be intellectually inferior to the whites. It was argued that people with dolichocephalic skulls were more intelligent than those with brachycephalic skulls. However these theories were soon discredited when it was found that many Africans and Germans, who were believed to represent the binary poles of intelligence, shared the same long skull features. (Sfroza, 2005). Franz Boas, the American anthropologist was instrumental in dealing this theory a death blow. Through his studies, he demonstrated how unreliable anthropometric yardsticks were in studying human qualities and to what extent factors like environment played a more decisive role in determining the shape of human skull. In short, biological determinism, upon which naturalist racism banked heavily, was proven to be a totally

untenable theory by scientists and anthropologists.

However, 'scientific' racism found new expressions in other areas namely linguistics, historicism and not the least in cultural analysis. The linguistic theory of Sapir and Whorf, known as linguistic relativism, tried to account for cultural differences among races using certain language parameters. According to Sapir and Whorf, various linguistic communities divide and categorize experiences as determined by their language; hence, disparate linguistic communities were thought to experience the world in totally different styles and ways. Though, not as strongly as the theory of biological determinism, this theory also led to an essentialization of racial differences. It was argued on the basis of this hypothesis, also known as linguistic determinism, that children speaking primitive languages like Hopi were incapable of understanding complex scientific theories since their languages did not have the conceptual categories to encompass such theories. Modern linguistics however proved this theory has little purchase on actual facts. They point to the mutual translatability of languages and the existence of language universals to negate the claims of linguistic relativists.

From the above discussion, it is evident that racist essentialism is a discourse cutting across disciplines. One of the most controversial projects in this area which both essentialists and non-essentialists heavily invest in is genomics. While studies in this area are said to have conclusively disproven any rational basis for a hierarchical classification of races, it should be said that medical practitioners and physiologists still rely on genomics in order to study the proclivity of certain races to certain ailments (Shafer, et al. 1993: 189). Their argument is: the old schemes of superior and inferior races cannot be empirically verified; but there might be differences among races which help some races to withstand certain conditions better than others.

One of the recent fascinations with racial differences was occasioned by the tremendous success of black athletes in the international sporting arena. It has now become common place to read black 'athletic superiority' in terms of the logic of race. It is interesting to note in this context, how the whites in America once thought it impossible for Blacks to beat Whites in sports like boxing. Malcolm X notes how the first victory by a black

boxer over a White caused such a sensation in his locality (Haley, 1964:43). Actually, the death of biological racism has as much to do with modern scientific findings which demolished the old pseudo-scientific notions as with the achievements of black athletes, intellectuals and other professionals that served to knock out racist assumptions in practical consciousness.

The ‘essence’ of Essentialism

In the previous section, I pointed to how essentialism is a multi-layered discourse that cuts across many disciplines. One of the vexed questions here is what can be rightly considered as ‘essentialism;’ since the term itself has become a bit slippery because of its constant overuse. Alana Lentin points to two kinds of ‘racisms’ around which the discourse of racism was historically built: natural racism and historical racism (Lentin: 2008,23-31). Naturalist racism considers races to be inherently different from each other. This school banks heavily on the theories of biological and sociological evolution; it considers humanity as we see today as the result of a gradual evolution; largely subscribing to the theory of polygenesis, it considers different races to have evolved separately. While positing the Black man on the lowest rung of the evolutionary ladder, it reserves the highest order for the white European. The African was thus conferred a near animal status and was as Gilroy said just given ‘an associate membership’ in the human family’ (*BC* 59). It was this conception of the essentialist nature of race that prompted Disraeli to claim ‘Race is everything’ (Lentin, 2008:5). Kant’s view of the Africans expressed below testifies to this perception:

The Negroes of Africa have by nature no feeling that rises above the trifling Mr. Hume challenges anyone to cite a single example in which a Negro has shown talents, and asserts that among the hundreds of thousands of Blacks who are transported elsewhere from their countries, although many have been set free, still not one was ever found who presented anything great in art or science or any other praiseworthy quality, even though among the whites some continually rise aloft from the lowest rabble, and through superior gifts earn respect in the world. (quoted by Gilroy, 2004:58)

As for the biological essentialism based on racial hierarchy,

the discoveries of modern science have a definitive ring. The differences between races are something skin-deep. It is only minor differences in the genetic configurations that account for these differences. It has been observed that intra-racial differences in genetic make-ups are sometimes more pronounced than inter-racial ones (Sfroza 2005). Notwithstanding the post-Kuhnian skepticism in scientific absolutism, we can state with certainty that biological hierarchization of race has no actual basis.

The second type of racism that Lenitn points to is known as 'historicist racism.' Unlike naturalist racism, this school does not believe in inherent biological superiority or inferiority of races. It instead attributes the greater advancement/sophistication [both contestable terms and concepts] of specific races over others to historical contingencies. It was historical chances and not biological qualities or proclivities that helped the higher developmental indices of certain races according to this theory. Lenitn considers historicism as a more rational form of racism compared with the naturalism (Lentin 29). In its more patronizing forms, the exponents of this school put the onus of uplifting the historically 'left out' races on the shoulders of the advanced peoples. In essence, this becomes a subtle advocacy of the 'Whiteman's Burden.' If we consider race not merely a biological fact but a sociological one, we will have to consider the historicist view too as 'essentialist.'

Historical essentialism is extremely Euro-centric in character. It presupposes what is good for the Other without actually taking into consideration the Other's own aspirations. Sardar, for example, points to the imperialistic character of many western modernist and postmodernist emancipatory projects which were foisted upon the non-western peoples much against their wishes (Sardar 1998 17-43). Western democracy, secularism and allied institutions were thus represented as the pinnacle of civilization and other cultures and their political and civic models condemned as primitive. In its patronizing form, Others were not only asked to abandon their traditional models of social and civic dispensation in favor of the western prototypes, but took the form of force-feeding these formulaic diets into the body politic of the Other to the accompaniment of disastrous consequences

The third view dispenses with terms like 'advanced' and 'less advanced' and instead opts for alternate designations under the label of cultural differences. In this scheme races are not considered biologically or historically superior or inferior; they are simply treated as distinct from each other because of the cultural differences between them. Gilroy considers this too as another form of essentialism (Gilroy, 72).

Recognizing the power of raciology, which is used here [in his essay] as a term for a variety of essentializing and reductionist ways of thinking, that are both biological and cultural in character, is an essential part of confronting the continuing power of 'race' to orchestrate our social, economic, cultural and historical experiences. (*BC* 72)

Unlike biological or historical essentialism, the cultural essentialist school does not subscribe to the semantics of superiority or inferiority but pivots its notations of difference on inherent cultural incompatibilities between peoples. Gilroy however considers cultural essentialism as part of the new 'racisms that code biology in cultural terms' (*BC* 127). He considers such essentialism to be capable of breeding a violent camp mentality just as biological and historicist accounts of race do. However, the logic of bracketing cultural essentialism and the solidarities that it fosters, with biological and historical essentialism seems difficult to maintain. If different cultural formations are keen to maintain their uniqueness and identity, without subscribing to any aggressive designs against other configurations, or violently enforcing its disciplinary codes on its members, can we oppose them on any realistic or altruistic grounds? This question does not seem to yield a satisfactory answer in anti-essentialist theory. Lentin, who considers race-perceptions based on cultural dynamics to turn essentialist in character much like naturalist racism, cites how such theorizings are used to legitimize anti-immigration and segregationist policies (Lentin, 106). This is a weighty argument; but it should not be used as an excuse for a blanket denunciation of cultural solidarities provided that they are not grounded on false claims as to genetic programming or racially determined instincts.

In fact, much of the anti-essentialist objections to culture-based solidarities that might incline toward essentialist forms can

be read as a reaction to the excesses perpetrated under the label of racially formed nation-states. They have been responsible for some of the most atrocious savageries in the previous century in the form of Auschwitzes and Gazas. On a lesser scale, but importantly enough they are still responsible for many of the social inequities and evils. However, one important question still remains unanswered here. Culture is a complex historical formulation which might articulate itself temporally in territorial or trans-territorial formulations and manifestations. If the solidarities that it affords can have a soothing and salutary effect on its members, without making inordinate demands on those within and without its boundaries, should it be considered objectionable?

Gilroy points to the camp mentality that cultural solidarities can foster. He dreads the prospect of such solidarities breeding an unwholesome environment where individual identities are evened out for the sake of the larger group identities. Such identities, that draws their energy from primordial cultural locations are susceptible to an easy process of petrification, he warns (Gilroy 103-15). Even if this is granted to be a valid argument, we should not fail to see how cultural solidarities are often invoked as defensive mechanisms against imperial and paraimperial tendencies. It is such solidarities whether invoked by Gandhi, Mandela or Arafat that gave the colonized people the psychological armor to resist colonial designs.

Gilroy's treatment of collective solidarities, whether it be that of the armed and exploitative oppressor or the unarmed and exploited oppressed, with the same skepticism is troubling (*BC* 97-131). His fear of the fascist potential latent in such solidarities is not entirely unfounded given the pattern of the events that unfolded in the post-colonial world, especially in Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe. But this danger of group solidarities degenerating into authoritarian forms cannot be said to follow a universal pattern. It was the congress under the leadership of Gandhi that led the Indian freedom struggle. Despite all the degeneration it has been subject to, the solidarity that it inspired is still viewed as a counter-Fascist collective by even its detractors. Part of the reason for the opposition voiced by Gilroy to culture-based solidarity springs from an essentially western notion of

identity and individual freedom. Gilroy explains how collective identity is always formed in opposition to something extrinsic to a collectivity's body politic (*BC* 102-109). In other words, it is always defined through the ontology of 'insider' and 'outsider.' Ziauddin Sardar notes how this is a uniquely western notion and how non-western societies had developed their own sense of identity dispensing with any notion of an essential opposition toward the Other (Sardar 1998: 263). Identity thus conceived is in no great danger of assuming fascist overtones any more than a collective of anti-essentialist cultural theorists. My argument is: cultural solidarity, whether it can be treated 'essentialist' or not cannot be conflated with naturalist or 'historicist' essentialisms, especially with those varieties of them that espouse hierarchical models. Sardar points to how the conception of individual freedom and self in Eastern societies is inextricably bound up with notions of collective self and identity (Sardar, 1998: 65, 241-42). The kind of anchorage that such solidarities provide and the soothing effect that they have on the individuals has a logic that goes beyond the logic of what Gilroy terms as 'the allure of race.' I will be discussing the alternatives provided by Gilroy for cultural and political solidarity later in this essay, after discussing how anti-essentialist discourse in modern cultural studies has to do with the wider post-structuralist discourse that is now fashionable.

Race: A Signifier

Stuart Hall considers 'race' to be a floating signifier which is from time to time invested with a variety of semantic contents:

Race is a signifier which can be linked to other signifiers in a representation. Its meaning is relational and it is constantly subject to redefinition to different cultures, different moments. There is always a curtain sliding of meaning always something left unsaid about race. This is a floating signifier. (Quoted by Lentin 47).

The veracity of these claims is to an extent vindicated by the associations that the black body has acquired over the years from the earlier inferior status to the now superhuman dimension. As Hall suggests human body, whether black or white, can be seen as a text that can be decoded and interpreted variously in different

contexts. It is important to note the close affinity this theorizing has with post-structuralist and by extension post-modern discourse.

Drawing heavily, from Saussurean linguistics –not withstanding its attempts to subvert it- post-structuralism considers language, and by extension the world as perceived through it, as a system of signs that are inherently unstable. According to this view it is not only race that is a signifier, but everything else: from clothes to sex to food. In other words, all that we have is signs and our notions of reality are always negotiated by their positionalities in a network. The signs acquire meaning only through their position vis-à-vis and the interplay with other signs or signifiers. The meaning that a specific sign acquires depends on the cultural investments that a particular community makes in it. Using a crude analogy from stock markets, one can say the value of a signifier may be subject to bullish or bearish tendencies.

The whole issue hence boils down to one of the nature of reality and signs. If we have only signs and if race is only one among myriad other signifiers that has been culturally constructed and available to be deconstructed, can its status be equated to that of other things that we perceive as 'reality' but are actually mere cultural 'signs'? An Extreme post-modernist -whose affinity with post-structuralists cannot be gainsaid- like Baudrillard, despite all the annotations he made, had stated that something as momentous as the First Gulf War had not taken place; all that we had was a bombardment of signs and images (quoted by Malpas 126-27) For the wider world outside the cozy comforts of the academia, Gulf war was something real not least because of the endless queues that they witnessed before the gas stations that ran short of oil but because of the countless sufferings that it caused humanity.

Notwithstanding Baudrillard's intention of driving home the issue of the disproportionate dominance of signs in contemporary life, the fact is there is something called fact outside the manipulative network of signs and images. And some of these facts, especially those which have to do with racial oppression, economic exploitation and cultural disenfranchisement are harsher than fiction. Here the alliance of anti-essentialist egalitarians with post-structuralist fetishists

of sign will only make their genuine case appear hazy and dubious.

According to modern science, humanity belongs to a single species and the difference between humans is largely superficial. This is a point that even essentialists belonging to the historicist and cultural variety are ready to grant. In this scenario the use of post-structuralist arguments to deconstruct race seems to have the danger of turning the issue of racism to one of semantic squabbling and away from the live issues that affect the lives of real people. Tying the ideological bandwagon of racelessness with poststructuralism, so seems to draw out the controversy into a semantic cul-de-sac. Lentin's charge against Gilroy of focusing too much on semantics is relevant in this context (Lentin, 2008: 92).

There is no doubt, post-structuralist discourse has been fashionable for the last few decades (it is notably one of the words for which Gilroy has a great fascination as can be deduced from his fear of sounding 'unfashionable'- e.g. Gilroy, 2004: X1, 29). It is debatable to what extent this fascination for what is trendy in the academic market has influenced anti-essentialist discourses on 'race.' Its influence can be readily glimpsed from Stuart Hall's observation about the new black cultural productions: these products, he informs us, instead of trying to suppress, engage the Derridean 'différance' rather than difference. My point is not to dispute these claims: since post-structuralist discourse by Derrida's own admission is subject to process of getting 'deconstructed,' it is probably a task unworthy of labor (Bertens, 2003: 119-35). My question is how cultural theorists can formulate a definitive politics to oppose racism if they are themselves standing on such a *terra infirma*. A faint realization as to negative consequence of this is evident in Gilroy's observation:

At a theoretical level, race needs to be viewed much more contingently as a precarious discursive construction. To note this does not, of course, imply that it is any less real or effective politically. (Gilroy, 1992: 50).

The concern here is precisely what Gilroy secretly dreads: won't treating race as a 'discursive' formation weaken the effectiveness of the politics of anti-racism and make it a topic of endless academic jargon-trotting? This doubt is relevant

especially since post-structuralism and postmodernism have been accused of being part of a larger western conspiracy to dominate and subjugate the other (Sardar, 1998). Toni Morrison's statement that 'the people who invented the hierarchy of "race" when it was convenient for them ought not to be the ones to explain it away, now that it does not suit their purpose for it to exist' (quoted by Kerr, 2007:363) springs from a similar awareness. Is treating race as a mere 'sign' or 'signifier' by the academics ensconced in the comforts of western academia itself a sign of the discourse of 'race' being shaped by the dominant discourse of our times? Isn't this discourse with its active collusion with other discourses on 'multiculturalism' and 'hybridity' shaped by the dominant market forces? These are questions that yield no easy answers.

No mere question of black and white

The issue of racism as Lentin explains is not merely an issue of black versus white (Lentin 39-56). We can trace the genesis and evolution of most of the modern conflicts from open warfare, to intermittent communal conflagrations to looming 'threats' of migration to some forms of racism. It is common enough to hear talks of our having entered a post-race era after the end of Jim Crowism and the dismantling of the apartheid in South Africa. But racism in new garbs is making a strong comeback: Aren't the daily killings in the battlefields of Palestine the result of naked and brutal racism? Isn't racism in a more civilized form responsible for the unwholesome debates surrounding Turkey's entry to the EU? Isn't it a more distilled form of racism that is in operation in the panic sirens being sounded at the sight of a veiled woman in some of the European countries?

These question marks can be endlessly drawn out. The point is: racism has only changed its complexion and redesigned its contours. The question whether race is only a discursive formation or merely a floating sign doesn't make racism any less sinister. The essentialist versus anti-essentialist controversy has rightly tilted the scales in favor of an egalitarian conception of humanity, though, as I argued, there might still be some bones over which the two schools may fight for a long time to come. However, the problem of racism should be confronted and contested

vigorously with political determination and the status of race as a matter of academic debate- where it might be given the rank of a floating sign, signifier or culturally determined code or simulacra, as the latest market trend indicates- should not deter the thrust of such struggles.

The reason for making this observation is the way 'race' and 'racism' –which at least in the western consciousness is a pair of Siamese twins- has been treated in some of the modern texts dealing with the topic. Paul Gilroy, for example, sees, or at least seems to suggest, the solution to all racism in the magic mantras of diaspora and cosmopolitanism. As he himself admits at the beginning of *Between Camps* (BC 1X) his futuristic dream sounds very much utopian. I doubt whether considering 'race' as a discursive category - and by implication merely a discursive category- has prompted even strong humanist thinkers like Gilroy to turn their attention from the real issue to an excessive pre-occupation with semantics. His notions of diaspora and cosmopolitan and their ability to ensure a post-racial world sounds so utopian when faced with questions as the nature of diaspora that a Palestinian child in Gaza can conceive of or the kind of cosmopolitanism that a Rwandan child caught in the racial or ethnic crossfire can dream, let alone conceive of.

Despite his sincere intentions, Gilroy's dreams of a world beyond the camp-mentality remains very much Atlantico-centric if not Eurocentric. All those heroic personages that he presents as cosmopolitan liberated individuals from Olaudah Equiano to Phillis Wheatley to Rachael Correa are people who savored the delights/horrors the world on the upper rims of Atlantic. In *Postcolonial Melancholia* he deservedly praises Correa, the American who died throwing herself before an Israeli bulldozer involved in a demolition drive in Gaza. For him she represents the ideal cosmopolitan. But he does not have any words of praise for the fighting Palestinian child throwing him/herself before the Israeli troops armed with nothing but stones: surely he/she doesn't fit in the picture of his liberated diasporic cosmopolitan.

In fact, I dread whether considering cultural solidarities on par with collectivities based biological notions of race and racial superiority will undermine the anti-essentialist case. It's also doubtful whether such anti-essentialist essentialism won't create

a new cultural solidarity of a class of raceless and sexless humans, mainly western, arrayed themselves against sexually and culturally organized communities that are still keen to maintain a degree of 'autonomy and cultural continuity. Gilroy's diasporic and cosmopolitan individual appears like one who can only exist in the temperate regions of the west. His idea of a black community that turns 'away from the past' (BC 336) and re-orient itself 'Black to the future' will remain utopian as long as the ghosts of the past continues to haunt the present in viscerally modern permutations.

To sum up: the controversy surrounding 'essentialism' in its various forms now presents a very hazy picture: while theories of biological superiority and naturalism stands disproven, ideas regarding cultural essentialism will continue to be debated for a long time to come and there seems to be no definitive end in sight to these controversies. The alternative models for the cultural collectives suggested by anti-essentialists remain largely utopian in nature and we cannot rule out the possibility of anti-essentialists themselves forming a new camp in this terminological and ideological warfare.

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Historiographical Positions on Indian Caste system

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A host of studies in the discipline of History has attempted to reveal that formation and development of caste system is historically and culturally contingent upon the complex process of production and distribution of material resources and ideological domination in various periods in Indian history. The studies which are based on the premises of historical materialism provided a general hypothesis of the formation of caste in which the insights given by D D Kosambi is significant. According to Kosambi the advance of agrarian village economy over tribal country is the first great social revolution in India.¹ The major historical change in ancient India was not between dynasties but in the advance of agrarian village settlements over tribal lands, metamorphosing tribesmen into peasant cultivators.² The new social organization that took place in Gangetic basin, which was different from that of what existed in Harappan culture, gave germination to the caste under totally different technic of production. The beginning of caste system can be traced to the formation of a servile group from the *dāsās* and the origin of caste endogamy is attributed to the process of assimilation of Aryan and Pre-Aryan into a single civil society. Therefore, he postulates, 'caste as class on a primitive level of production'.³

The entire course of Indian history, Kosambi says, 'shows tribal elements being fused into a general society. This is the very

foundation of the most striking Indian social feature, namely the caste.⁴ The formation of servile caste from the defeated *dāsa* and *sūdra* tribes led to the development of new relations of production in Aryan society, this was the origin of the older northern caste system.⁵ Transition from tribe or guild to caste means primarily enrolment of the group on a hierarchical scheme of general society, under Brahman sanction.⁶ However, in south India caste cum class was developed under external stimulation of the materially and technologically superior Aryans and the aborigines of different cultural levels and territories. Kosambi argues that caste and occupational levels became rigid only in the stagnant Indian villages with the emergence of feudalism.⁷ 'Because of the caste system' Kosambi wrote, 'India had helotage, not slavery....'⁸ 'Caste is an important reflection of the actual relations of production, particularly at the time of its formation.'⁹

Devraj Chanana has studied the development of the slave or *dāsas* in different periods in early India.¹⁰ However, Chanana does not focus his study of the slavery in relation to the untouchable castes. He says that it is difficult to assign the term *dasa* to any particular *varna* in society.¹¹ It was in the Buddhist context that there developed institution of slavery in large scale as society and state was expanded to evolve multiple forms of subordinations.¹² Slavery is vividly described in the Arthasāstra in relation to the economic conditions that existed in the period.¹³ Chanana also emphasized the point that there was no impurity attached to the *dāsās* since they worked and lived in close proximity to their masters. It indicates that there existed the marked differences between the *Dāsās* and impure castes. Devraj Chanana and R S Sharma have shown that slaves were employed in large number in the production process in certain regions of India in post-Vedic and Mauryan times. However, Marxist historians in India generally endorse the view that slaves did not constitute the main basis of production at any stage.¹⁴

R S Sharma worked on early and early medieval India with a Marxist perspective¹⁵ and probed caste as being rooted in material conditions closely allied with the super- structural dimension in politics.¹⁶ However, it could not provide the base for a social class of exploiters. The early Vedic society was neither fully egalitarian nor class divided.¹⁷ It was a 'small scale non

monetary peasant society' characterized by unequal distribution of the produce of land as well as the prominent tribal features.¹⁸ The social structure from the sixth century BCE to the fifth CE is suggested to be a Vaishyas –Sudra based society in which Vaishyas were peasants and Sudras were artisans and hired labourers.¹⁹ Sharma has studied the origin and development of the Sudras²⁰ and he stated that the term Sudra was not always used to refer to conditions of subordination and oppression but also referred to the ruling elites, especially during early medieval times.²¹ Attempts have been made to study the various aspects of labour and forced labour practices that existed in ancient and early medieval India.²²

Romila Thapar has focused on the changes that took place in the Gangetic valley for the explanation of formation of a non egalitarian social order and the origin of caste. Thapar explains the transition of a lineage based society to the state society in the Gangetic valley.²³ She argues that communities that existed in Vedic period practiced reciprocity and redistribution and was based on lineage and house holding economy. The lineage distinction appeared in the form of that between *rājanya* and *viś* and in later Vedic times the former had become the senior lineage and the latter was meant for the junior lineage. Kin- based differences may give rise to class only in productive economy. The development of these institutions led to the formation of the state. Thapar held the view that the functional aspects of castes appear to have been *jāti* and *varna* represented the theory of the social structure. *Jāti* relationships represented the actual way in which society functioned. *Varna* became 'ritual rank' whereas *jāti* was the indication of the actual status.²⁴

The untouchables and untouchability received prime importance in the studies of Vivekananda Jha who concentrated in the early north Indian societies to formulate a general frame work for the study of the origin of untouchability and the communities of untouchables.²⁵ He has argued that the notion of pollution had historically been developed at different periods which incorporated several groups into the category of *asprasya*.²⁶ He also highlights the way in which a number of ethnic and occupational groups became servile groups with the mark of untouchability in their social and cultural life. These groups are

designated as impure and various disabilities were imposed upon them along with severe punishments. These untouchables and outcaste social groups developed through the historical evolution of society from pre-state, state and to the feudal society. Jha is able to develop a class analysis which enabled him to postulate that untouchability developed out of the notion of pollution that existed in the pre-Mauryan phase of the post-Vedic class society in northern India.²⁷ The class relation and the ideology of *varna* and *jāti* developed simultaneously. Buddhists addressed the caste inequality and the disabilities of the outcastes and *Candālas* with ethical and moral notions and Buddhists treated *varna* as an ideological framework. He concluded that both Buddhism in the sixth century C E and the bhakti movements in the early medieval times did not succeed in dismantling the domination of *varna* ideology and the practice of untouchability.

Suvira Jaiswal has argued that the evolution of caste system cannot be detached from the emergence of patriarchy, class division and state.²⁸ By the close of the Later Vedic period the *varnas* were being clearly distinguished on the basis of caste organization: hierarchy, inherited occupational specialization and endogamy.²⁹ The patriarchy was intrinsic to the process of stratification in Vedic times and clan endogamy that existed came to be transformed into an instituted form to regulate and reproduce patriarchy as well as the hierarchy of social groups.³⁰ *Jātis* emerged within the *varna* system through the fragmentation as well as the incorporation of tribal communities within a structure which regulated hierarchy through marriage rules and endogamy, and privileged heredity or birth in a particular lineage, leading to the use of the term *jāti* for indicating membership in a particular community. Thus, *varnas* were extended to provide the institutional and ideological base for the growth of a wider society.³¹

Uma Chakravarti has used the Buddhist sources and the texts of the popular traditions like *jātakas* to offer a very constructive understanding of the social stratification process in early India.³² She also locates the cultural subordination and the economic oppression which had led to the caste subordination and oppression of the subordinated groups. Buddhist texts reflect the existing conception of high and low prevalent in the area in

which they were located.³³ The Buddhist categorization or system of social ranking was based on the principle that those who work for themselves as owners and producers as high and, whereas those who work for others as low.³⁴ The manual and non manual works were treated as low and high respectively. The people who were associated with the low material culture like *Chandāla*, *Pukkusa*, *Vena* and *Nesāda* were treated as *nīca kula* or *hīna jātīs*. It indicated that *jāti* and *kula* appear in the concrete situations.³⁵

Occupational divisions among the people were given more importance in Buddhist literature and *kula* division was used to indicate the social stratification. The function that one actually performed provided the basic identity of the individual.³⁶ Uma Chakravarti categorically assumes that *varna* divisions constituted purely conceptual scheme that had no application, *jāti* was both a conceptual and actual scheme of categories based on ascribed status.³⁷ Importantly, Buddhist did not subscribe to the views of the brahmanical *dharmaśāstra* literature as the brahmanical model of depicting the social stratification failed to explain the political and economic life world and was distanced from the empirical reality of the time.³⁸ Chakravarti has argued that the representation of a system of stratification independent of brahmanical scheme has always existed in India.³⁹ She has attempted to analyse the bondage and servitude including the servitude of *dāsīs* that had been developed in relation to the *dāsa-karmakāras* from the Vedic period to the period of the Guptas.⁴⁰

Chakravarti further clarifies the process of both class formation and caste system from gender perspective⁴¹ and she argues that it is difference between class as a system of production and caste as a system of both production and reproduction that distinguishes the Indian system of stratification from other regions and introduces the specific complexities of the Indian situations. Caste cannot be reproduced without endogamy and it is for this reason that endogamy has been regarded as a tool for the manifestation and perpetuation of caste and gender subordination.⁴² She says that brahmanical patriarchy is a mechanism to preserve land, women, and ritual quality within it. The whole of the complex formation of social status, economic

production and social reproduction is contingent on what has been characterized as 'brahmanical patriarchy'.⁴³ Brahmanical patriarchy implies the model of patriarchy outlined in the brahmanical prescriptive texts, to be enforced by the coercive power of the king, or those who act on behalf of the king. This set of norms has shaped the ideology of the upper castes in particular. It continues to be the underpinning of beliefs and practices extant even today among these castes and is often emulated by the lower castes especially when seeking upward mobility. The caste system and brahmanical patriarchy work to the advantage of a very few men at the top of the order, thus, all others who are complicit in this system only facilitate its reproduction.

Subscribing to the Kosambian argument in analyzing the social stratification process, Irfan Habib tried to historicise the *jāti-varna* system of the subcontinent and he says that the *varnas* mentioned in Rig Veda is more a description of social classes than the caste. The hereditary division of labour and endogamy did not exist in early Vedic period.⁴⁴ When primitive hunting and food gathering tribes entered the general society they were subjugated by the advanced peasant communities and consequently became the lowest *jāts*. Those tribes who were excluded from participating in agriculture became a large reservoir of servile landless labour and available for work to peasants and landholders. They were the original untouchable castes.⁴⁵

Caste system operated in two different worlds of labour, caste labour belonged to a natural economy and the artisan of the town.⁴⁶ The self sufficiency of the village sustained the hereditary artisans and the servile groups. It not only isolated the village but also enlarged its capacity to pool a larger part of the surplus to the ruling class. The hereditary occupation enabled the artisanal groups to accumulate the special skill from generation to generation.⁴⁷ Being a relatively rigid form of division of labour, caste system was part of relations of production. It functioned as much ease in a natural economy as a market oriented one and it was a system of class exploitation rather than a fabric of imagined purity.⁴⁸ This structure of hereditary caste labour in villages and in towns, Habib argues, is practically a continuation from ancient times to the eighteenth century.

Nilakanta Sastri and his students who studied the Pallavas and Vijayanagara history did not give any constructive attention to the question of caste, the formation of untouchability and the oppression of marginal caste groups.⁴⁹ Sastri makes only passing comments on the subordinated and marginal castes in his voluminous work and commented only on slavery and agrarian labour rather than untouchability and the untouchable castes.⁵⁰ Describing the economic life of the village C Minakshi makes a passing reference to the untouchable castes as 'in the midst of the cultivated lands far removed from the main village the Pulayas or Parayas lived.'⁵¹ She also says that the Pulayas and Parayas were the lowest in the social order and lived in *paracheri* with the condition of little better than that of serfs.⁵² This kind of treatment is also made by T V Mahalingam in his study of the Vijayanagar.⁵³ The existence of a hierarchical system of caste division is attested by him⁵⁴ and he also subscribes to the view, mainly following the information given by the foreign travelers' account, that there existed slavery in Vijayanagara⁵⁵ and the rulers of the kingdom upheld the *varnāśramadharmā*.⁵⁶ However, the question of caste oppression and the untouchability do not get attention in the works of Minakshi and Mahalingam.

An important study concerning the economic conditions of South India during the period 1000- 1500 C E is done by A Appadorai in which the material basis of social existence of the people is described.⁵⁷ The types of village communities⁵⁸ existed in different localities in South India and how it contrasted with the view given by the colonial administrators' on the Indian village communities⁵⁹ are also described in this work. Detailed descriptions of land tenure system and the agriculture practices of South India are given. The small tenants and the hired labourers are base of agriculture practices.⁶⁰ He argues that slavery undoubtedly existed in South India in the medieval period.⁶¹

Kathleen Gough has tried to postulate the theory of mode of production with the notions of Asiatic mode of production⁶² to analyse the changes in the political economy and the production relation from the first half of the ninth century CE until the middle of the eighteenth century in South India in general and Thanjavur region in particular.⁶³ The land tax and the rent were identical, upper share called *mēlvāram* belonging to the king and

the lower share called the *Kīlvāram* to the cultivators. The *vellanvagai* villages were communes containing a kinship community of peasants or *Vellalars* together with specialized smaller caste and kinship groups of village artisans and other village servants. These inhabitants held the land in joint possession.⁶⁴ In such villages each peasant household organized part of its own cultivation, but communal labour persisted for major undertakings such as digging out irrigation channels and transplanting, harvesting and threshing rice.⁶⁵ The artisans and other village servants belonged to separate endogamous caste below the peasants. The village slaves were called *adimai* and most of them were descended from the conquered tribes who had earlier possessed the lands out of which the irrigation state was carved. They were called Parayar and they lived as separate kinship communities.⁶⁶ They specialized in ploughing wet rice lands, transplanting the seedling, harvesting, threshing the crops and they were attached to the land.⁶⁷ Slaves, and perhaps ordinary peasants, were corveed to build and repair irrigation channels and to quarry and transport stone for palaces and temples, make roads and drag heavy ruins of royalty. They were also used large scale irrigation and drainage works consisting of dams, reservoirs and numerous channels leading from the Kavery.⁶⁸

As far as Kerala in the early medieval period is concerned, Kathleen Gough argues in line with the AMP and substantiated that the climate and terrain along with the heavy rainfall and numerous rivers and streams Kerala had no need for large irrigation works and this also influenced to develop the political structure which hardly developed centralized state system and bureaucracy.⁶⁹ It is because this that she characterizes the economy and society that existed in Kerala as 'feudal.' The Brahman *ūr* and the settlements of royal and noble aristocrats are conceptualized as a kind of manor where they 'owned' the village in a form of a possession known as *janmam*.⁷⁰ The estates of the temples are autonomous. At the village level, personal and inter-household ties of service bound the village lord to his military *Nāyar*, and below them to each household of artisan or other village servants, to separate the households of tenant serfs of the *Tiyyar* or *Izhava* caste, and to the lowest Untouchable households of patriarchal slaves who carried out rice cultivation. The slaves were fewer in Kerala than in Thanjavur for wet rice

region was less. The important point she makes is that the tenant-serfs who cultivated dry lands and orchards were more numerous in Kerala.⁷¹

Noboru Karashima has studied the Chōla inscriptions⁷² and says that the inscriptions of Rajaraja, the Chola king, have references to certain *tīndāchēri*, the residential area of untouchable communities.⁷³ It also mentions certain *parai-chēri*, the residential area of the Paraiyar. Karashima is of opinion that there was a faire prevalence of *paraichēri* in the villages in the *Cholamandalam*.⁷⁴ The *tīndāchēri* and *paraichēri* are one and the same. The social position of Paraiyar was at the bottom of *jāti* hierarchy. Karashima states that the Paraiyas and Pulayas had become slaves to be transferred [*adimailadiyār*] by the fourteenth century.⁷⁵ *Pallar* who were a community who lived mostly in Thanjavur and Tiruchirappalli Districts appeared to have become slaves which are attested in the nineteenth century palm- leaf documents⁷⁶, much later than the Chola and Vijayanagar period. Karashima concludes that certain communities were considered untouchables during the Chola period, though their identity was not very clear. Parayas and Pulayas were engaged in menial jobs and were made slaves [*adimai*] and transferred from one owner to another. He states that the conditions of these untouchables do not seem to have changed much since the Chola period.⁷⁷

Karashima has studied the historical nature of village community and the structure of power network over those village communities.⁷⁸ Communal ownership and the economic and social independence or self sufficiency was often attributed as the common nature of the village communities.⁷⁹ There were different residential areas in the villages⁸⁰ and Parayas in those villages were employed for cultivation operations.⁸¹ They have separate well and cremation grounds, *paraikulakuzhi* and *paraichuchudukātu*.⁸² However, the villages did not have as independent a nature as has been presumed by historians following the view taken by Maine and Marx.⁸³ Dharma Kumar studied the land ownership in medieval south India especially the communal ownership of the village and the collective possession of the extended households.⁸⁴

The social life of the *Ādisūdra* caste during seventeenth

and eighteenth century in western Deccan and Konkan region under the Maratha kingdom / *Peshva* government has been studied.⁸⁵ The *Mahar*, *Mang* and *Chambar* were the *Ādisūdra* communities and they were historically incorporated to the exploited framework of the village system called Vatan system. The contact with an *Ādisūdra* was regarded as bringing impurity which was also considered to be transmittable to other persons and various purificatory ceremonies were conducted to the eradication of such impurity.⁸⁶ There were measures to avoid physical contact with the *Ādisūdras* in villages, temples etc.⁸⁷ To prevent any physical contact with the *Ādisūdras* their dwelling places were restricted and their settlement called *mahārvāda* were located outside the village walls.⁸⁸ Sometimes, their dwelling places were relocated and occasionally changed due to the hard measures of the practices of untouchability.⁸⁹ Caste was officially ranked, a stratified caste ranking was existed among the *Ādisūdras*, and each caste was represented by its head to the state or its representatives and *vatan* system enabled the effective control of the various castes within a frame work of exploitation.⁹⁰ The sin – penance, *dōsa prāyachitta*, ideology must have been used by the medieval state in Deccan to the continuation of caste exploitation and subordination of the marginal castes.⁹¹

There are two major strands of approach to the varna – *jāti* system that existed in pre-modern Kerala. One is the ethnographic understanding of the caste and another is the view which emphasizes the ideas and values of the temple centered Brahman villages that created the caste system. Early writers on Kerala either followed the travelers' account and the reportage given by missionaries and merchants or they subscribed to the ethnographic understanding of caste which was largely influenced by the oriental / colonial interpretations. William Logan's position of the *varna – jāti* system is important because it represented the leading administrative ideology. He followed the oriental colonial position of caste and he partially rejects the *Kēraḷōlpathi* tradition of claim held by the indigenous elites on customary land ownership and at the same time he subscribed to the brahmanical perception of caste represented in *Kēraḷōlpathi*.⁹² Missionary discourse on Kerala's caste system has a history and early European accounts of Lingschoten and Vathema was mediated

by the brahmanic perception of caste as they were the informants to these missionaries. These missionaries primitivised the indigenous people with the European predilections.⁹³ This can also be seen in the works of French Missionary, Abbe j Dubois.⁹⁴ The missionary discourse on caste has systematically been started with the establishment of London Missionary Society [LMS, 1795 C E] and the Church Mission Society [CMS, 1799 C E].

The most important representative of the missionary engagement with the varna –*jati* system in Kerala is Samuel Mateer who was an LMS missionary. The basic premise on which Mateer developed his argument is the Aryan theory and he argues for the existence of antagonistic Dravidian and Aryan Brahman groups.⁹⁵ The Aryan theory became an explanatory mode of analysis in the administrative ideology and missionary discourse on caste.⁹⁶ The historians who wrote on Kerala in the beginning of the twentieth century largely subscribed to the views developed by the administrative ideology and the missionary discourse on caste which were based on the colonial ethnology and racial science.⁹⁷ The leading exponent of the ethnological understanding of caste is L K Ananthakrishna Ayyar who followed the typical colonial anthropological position on caste.⁹⁸ K P Padmanabha Menon largely subscribed to the views of the medieval travelers, missionaries and on the colonial anthropologists and developed a synthetic theory of caste formation.⁹⁹

Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai can be considered as the pioneer to give a historical perspective to the origin and growth of the caste system. He viewed the Sangam period as a period of casteless society.¹⁰⁰ The transfer of land to the Brahmans was one of the consequences of the 'aryanisation' of Kerala starting from seventh century CE.¹⁰¹ It was during the eleventh C E that the Brahman centered land system, when the forces unleashed by the 'Chera –Chola war' helped the brahmanas to acquire vast area of land and became wealthy and powerful janmis.¹⁰² He argued that the fall of the united polity in Kerala under the '*Kulasekhara* Empire' in the later period of the war and rise on its ruins of innumerable petty principalities helped the Brahmans to extend their sway further, when they made the caste system and *janmi* centered land system more complete.¹⁰³

The typical example of understanding the caste in terms

of the brahmanical ideology and the temple centered village can be seen in the works of M G S Narayanan. Aryan- Dravidian binary with functional relativism can be seen in the works of M G S Narayanan who has argued that the Dravidian society consisting of *Īzhavar*, *Vāṇiyar*, *Vannār*, *Taccar*, *Tattār*, *Vellalar*, Pulayar and others were divided on the basis of hereditary profession and their dependence of Aryan Brahman settlements made the caste system more rigid.¹⁰⁴ The evolution and consolidation of caste system is directed by the well –organised ‘Aryan Brahmins.’¹⁰⁵ The hereditary occupations of groups such as *Īzhavar*, *Vāṇiyar*, *Vannār*, *Taccar*, *Tattār*, *Vellalar*, Pulayar probably took place even without the agency or inspiration of the Brahmins and this type of hereditary occupation provided a powerful impetus to the evolution of sub castes within the general frame work of caste.¹⁰⁶ He formulates a view that the caste system existed without any tension or conflict and there prevailed a general atmosphere of harmony and peace¹⁰⁷ in the social fabric. Kesavan Veluthat has argued that the tribal population got transformed into peasants and other occupational groups into so many *jātis*.¹⁰⁸ The primary producers were bonded labourers and the surplus labour at their disposal was expropriated mostly in the form of a labour rent.¹⁰⁹

According to Rajan Gurukkal the period between the seventh and ninth centuries witnessed the proliferation of Brahman villages and expansion of irrigated agriculture in wetland which integrated the non kin labourers into the labour process. The functional association of producers, artisans and craftsmen constituted the social formation of the period. The period from the eight to the tenth centuries is characterized by the proliferation and consolidation of temple centered agrarian villages of the Brahmins. The interaction of landed households into corporate settlements and the formation of larger agrarian society corresponded to the emergence of temples marked the expansion of agriculture through Brahman dominance as well as super imposition of superior land rights of the Brahmins. The temples employed large number of people in its various services on the basis of a system of service tenure.¹¹⁰ The nature of rights over the land and the level of entitlement to the producers determined the strata of the people and aggregate designed the social relation

of the period. The dominant position of the Brahmans that was crucial in the operationalisation of *jāti* hierarchy.¹¹¹ What is Brahmanical is not *jāti* but the notion of hierarchy.¹¹²

The amateur scholars have attempted to unravel certain issues involved in the writings of professional historians who worked on caste formation and the consolidation of *varna-jāti* system. Scholars like P K Balakrishnan polemically postulated certain notions in which caste has been understood as a system of perpetual backwardness and which became a category to primitivise the economy and society of the early and early medieval Kerala.¹¹³ However, the scholars who were concerned over the former untouchables took a constructive critical engagement with the positions taken by historians, mostly of Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai, and tried to develop narratives of the historical past of the *Atiyār* and the untouchable communities of Kerala.¹¹⁴

Since the main concern is to know the way in which hierarchical social order had been consolidated over the centuries, it is necessary to make a critical evaluation of some of the important theories which focus on how caste has emerged in history and the historiographical positions on the development of the ideology and practice of caste system. The social science practices in India give much emphasize on functional aspects of the caste including the ideology of the caste system, namely, on its ritual aspects, to the exclusion of material conditions and questions of power. This is a consequence of focusing on the brahmanical view drawn from brahmanical texts.¹¹⁵ It disinclined to engage with the materialistic interpretations given by historians¹¹⁶ and the counter view of dalit writers who have provided on the caste system by focusing on the experiential dimensions of caste based oppression.¹¹⁷ B R Ambedkar's writings on the history of Shudras and Dalits were not cited in studies of social history; nevertheless they had an indirect impact.¹¹⁸ However, the theory propounded by Louis Dumont, that is so much more popular because it follows the brahmanical perception of caste as it emphasizes the purity and impurity as the fundamental governing principle on caste.¹¹⁹

The Brahman informants and brahmanic upper caste scribes informed the early European travelers the social ordering of the

people only after placing themselves in a privileged position in their ideal universe. It was because of this, the practice of untouchability was conceived as an ideology in the ideal universe of brahmanical self perception. This brahmanical self perception about the social realities and material practice of cultural specificities inverted to represent in their ideal social universe as an ideological schema. It was this indigenous elite's self perception that was followed by the early European travelers and subsequently became a frame of reference in the missionary discourse and the colonial position of caste.¹²⁰

The colonial position on caste is that the brahmanical self perception regarding caste hierarchy is inverted to constitute the 'other' in the form of a stagnant, inflexible hierarchy based on racial differences which enabled to ossify occupational differentiations.¹²¹ It was this position on caste that became a prism through which the colonial rulers began to see Indians and the whole Indian society. Caste was seen as representing the worldview of Indian social and cultural life in a stagnant and degenerated form. The non-ritual, even non religious elements which always existed in the caste system as part of labour process and some aspects of inter-caste relations were theoretically ruled out of the system.¹²²

Notes

- 1 DD Kosambi, The Basis of Ancient Indian History, in Combined Methods in Indology and Other Writings, Compiled , Edited and Introduced by Brajudalal Chattopadhyaya, op.cit., p.308.
- 2 Ibid, p.312.
- 3 D D Kosambi, Culture and Civilization in Ancient India in Historical outline, p.50.
- 4 D D Kosambi, An Introduction to the Study of Indian History, p.56.
- 5 D D Kosambi, Culture and Civilization....., op. cit., p.50.
- 6 DD Kosambi, The Basis of Ancient Indian History, in

- Combined Methods in Indology and Other Writings, op. cit, p.317.
- 7 Suvira Jaiswal, Caste: Origin, Function and Dimensions of Change, [Manohar, Delhi, 2000], p.47.
 - 8 D D Kosambi, Marxism and Ancient Indian Culture in Combined Methods in Indology and Other Writings, op.cit, p.788.
 - 9 D D Kosambi, On the Development of Feudalism in India, in Combined Method in Indology and Other Writings, op. cit, p.804.
 - 10 Devraj Chanana, Slavery in Ancient India, [People Publishing House, Delhi, [1960]1990].
 - 11 Differences in the evolution of slavery are due to differences in material and historical conditions, ibid, p.112.
 - 12 Ibid., pp.39-63.
 - 13 Ibid., pp.87-104.
 - 14 Suvira Jaiswal, Caste: Origin, Function and Dimensions of Change, [Manohar, Delhi, 2000].p.47.
 - 15 Romila Thapar, Ram Sharan Sharma, [1920-2001], Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.XLV1NO.38, September 17, 2011.
 - 16 R S Sharma, Social Changes in Early Medieval India [circa A.D.500-1200, [People Publishing House, Delhi, 1969]. R S Sharma, Material culture and Social Formation in Ancient India,[1983, Macmillan 1996],pp.23-55.
 - 17 R S Sharma, Mode of Production in Ancient India, in Rethinking India's Past, [OUP, Delhi, 2009, 2010], p.133. Suvira Jaiswal, Caste: Origin, Function and Dimension of Change, op. cit., pp.48-49.
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- 19 R S Sharma, Class Formation and Its Material Basis in the Upper Gangetic Basin [1000-500 BC]Indian Historical Review, Vol. 2:1, July 1975, pp.1-5.
- 20 R S Sharma, Sudras in Ancient India: A Social History of the Lower Order Down to Circa A.D. 600,[Motilal Banarsidass Publishersm, Delhi, 1958, Third Revised Edition,1990]
- 21 Aloka Parasher –Sen [Ed], Subordinate and Marginal Groups in Early India, [OUP, Delhi, 2004], Introduction, p.36.
- 22 P C Jain, Labour in Ancient India: From the Vedic Age up to the Gupta Period, [Sterling Publishers, New Delhi,1971]G K Rai, Forced Labour in Ancient and Early Medieval India, Indian Historical Review,Vol.3No.1,July 1976, pp.16-42.
- 23 Romila Thapar , From Lineage to State: Social Formation in the Mid-first Millennium BC in the Ganga Valley, [OUP Delhi,1984]. She explains the lineage theory in which elders enjoy authority and better access to resources at the cost of the juniors because of their kin based seniority. Thapar also describes the development of house holding economy which means a large , self sufficient households comprising several small houses , all belonging to the same kin group. The head of the households assumes power and authority over its members, and also employs labourers not belonging to the kin.
- 24 Romila Thapar, Ancient Indian Social History: Some Interpretation, [1978, OUP, Delhi, 1996], pp.36-35.
- 25 Vivekananda Jha, ‘Candala and the Origin of Untouchability’, Indian Historical Review, Vol.121-2July 1986-January11987, pp.3-36. The Brahmanical prescriptive literature, Budhist and Jaina literature, and also non Dharmasastric Sanskrit literature are used to reconstruct the history of untouchability up to the period 1200 CE.
- 26 Vivekananda Jha, ‘Stages in the History of Untouchables’,

- Indian Historical Review, Vol: 2, July1975; 'The History of Untouchability', Indian Historical Review, Vol.8:1-2 July1986- January 1987.
- 27 Vivekananda Jha, 'Candala and the Origin of Untouchability', op.cit.,pp.3-16.
- 28 Suvira Jaiswal, Caste: Origin, Function and Dimensions of Change op.cit., P.6.
- 29 Ibid., p.12
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also had a small collection of Izhava serfs and Untouchable
slaves attached to it, who worked the land which was leased
by the vassal house from the lord's estate and also that
possessed hereditarily on military service tenure by the
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Situating Malabar Coast in the Indian Ocean Trade Network: Developments in Late Medieval Times

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Introduction

As it is well known, from the ancient times onwards, the Malabar Coast had a significant space in the international trade network and which is substantiated by the archaeological and literary evidences. Most of the trading population of the globe including Chinese, Arabs, Yemenis, Greeks, Romans, Egyptians and Africans regularly paid visit to the port cities of the Malabar Coast and engaged in the trading activities. This land was considered to be a place of halt for traders on the way between the West and South East Asia.¹ The notices of Medieval travelers attest to the very fact that many a cities of Malabar served as the international trading emporia or trading marts.² Until the close of the fifteenth century there were no considerable changes in the pattern of trade. It was characterized by the free participation of any stakeholders without trespassing to the domains of the others. The predominant fact with regard to the Indian Ocean trade net work in ancient and early medieval times was the somewhat towering position of the Arab seafaring in it.³ However, by the period from the coming of the Portuguese up to the British,

there was a considerable shift in the arena of trade, most significant of which was the monopoly of the European trading enterprises. The present paper attempts to explore the developments occurred in the Indian Ocean trade and the role of Malabar Coast in the Indian Ocean trade network in the late medieval times.

The sixteenth century is a turning point where the Portuguese dominance became a reality in the case of Indian Ocean trade. They specifically hoped to have a large impact on the ocean; indeed, their empire in Asia was, notoriously a maritime one, extending very little distance into the hinterland. Throughout the sixteenth century the Portuguese followed a policy of obliterating the Asian merchants from the Arabian Sea.⁴ M.N. Pearson has delineated the centrality of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean.⁵

The two important areas of debate concerning the sea trade in the Indian Ocean in the sixteenth century according to Pearson were the community composition of the sea farers and economic position of the merchant passengers. It has been generally assumed that the ships of the Ocean in 1500 were nearly all Muslim-owned and manned. Indeed at one time scholars talked of a period of Arab dominance. This had however, if it ever existed, had certainly ended by the sixteenth century. The situation was, in fact quite complicated in 1500. Muslims, no doubt, did control the bulk of the trade and managed most of the ships, but does not mean any case these Muslims, were very diverse indeed. There were some big merchants and famous pilots who came from the Middle East, especially the Red Sea and Hadramauth region. The majority of Muslim ships were owned by more recently converted Muslims from Gujarat, Malabar and Bengal.⁶ Barbosa, the sixteenth century Portuguese traveler, has eloquently writes about the influence of Arab traders on the rulers of Malabar Coast, read Kerala.⁷ It is said that the activities of these traders were often geographically divided. Thus Red Sea and Middle East Muslims dominated the trade from Aden to Gujarat, but from Gujarat to Malacca, Gujarati Muslims were most important. If we take the argument of Pearson, the same sort of division appears in Malabar, where again trade to the Red Sea was controlled by Middle East Muslims, but the eastward

traffic to Malacca was handled by various Indian Muslims.⁸

This does not mean that there were no Hindus in the field of overseas trade. There is a fair amount of evidence of Hindus of various castes in trading overseas, for example from Gujarat to East Africa, and down the Western Indian Coast. *Banias*, who traded to and were resident in Red Sea and Hadramauth ports from pre-Portuguese times. From within the Hindus the main seafaring group in 1500 was *Chettyars* of Coromandel, who had a very important role in trade in the whole Bay of Bengal area and especially from Coromandel to Malacca. It is not clear that the crews of all these ships were overwhelmingly Muslim, hailing from a wide range of Muslim littoral communities. One such was the *Navayats* of Rander, in Gujarat, who were much praised by the early Portuguese for their navigational skills. Besides, various lower caste Hindus in both Malabar and Gujarat sailed ships on coastal routes, and also engaged in fishing.

To get a picture of the dynamics of trade on the coast of Kerala, a proper understanding of the political structure of Kerala is a pre requisite. The decline of *Kulashekara* (second Chera) kingdom in the end of eleventh century resulted in the formation of some four major sovereigns like the *Samutiri* of Calicut, the *Kolathiri* of Ezhimala (Kannur) the King of Perumpadappu (Kochi) and Kingdom of Venad. Though the royal families of Medieval Malabar Coast (read as Kerala) were linked to each other by traditional ties (as according to the Parasurama legend) the rivalry between them was notorious. The dispute regarding the heritage of the Edapalli Raja culminated in to an endemic war between the *Samutiri* and the Kochi Raja. The success was over the side of the *Samutiri* and he forced the Kochi Raja to pay tribute and had seized from him Cranganore.

The significance of Kerala as one of the active links in the Indian Ocean trade network is worth mentioning. As a region where pepper and ginger are abundantly grown, Kerala had supplied Sri Lankan Cinnamon and Moluccan spices. The best ginger was harvested in the Calicut area. Although the pepper in the Ezhimala (Eli) region was scarce, its quality was superior to that of south.⁹ Towards south also there were slopes of mountains, where pepper was harvested in large quantities. It is said that the raja of Vadakkumkur and Kollam had owned their

own pepper growing lands.¹⁰

As Bouchon writes, each year at the end of December, ten to twenty ships sailed from Calicut and its satellite ports to the Red sea, loaded with spices and cloth¹¹. Some traders undertook the journey twice a year, in February and in October. The Malabar ports were not only pepper warehouses, but also the calling points in a large eastern circuit. Each year the Malabar traders went to Pulicat where they embarked for Malacca on the Coromandel merchant ships. Kollam was associated with a maritime network covering the ports of Sri Lanka, the Pearl Fishery coast, Pegu, Tenasserim and Siam.

It is interesting to note that except the trade in precious stones and certain amount of pepper transported by convoys of oxen to Vijayanagara, most of the Kerala's Indian trade was undertaken by the sea. From September to April the vessels were started as far as Dabhol, Chaul, Bassein, Diu, Surat and the ports of Coromandel. The products were not only from Kerala but also from the western world consisted of copper, vermilion, coral, rose water and mercury. The Calicut and Cochin merchants brought Sri Lankan cinnamon while the Cannanore traders brought back Copra and rigging from Maldives archipelago which they supplied to the ship owners of Calicut and Cambay. These products were accompanied by many other goods: wax, areca nut, betel, indigo, dyes, spices, perfumes and drugs for consumption inland.

For the foodstuffs to feed the people of Kerala, the merchants were depended upon the Vijayanagara producers. They traded foodstuffs in the ports of Banda, Mirjan, Honavar (Onore), Bhatkal, Harkur, Basrur, Mangalore and Kumbala in exchange of coconuts, palm oil and wine. The traders of Cannanore and Darmapatam played an important part in this traffic and supplied mainly the Maldive islands and Calicut from Tanor [Tanur] to Cape Comori [Kanyakumari], the Mappila merchants of Cochin controlled another rice route from Coromandel, Orissa, Bengal and Sumatra. During the good seasons, the *almadias* sailed along the coast, and carried rice as far as Calicut and Sri Lanka. It was generally transported with sugar, grown mainly in Canara dried vegetables from Gujarat, or fruit from the South; fish, either smoked or dried in the sun, was

imported from the Maldives archipelago by the merchants of Cannanore.¹² The main role of merchants in sea port towns according to K.N. Chaudhuri, was to act as intermediaries between the producing class and the consuming markets which actually was widely scattered in space.¹³

The cloth was one of the major commodities of trade during the period in Kerala. Almost all vessels carried some kinds of cloths along with other goods. The merchants of Cochin and Cannanore had sent ships to fetch cloths from Chaul and the ports of Gujarat, in exchange of spices. Textiles of Bengal and Coromandel were of finer quality often accompanied of ship loads of rice. Trade in horses was occurred on the coast of Cannanore which imported from Hormuz, Aden etc. The horses then were transported to Vijayanagara territory and probably to Venad. According to M.G.S Narayanan, there are frequent references in Chola inscriptions from Tanjore, Tiruchirappalli, and South Arcot to *Kutira chettikal* (horse dealers), who seems to have been importing horses from Arabia.¹⁴ Presumably they belonged to northern parts of Kerala. Chettis, Vaniyar, and Kalavaniyar were other stake holders of trade in Malabar. Italian traveler Ludovico di Varthema also refers to the existence of horse trade in the city of Cannanore. He writes, "Canonore is the port at which the horses which come from Persia disembark. And you must know that every horse pays twenty-five ducats for customs duty, and then they proceed on the mainland towards Narsinga."¹⁵ We are still ignorant about the medium of exchange that is the money or rises as against the horse trade with Hormuz. Cannanore merchants also had controlled the transport of elephants from Sri Lanka which were shipped by Cochin vessels to Cambay.

The mercantile communities functioning in the field of trade on the coast of Malabar constituted as separate composition. The Gujaratis had settled in the ports of Kerala with their districts like Calicut, where they inherited vast warehouses built for the Chinese. *Chettis*, from the Coromandel Coast controlled the market in coral and precious stones. It is believed that their guild was existed in Kerala before the advent of Islam. In Kollam they were money changers, bankers and gold smiths. The backwaters, they controlled the trade in pearls, though the fishing trade was

contacted to a Muslim who received duties there from which he paid to the Raja of Venad. During the sixteenth century, the Muslim aristocracy of commerce had had retreated before the coming of the Portuguese. The vacuum was filled by the Konkani brahmans' arrival on the coast¹⁶. The Muslim merchant groups like *Kunjalis* and *Karimis* had been engaged in the lucrative business of Malabar.

The ancient merchants like Jews were not prosperous during the time. A few of the families had settled in Matayi in Kannur some others were in Kodungallur (Cranganore) and it is believed that many had fled to Kochi at the time of Periyar flood. Jews might have deserted Kollam once they had lost prominence. There was a rather prominent group of Christian Community in Kerala. It was pepper merchant Mathias of Kayamkulam who loaded Portuguese vessels in 1503 and 1504. Calicut was a place where Christians were a strong presence and *Samutiri* had granted them an audience room. It was Kollam, the centre of their old parishes. The Portuguese had interest in the Christian church and the community in Kerala.

The Muslims had played a predominant role in the medieval trading practices in Kerala. There were foreign Muslims and indigenous community, diversified presence in the cities such as Calicut. The foreign Muslim merchants were treated with high esteem in the Kerala society. It is said that when such a merchant was landed in Calicut, he had a *Nayar* to guard and serve him, a *Chetty* to look after his possessions and a broker to get goods for him, though he had to pay them each. The external trade in Calicut was dominated Gujaratis and foreign traders. As a result, the *Mappilas* adorned a minor position as brokers, speculators or forwarding agents. In Kochi the *Marakkars* controlled the world of business. They used to go to the Malacca emporium for the spices of the archipelago and to Sri Lanka for elephants and cinnamon. Since 1504 for ten years, they supplied pepper to the Portuguese in Kochi and which was collected by the agents from the inland foot hills bartered for rice brought from Coromandel.

In Kannur, it was *Mammalis* another influential trading-ruling family who controlled the maritime trade. The head of the *Mammalis*, Ali Raja, collected the maritime commercial profits and fixed the price of spices, holding back the *Kolathiri's* share.

Panthalayani Kollam, other port of lesser importance was also had a powerful presence of Muslims. The influential Muslims were in constant touch with the *Nayar* elites and had even sometimes attended the royal councils. The lower class *Nayars* hired out their services to businessmen. The *Mukkuvan* and *Tiyyas*, the lower caste people were at the service of the *Mappilas*. With Mappilas they formed the greater part of the ships crews and maintenance men. This common occupation tempted many to convert to Islam, and by which to escape from royal privilege allowing kind to seize their possessions. Of course there was a remarkable solidarity among the Muslims of Kerala. Initiated in Cannanore, at the beginning to sixteenth century, Islamic society continued to grow. As a matter of fact, the sixteenth century witnessed the beginning of a protracted warfare between the Portuguese and the Muslims on the coast. The Muslims, who raised fierce defence, were especially the *Kunjalis* and Ali Rajas of Cannanore.

The trading arena of the seventeenth century Indian Ocean trade in the Malabar Coast according to Sinnappah Arasaratnam, was traumatized by the European rivalry and penetration, and this to a degree far exceeding any other part of the Indian sub continent. The important event taken place by the year 1600 was abolition of the great naval-commercial family of *Kunjalis* by the joint forces of the Portuguese and *Samutiri*. Another development associated with the Portuguese penetration of nearly one century was growth of Cochin as a trading centre with the protection of the Portuguese. No doubt the port city of Cochin had grown at the expense of Calicut. The growth and prosperity were artificial, incorporated into the Portuguese *Estado*, and predominantly a centre of Portuguese settlement. The Portuguese city itself grew as the centre of officialdom and the church, with stately public buildings and mansions for private settlers. The raja's dependence on Portuguese handouts was abject.¹⁷

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, Cochin was on the brink of decline, and at the same time Calicut was on the ascendant, writes Arasaratnam. The decline of Cochin was linked to the decline of Portuguese power and Commerce on the Malabar Coast. The basic course for the decline of Portuguese share of pepper export was their system of procurement by use

of force. Though that policy was successful throughout sixteen century, it faced a decline in the next century. The very rich pepper principalities south of Cochin – Porakkadu, Kayamkulam, Carnapoly, Coylon, Attingal and Travancore – had re established links with Asian merchants and had begun to sell their pepper in open markets. The Portuguese did not have the capital or the shipping capacity to take possession of even what was offered them through these pepper contracts. Apart from this the constant warfare to the northern powers like the *Samutiri*, Ali Raja, and the *Kunjalis* made them to loosen their power and this area was opened up to Asian private trade.¹⁸

Another major development by the beginning of the seventeenth century was that all the major Malabar commercial powers had to align with the Portuguese. Thus Calicut was regaining a pepper emporium of the region. Cannanore after the ties between Ali Raja and Portuguese grew into a major centre of pepper export. Though there developed tussle between *Mappila* naval powers in the Portuguese, it was settled soon. And the trade from Calicut and Cannanore to the Red Sea ports of Aden and Mokha was resumed largely with the Portuguese passes.

There was also a regeneration of north-south trade route, from Malabar to Surat during the century. Surat merchants took pepper from Malabar to make Surat a pepper entrepot of Malabar pepper and then to transport to the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. In exchange of pepper the Surat merchants imported opium and cotton from Surat which had excellent Market through south Malabar. Though the Surat merchants sought for cheap and abundant pepper in southern markets like Kayamkulam and Coylon, once Calicut and Cannanore regained their ascendancy, they topped at these ports. Thus a strong bond between Surat and Malabar merchants emerged.

The emerging trade relation between Calicut and Surat also contributed to establish a link between Cannanore and Calicut, in the expense of Kochi. It was also boosted by the entry into these waters of the English and the Dutch East India companies in the first decade of seventeenth century. Both the English and the Dutch established contact with Calicut merchants trading in Acheh and the Zamorin had offered them concessions. The

pepper of South Malabar passed to Calicut and Cannanore with purchasers being Gujaratis from Surat, Arabs from Red Sea and the companies. The Dutch tried to participate in the trade from Malabar to the Red Sea ports, exporting pepper and cardamom, but could not compete with the Malabaris, of course the entry of the Dutch and the English had stimulated the demand for pepper in Malabar.

The Dutch navy's confrontation against the Portuguese and conducting regular blockades of Portuguese ports during the trading season in 1630's and 1640's were favourable for the Malabar merchants. This gave boost to Malabar west-Asia trade. Malabar merchants shipped pepper, cardamom, and cinnamon to Mocha and Muscat as well as to Basra.¹⁹ The conquest by the Dutch of the Portuguese ports of Cochin, Cranganore, Cannanore and Quilon in the 1660's temporarily threatened the Portuguese trade. The Dutch following their policy towards spice producing states entered into exclusive contracts with almost all pepper producing states of the coast. But the thriving demand northwards in Surat and Westwards in the Red Sea and Persian Gulf ports, these contracts were soon a dead letter.²⁰

Imports of Malabar during the century consisted of spices from Indonesia, cotton, textiles and opium from Surat, rice from northern ports, Coromandel and Bengal and textiles from Coromandel. The Indonesian species were monopolized by the Dutch merchants from Surat, Konkan, Coromandel and Malabar and the English competed successfully with the Dutch in respect of other imports. Malabar had another important route of trade south eastwards to Madura, Sri Lanka and Coromandel. A variety of commodities of daily use were traded in this route. Pepper, coconut, coconut products, arecanut, timber, sea produce and imported cotton textiles, tobacco, rice and other goods were exported by Malabar. This trade, which was carried on in small one and two masted vessels by Muslim and Hindu traders living all along this coast, had gone on undisturbed right through the period of Portuguese domination, even though their hold over those parts of coastline embraced by this trade was strong. As the Dutch sought to control a large part of this trade, this led to a number of conflicts with states along the coast-the *Nayakas* of Madura, the *Thevars* of Ramnad the queen of Attingal and the

Raja of Travancore.²¹

As mentioned before the Mappila merchants had direct dealings with the Maldives from where they brought cowry shells, fish and coconut products. But during the seventeenth century the Dutch attempted to the direct voyages to the Maldives but soon were abandoned. Ports outside European control, Calicut, Cannanore, Ponnani, Tellicherry, Tanur, Porca, Arjengo continued to be outlets of Malabar trade in the 17th century. Rulers such as Samutiri of Calicut, Ali Raja of Cannanore, queen of Attingal, and the Raja of Travancore kept Malabari interest in the oceanic trade alive. The English, and later the French proved catalysts of indigenous trade, helping to push export prices up and assisting in the challenge to exclusive claims of the Portuguese and the Dutch. At the end of the seventeenth century there was an upsurge in the trade of Malabar caused partly by the decline of Dutch naval power in these waters and the expansion of English company and private trade in collaboration with Indian traders from Surat and Malabar. When Cochin was decline to the close of the century, Calicut to the North and Travancore to the south was increasing the volume of oceanic trade.²²

Eighteenth century is considered to be a period of transition because of more than one reason. It is true in the case of India as politically and economically new trends were visible. Politically, the major power, the Mughal Empire was in the declining phase and new regional powers were in the making. More importantly the fierce battle between the British and French East India companies for power and trade was common. And in the trading arena there were also new openings for Indian merchants to collaborate with the British and prove their fortunes. Likewise, some rulers especially of south India were of determination to control the activities of the companies and introduced state monopoly over trade. For analyzing the trends of Indian Ocean trade in the Eighteenth century, we have to depend upon the studies of Ashin Das Gupta who is known as the historian of the eighteenth century in general and Malabar in particular.²³

According to Ashin Das Gupta, the breakdown of the synthesis and the emerging domination by the European can be seen as important features of the eighteenth century in the history of Indian Ocean.²⁴ There were two major developments in the

history of Indian Ocean in the eighteenth century. In the western Indian Ocean the magnificent Gujarati fleet, particularly prominent on the Red sea run, gradually dwindled into insignificance, while in the eastern ocean the Calcutta fleet of the private British merchant won the supremacy of the ocean and at the close of the century had for outstripped the achievements of the Gujaratis even at their peak.²⁵ The Gujaratis were on the retreat from both the Red Sea and the Persian market in the first two decades of the eighteenth century. The reason for it was only partly that civil war in Yeman and insecurity in the Gulf made trading difficult; more importantly the Gujarati merchant was under pressure at home. As the Mughal Empire declined in western India, Surat lost its far flung hinterland which had earlier linked the port to much of the country, and Surat came to be cut off from its more immediate hinterland in Gujarat itself.

The other claimant to pepper was the state of Travancore under Marthandavarma (1729-58). Under the arrangement made for this monopoly, merchants of Travancore became agents of the government and supplied pepper to state depots run by a commercial department at fixed prices and obtained a fixed commission. The producers were also paid a price fixed by the state and large profits were made by the government on the eventual sale of the commodity. Because of the Dutch control around cochin, Travancore for the early years of the system send the pepper across to the eastern coast over the hills, but in the 1780's, under King Rama Varma, Travancore made for itself a port at Alleppey and catered directly to the Indian Ocean demand. The Dutch had been unable to check Travancore militarily in the 1740's and were obliged to accept this breakthrough in the 80's because of growing weakness.

In the later eighteenth century, Mysore under Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan attempted to achieve profits from oceanic trade similar to that of Travancore. Tipu Sultan over ran Calicut in the 1780's and organized both a monopoly and a commercial fleet in the Arabian Sea. Contemporary traveler Francis Buchanan details about the way in which the monopoly was materialized. He writes, "in the Malabar year 964 or 1788-9, the Sultan established a monopoly for all the goods that are usually exported from Malabar. The principal *Cotay* or factory, was placed here [he

mentions about Burgarra or Vatakaral]; and other dependent ones were established at different parts of the coast such as Mahe, Coilandy, Calicut, & c.& c. At any of these factories, the goods were received at a certain fixed rate, and paid for by the government, and were afterwards sold by the factors, on its account, to any person who chose to export them. The price fixed on the goods at delivery was low. The Factors, for instance, gave 100 Rupees a candy for pepper and sold it for from 150 to 170”²⁶. But this effort came to an end in 1792 when the British captured Malabar. Eventually, the British private merchant claimed the trade in the wake of the armies. By the end of the eighteen century, the west coast of India saw its trade centered at Bombay. Surat was an important supporting port for the operations at Bombay.

The ports of Kerala were at the time undergoing important changes and the pepper trade of the coast which the British merchant coveted was the subject of attention from various quarters. The Dutch, settled at Cochin from the 1660's had claimed a monopoly in the trade of pepper which had never been very effective. In the first half of eighteenth century this monopoly was challenged by the revived city-port of Calicut in the north and Travancore under King Marthanda Varma in the South. The demand at Calicut was probably produced by the eclipse of trade to the Persian Gulf and the chaotic conditions at Surat. It is a fact that vessels which called for pepper at Calicut came mostly from ports like Porbandar, Kutch-Mandvi and Muscat. It is to be presumed that they carried the pepper to the Red Sea and the Gulf, asserting the importance of the secondary. But the British private merchant was also vigorously acting in the trade and they organized the supply of pepper and sandalwood at Tellicherry, Calicut and Anjengo during the later eighteenth century with the help of some major merchants of Kerala like Ezechiel Rahabi of Cochin, Haji Yusuf of Calicut and Chovakaran Musa of Tellicherry. This process eventually culminated in the emergence of indigenous capital, though did not flourish due to very many reasons.²⁷ This demand coming from both the networks of oceanic trade proved a bane for the Dutch monopoly at Cochin.

Conclusion

Malabar was a commanding presence in the arena of Indian Ocean trade network. In the ancient times onwards, the coast had responded positively to the currents of the whole international market. Almost every trading group of the world contacted the coast and eventually, socio-cultural interactions were taken place. The trading activities were flourished with the support of the local rulers who benefited much in the form of customs revenue. By the coming of the Portuguese, the balance of trade was toppled as they were the first power to introduce politics in the waters. They were followed by the Dutch, French and English East India companies whose period was of mutual competition for monopoly over the spice trade, popularly known as 'pepper politics'. The game in the waters gradually found place on the land and which led to the acquisition of the power of the region. The significant development towards the close of 18th century was the emergence of class of merchant capitalists on the backdrop of Company trade and administration which is a domain needs further research.

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Social Capital Formation Through Self Help Groups: A Study of SHG Micro Entrepreneurs in Kerala

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Abstract

The study examines the effect of SHG activity on the social capital of women who has become micro entrepreneurs thanks to self help based poverty eradication programmes in kerala. Widely accepted indicators of social capital like associational activity, networks and perceptions of trust are used for analyzing the change in social capital. The data collected from 200 SHG women micro entrepreneurs reveals significant improvement in all these indicators.

Introduction

Pursuance of group micro enterprise has been an accepted remedy for the problems of unemployment and poverty in the world over. In Kerala, SHG micro enterprises under government initiatives like Kudumbashree, SGSY, etc have been established during the last few decades. SHG approach to poverty alleviation envisages collective endeavors on the part of the poor to enable themselves escape from the clutches of poverty. Promotion of entrepreneurship under such community based organisations has been successful in dealing with many limitations faced by women as individual entrepreneurs such as shortage of finance and risk bearing capacity. It enables them access resources otherwise inaccessible (Haan de Nicoline, 2001). The group approach

facilitates pooling of individual resources contributing a better capital base to the collectivity in its varied forms – financial, human and social. While financial capital signifies the money resources at the command of the group and human capital represents human resource capabilities like knowledge, skill and experience, social capital implies relationships that are having an economic pay off.

Social capital-The concept

Very broadly, social capital refers to the social relationships among people that enable productive outcomes. Coleman, (1988), considers social capital as “a variety of entities with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of actors...within the structure” – that is, social capital is anything that facilitates individual or collective action, generated by networks of relationships, reciprocity, trust, and social norms.

According to Putnam, Social capital refers to “the features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions” (Putnam et al. 1993). For Putnam, social capital is a productive resource that enables the democratic resolution of collective action problems. Thus, the central proposition in social capital is that networks of relationships constitute or lead to resources that can be used for the benefit of the individual or collectivity.

Social Capital and Poverty

In the development literature, those communities endowed with a rich stock of social networks and civic associations have been shown to be in a stronger position to confront poverty and vulnerability and share beneficial information. A defining feature of being poor is that one is not a member of-or is even actively excluded from-certain social networks and institutions that could be used to secure good jobs and decent housing (Wilson, 1996). Without access to employment information networks, the poor find themselves trapped into low wage occupations. Very often, social capital of the poor is the only asset they can potentially draw upon to manage their way through life. As Dordick (1997)

notes, “the very poor have “something left to lose”, namely each other. While much of the discourse surrounding poor people and poor economies is one of deficits, a virtue of the social capital perspective is that it allows theorists, policymakers, and practitioners to take an approach based on assets.” The fight against poverty means strengthening the capacity of people and communities to satisfy their needs, solve problems and improve their quality of life through their active participation and involvement to which end creation of social capital is perhaps the most effective strategy.

Review of literature

Social capital formation by Self Help groups is an understudied area of research. Studies reviewed as part of this investigation includes the following: Bastelaer (2000) studies the role of social capital in facilitating access to credit for the poor and explains how social capital is associated with the operations of ROSCA, money lenders, trade credit and group based microfinance. The study by Mondal (2000) explores the role played by BRAC and PROSHIKA groups in social capital formation in Bangladesh. The study reveals robust positive outcomes of cooperation and collective action undertaken by people under the NGO groups. Gomez and Santor (2001) concludes that social capital contributes to better economic performance and individual entrepreneurs with no or little financial collateral may benefit more from increased level of social capital. Mayoux (2001) endeavored to study the interrelationship between microfinance, social capital and women empowerment in Cameroon and found that micro finance that facilitates social capital formation among women have considerable potential to contribute to women empowerment. Ismawan (2002) explained the effect of micro finance programme on existing social capital. He stated that the programme sometimes strengthens existing social capital such as local communities, local government, etc and destroys social capital such as money lenders, social hierarchy, etc. Westlund and Nilsson (2005) examine the concept of social capital in the context of economic enterprises. Oommen (2007), in his study of Kudumbashree in Kerala, found significant improvement in most social capital indicators including

willingness to cooperate, mutual trust, trust and cooperation with members of local self governments etc. B Deepa (2009) examined social capital, trust and life satisfaction among people engaged in collective action in southern parts of Kerala and coastal areas of Tamil and finds that social capital is having significant impact on life satisfaction of people engaged in collective action. Basargekar (2010) analyses the meaning and role of social capital with reference to microfinance programme and attempts to measure its impact on social empowerment of women and finds that regular microfinance activities such as weekly meetings, peer monitoring of financial transactions, collective action etc result in creation of social capital. Feigenberg et al (2010), provide experimental evidence that building social capital in the context of microfinance is economically beneficial as it encourages economic cooperation and risk sharing among clients and significantly reduces the default rates.

Statement of the problem

Social capital formation has been recognised as an effective strategy for overcoming many deficiencies of poor nations including poverty and economic underdevelopment. Community Based Organisations formed primarily as vehicles of self employment promotion are also expected to generate social capital in its varied forms such as improved associational activity, network abundance and enhanced social and institutional trust. However, the issue is only rarely addressed by studies in the context of Kerala. This study intends to analyze certain indicators of social capital formation among members of Self Help Group micro enterprises in Kerala.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to examine the extent of social capital formation among SHG women micro entrepreneurs in Kerala with reference to selected indicators.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between numbers of group memberships before and after joining the SHGs.
2. There is no significant difference in trust perceptions of

members before and after joining SHGs.

Indicators of social capital used in the study

1. Number of group memberships (Grootaert *et al* (2003), Narayan 1997)
2. Number of friends (Grootaert *et al* (2003), Narayan 1997)
3. Perception of trust in selected actors (Grootaert *et al* (2003), Narayan 1997).

Methodology

The study is based on primary data collected from 200 SHG micro entrepreneurs from two districts of Kerala namely Alappuzha, and Kozhikode. The data were collected using a fully structured interview schedule from one member each of each SHG micro enterprise selected at random from the list provided by the Local Self Government authorities. Before - After method of analyzing data has been followed. The analysis of data has been done using mathematical and statistical tools like percentages, averages and the t test.

Results of Analysis

122 out of 200 (61%) respondents are from Kozhikode and 78 (31%) are from Alappuzha. 78.5% of them belongs to Kudumbashree micro enterprises followed by SGSY 12% and others 9.5%. Most micro entrepreneurs under SGSY and others also hold membership in Kudumbashree neighbourhood groups and hence the observed results may be the composite effect of multiple SHG memberships.

Table1. Socio- economic profile of the respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent	Religion	Frequency	Percent
Up to 30	9	4.5	Hindu	164	82.0
31-40	93	46.5	Muslim	27	13.5
41-50	76	38.0	Christian	9	4.5
Above 50	22	11.0	Total	200	100.0

Total	200	100.0			
			Caste	Frequency	Percent
Education	Frequency	Percent	Sc/St	12	6.0
literate	3	1.5	Backward castes	161	80.5
UP school	30	15.0	Forward castes	27	13.5
high school	121	60.5	Total	200	100.0
PDC/HSS	25	12.5			
Degree and above	21	10.5	Marital status	Frequency	Percent
Total	200	100.0	Married	179	89.5
Economic status	Frequency	Percent	Unmarried	9	4.5
BPL	99	49.5	Widow	8	4.0
APL	101	50.5	Divorcee	4	2.0
Total	200	100.0	Total	200	100.0

Source: Survey Data.

About 85% of the respondents are aged between 30 and 50 with majority (46.5%) between 30 and 40. 73.5% are educated up to high school or above with 21% graduates or post graduates. 49.5% of the respondents belong to BPL category as identified by the Government and majority (50.5%) is placed above the official poverty line. 82% are Hindus, 13.5% are Muslims and 4.5% are Christians. Regarding social stratification, SC/ST constitutes 6%, backward castes 80.5% and forward castes 13.5%. Regarding marital status, 89.5% are married, 4.5% remain single, 4% are widows and 2% divorcees.

Number of group memberships

Associational abundance and increased group memberships are considered important aspects of high social capital. Groups in this context may be geographical groups, professional groups,

and social groups. According to Portes (1998), “social capital stands for the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures.” Associational density is one among the most important indicators adopted for the measurement of social capital at community level. This study uses average number of group memberships per respondent to represent associational activity.

The following table gives a comparison of group memberships among respondents before and after joining the SHG movement.

Table3. Number of group memberships of respondents before and after joining SHGs

Before joining SHG			At present	
No of Groups	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
0	138	69.0	0	0
1	44	22.0	11	5.5
2	17	8.5	57	28.5
3	1	.5	55	27.5
4	0	0	42	21.0
5	0	0	26	13.0
6	0	0	9	4.5
Total	200	100	200	100.0

Source: Survey Data.

69% of the respondents were not members even in a single group of any type before their joining their first SHG. After joining, the proportion that remained as member in that single association alone is only 5.5%. Of the remaining, prior to SHG membership, 22% were members in one group, 8.5% in two groups and an exceptional 0.5% (1 out of 200) had membership in the largest number of groups-three. On the other hand, at present, 94.5% are members in at least two groups with 4.5% having some stake in six groups, 13% in 5 groups, 21% in four groups, 27.5% in three groups and 28.5% in two groups respectively. Prior to SHG membership (at a mean age of about

33 years), the mean number of group membership was 0.405 which now (at the mean age of about 42) stands at 3.21. During average nine years of involvement with SHGs the average number group membership has grown about eight times. The t test is applied to test the significance of difference between means.

H0: There is no significant difference between mean numbers of group memberships before and after joining the SHGs.

H1: There is significant difference between mean numbers of group memberships before and after joining the SHGs.

Table.4. Paired sample statistics-t test - Number of group memberships

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)
No of groups in which you were a member -Before	.4050	200	.66573	.04707	38.307	199	.000
No of groups in which you are a member -After	3.2100	200	1.26646	.08955			

Source: Survey Data.

Significance value is less than 0.05 and therefore the H0 is rejected and H1 is accepted with 95% confidence.

Networks

Formal and informal networks are central to the concept of social capital. They are defined as the personal relationships which are accumulated when people interact with each other in families, work places, neighbourhoods, local associations and a range of informal and formal meeting places (ABS, 2000). Networks of social relations may be formal or informal. In discussing formal, informal networks, Putnam (1998) suggests that informal networks include relationships people have with their families, partners, friends and neighbours; whereas formal

networks include relationships at work, within community groups and churches, and with formal bodies such as businesses and governments. This study uses the number of friends that each respondent claims to have as an indicator of networks. Table 6 gives a comparison of number of friends of respondents before and after joining SHGs.

Table6. Number of friends before and after joining the SHGs

No. of friends	Before joining the SHG		After joining SHGs	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
0	8	4.0	0	0
1	10	5.0	1	.5
2	33	16.5	1	.5
3	43	21.5	3	1.5
4	34	17.0	6	3.0
5	37	18.5	5	2.5
6-10	33	16.5	41	20.5
11-20	2	1	69	34.5
Above 20	0	0	74	37
Total	200	100	200	100

Source: Survey Data.

Before joining SHGs, 4% of respondents had no friend at all while 5% had 1 each. While 38% had two or three, 35.5% had four or five. Thus 78.5% had up to 5 friends. The creamy layer in this respect comes to 16.5% with 6 to 10 friends and the richest

comes to 1% claiming to have had up to 20. But, presently these categories have become somewhat irrelevant as the largest group- 37%- claims to have more than 20 friends. 34.5% have 11 to 20 friends and 20.5% have 6 to 10. Only 8% have up to 5 friends and none is without one. Mean number of friends have grown about five times from about 4 to 19 during the period averaging nine years.

Trust:

Trust emerges from the actor’s reliability in keeping promises. Trust indicates the probability with which an actor is expected to behave in the manner in which he is supposed to. Within informal networks individuals have what is called particularized trust; a trust that is specific to the individual a person knows. Development of such trust requires a history of satisfactory interaction with the person. This is different from the trust people have for strangers since the integrity of a stranger cannot be predicted with certainty and is termed ‘generalized trust.’ Trust in formal networks, which is referred to as institutional trust, is similarly general and relates to, for example, trust of ‘the government’, of ‘the police’ or of ‘the church’(Western et al.). The study uses five indicators of trust namely, trust in local people, trust in local government, trust in people in general, trust in political leaders and trust in civil servants.

Table7: Distribution of trust of respondents before and after joining SHGs.

Level of trust in:	Local people		Local government		People in general		Political leaders		Civil servants	
Before-	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%
Very low	14	7.0	8	4.0	22	11.0	35	17.5	4	2.0
Low	72	36.0	87	43.5	91	45.5	83	41.5	72	36.0
Moderate	101	50.5	98	49.0	84	42.0	76	38.0	121	60.5
High	12	6.0	7	3.5	2	1.0	4	2.0	3	1.5
Very high	1	.5	0	0	1	.5	2	1.0	0	0
total	200	100.0	200	100.0	200	100.0	200	100.0	200	100.0

After-

Very low	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	8.5	0	0
low	2	1.0	1	.5	3	1.5	27	13.5	3	1.5
moderate	18	9.0	25	12.5	54	27.0	79	39.5	41	20.5
high	110	55.0	127	63.5	121	60.5	66	33.0	147	73.5
Very high	70	35.0	47	23.5	22	11.0	11	5.5	9	4.5
total	200	100.0	200	100.0	200	100.0	200	100.0	200	100.0

Source: Survey Data.

An upward shift is very visible in all trust indicators. All before-enrollment perceptions are thickly concentrated in very low to moderate levels while they are concentrated towards higher levels except for politicians in whose case 61.5% still remain skeptical. Prior to SHG membership, 7% of respondents placed very low and 36% had only low trust in people in the locality where they resided for a mean period of about 13 years. 50.5% had moderate trust. During the nine years the picture has changed completely with 35% having very high, 55% having high, 9% with moderate, only 1% with low and none without trust in their neighbours. Similar changes are visible in other indicators as well except for politicians. While only 5.5% place very high and 33% keep high trust in politicians 17.5% have only very low and 41.5% keep only low trust in them. The t test is applied to test the significance of difference in the mean trust values before and after SHG affiliation for all trust indicators.

H0: There is no significant difference in trust perceptions of members before and after joining SHGs.

H1: There is significant difference in trust perceptions of members before and after joining SHGs.

Table8. Paired sample statistics-t test- trust perceptions

Trust indicators	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1 Trust in local people	2.5700	200	.73334	.05186	-	199	.000

-before

Trust in local

people-after	4.2400	200	.65155	.04607	32.026
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Pair 2 Trust in

local Govt.

-before	2.5200	200	.63373	.04481	-	199	.000
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Trust in

local Govt.

-after	4.1000	200	.60980	.04312	33.465
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Pair 3 Trust in

general public

-before	2.3450	200	.70602	.04992	-	199	.000
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Trust in

general

public-after	3.8100	200	.63713	.04505	27.898
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Pair 4 Trust in

politicians

-before	2.2750	200	.80786	.05712	-	199	.000
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Trust in

politicians

-after	3.1350	200	1.00590	.07113	15.160
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Pair 5 Trust in

govt. officers

-before	2.6150	200	.55526	.03926	-	199	.000
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Trust in govt.

officers-after	3.8100	200	.52467	.03710	25.215
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Source: Survey Data.

All significance values are less than 0.05 and therefore H0s are rejected and H1s accepted at 5% level.

Discussions and conclusions

This study examines certain aspects of social capital development occurred among ordinary Kerala women as a corollary of their SHG affiliation during the last few years. As shown above the upward change in all indicators discussed here

is tellingly apparent. SHG activity has opened up opportunities for multiple group affiliation. The change in number of friends clearly shows the volume of expansion in the social circles of women. Improvement in trust levels may help enhance economic cooperation. Improvement of trust in local self governments shows constant interaction and cooperation of respondents with these centres of democracy. Running a micro enterprise necessarily involves constant interaction with people including strangers about whom no sort of information is available. The researcher could find only one incident of decline in trust in people during this survey. It was from a group of women who had to close down their tea shop due to excessive bad debts in a rural village where high rate of alcoholism and illicit liquor trade was prevalent. Some women stated that they are now confident enough to deal with strangers as they are backed by a network that comes to their rescue whenever needed. However, it can also be seen that the public in general has chosen to support women entrepreneurship by offering an extended trustworthiness.

Trust in politicians is the one among trust indicators that is least recorded and least improved. However, the change is statistically significant at 5% level though even after the change, it is only moderate. The average trust of respondents in government officers, grew from a below moderate level to below high level during the period. Right to Information Act and many such developments took place in recent years might have added transparency to government offices. The respondents belong to a group that maintains constant contact with local administrative bodies and such other offices. The involvement of strong women network in the administrative matters should also have added to their responsiveness. To conclude, the growth in network strength and associational membership is found to be accompanied by considerable improvement in trust perceptions pointing to an incremental social capital.

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Royal Indian Naval mutiny in Bombay: A Historical Enquiry

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This essay makes a preliminary attempt to describe and analyze the Royal Indian Naval Mutiny,* the popular uprisings expressing solidarity in Bombay, on the basis of facts collected from confidential state papers, newspaper files, accounts of the participants and interview with the participants. The event of 1946 under study occurred at the insurrection of two historicities which fused at a moment to give rise to a powerful popular upsurge in Bombay and Karachi. The Naval uprising of February 1946 was an event which galvanized various classes of Indian society against British imperialism. It does not command adequate status in Indian historiography.

The social scientists have not turned much attention on to the topic 'RIN Mutiny.' As E.M.S. Namboodiripad observes, "unfortunately no significant attempts have been made to make a detailed and deep study of the Royal Indian Naval Mutiny. The kind of efforts to collect and publish historical facts with regard to the 1857 Revolt has not yet been made in the case of the Naval Mutiny and the related incidents."¹ B.C. Dutt, who had played a leading role in the RIN Mutiny stated: "All the relevant records pertaining to the Royal Indian Naval Mutiny are in the Archives of the Defence Ministry. A comprehensive account of

* Here in after RIN Mutiny

the mutiny can be written only at the instance of the Government of India. No official history however has as yet been attempted nor has any private initiative been encouraged. Somebody, perhaps, the historian of a future generation, free from the prejudices and pressures of the present, will want to record the full and unbiased story of the freedom movement. When he comes across the story of the RIN Mutiny he may not be inclined to dismiss the motive behind the upheaval as just a violent agitation for a better quality rice-and-daal ration as was given out to the people.²

However there is no major attempt to analyse this Revolt in an academic manner by scholars. At best the mutiny formed a chapter of a wider study. Otherwise it amounted to a section within a chapter. This is the case in Sumit Sarkar's "Modern India"³, "Popular Movements and National Leadership, 1945-47"⁴, Bipan Chandra's "India's Struggle for Independence"⁵ and Sucheta Mahajan's "British Policy, National Strategy and Popular National Upsurge, 1945-46"⁶, "Independence and Partition: Erosion of Colonial Power in India."⁷ Some authors confirmed their observation to a paragraph or two, example, R.C. Majumdar's "History of the Freedom Movement in India." Vol. III⁸ and V.P. Menon's "Transfer of Power in India."⁹ At the same time, nationalists, politicians and other thinkers have written in some more detail. Accounts by participants formed an important source material. But these are handicapped by the authors own bias which sometime became very explicit or too much of a subjectivised narration. A Group of Victimised Ratings', "The RIN strike"¹⁰, B.C. Dutt's, "Mutiny of the Innocents"¹¹, Biswanath Bose's "RIN Mutiny: 1946"¹² and Subrata Banerjee's "The RIN Strike"¹³ can be cited as examples.

The imperialist historians in general were interested in concentrating on the nuclear significance of British political and administrative activities in India and in neglecting the study of the Indian responses they implied. The British historians on Modern Indian history completely ignore the RIN episode. Nicholas Mansergh was an exponent of the imperialist school of thought, a strong defender of British Empire. In his Transfer of power vol. VI, he stated clearly that Naval Revolt of 1946 was merely a 'Mutiny.'¹⁴ Penderel Moon was another exponent of

imperialist school of thought but liberal in outlook. His edited work "Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal" provides an official outlook of the RIN Mutiny.¹⁵

The Nationalist historians completely ignored the political importance of the Mutiny. They paid little attention to the popular rebellions which hastened our independence. Perhaps the best representatives of Indian nationalist historians review are done by Tarachand. He, the official historian of the India's freedom movement completely neglected the RIN Mutiny in his multi-volumed (IV) work, "History of the Freedom Movement in India."¹⁶ This is indeed surprising because he has devoted much space to several other incidents whose connection with the National Movement and Politics associate with it were either very vague or none at all. The third volume of R.C. Majumdar's "History of the Freedom Movement in India" left a short paragraph to the Mutiny in the long chapter 'Negotiations and Settlement'.¹⁷

The historiographic survey of the available literature on the topic has to begin with the early narratives. The early work related to the theme is 'The RIN strike' by a Group of Victimized Ratings.¹⁸ B.C.Dutt's "Mutiny of the Innocents"¹⁹ forms another work of this category. As a participant of the Mutiny, he narrated the events, in his own style. He claims that it was probably the greatest single factor in hastening our independence. An important limitation of these works is that, the Leaders often exaggerated the importance of specific actions they participated in – a tendency that is shared by the historians of these movements.

The leftist historians followed a different treatment towards the RIN Mutiny. They generally emphasis the participation of different sections of the society expressing solidarity with the mutineers.²⁰ They argued that the RIN Mutiny was the sharpest expression of national consciousness of the people. A recent study published in this field is Sucheta Mahajan's "British Policy, National Strategy and Popular National Upsurge, 1945-46."²¹ She analyses the last years of the Raj in a detailed way. In her work, the author has evaluated the imperialist, nationalist and leftist accounts of the RIN Mutiny. She criticizes the imperialist and nationalist perspectives towards the mutiny. An important

weakness of imperialist historiography is that it ignores the major political activity going on in India. The nationalist historiographical school recognizes nationalism as the central cause of the British withdrawal from India. They did little attention to the political activity like the RIN Revolt. She argues that the histories and commentaries coming from the left tradition are a valuable corrective to both the imperialist and nationalist writings.²²

The RIN Mutiny of 1946 was the culmination of events which began in December 1945. The first occasion came on December 1st 1945 Navy Day which the authorities wanted to celebrate with flags and bunting. Some representative civilians were to be invited- Which was rather a new thing in the annals of the Indian navy. Some of the ratings in HMIS* Talwar conspired among themselves it was a very limited circle- to spoil the whole thing. During the night the ship was not left unguarded. Sentries at different places were keeping watch. B C Dutt writes, "By dawn Talwar meant as an exhibit before the admiring Bombay public was a shambles, the parade ground was littered with burnt flags and bunting; brooms and buckets were prominently displayed from masthead. Highly militant political slogans were scrawled all over the barrack areas: "Quit India, Down with the imperialists, Revolt now, Kill the British, Kill the white dogs, and Kill the white bastards."²³

The conspirators felt elated at this success. The ratings who were not fully with the rebels, but who could guess who had done this, congratulated them. Their ranks grew in number. The Navy day action proved that there existed in the Talwar a group that was sufficiently motivated politically to engage such a risky venture. Some ratings in the Talwar had got together and formed what they called the 'Azad Hindi' group.²⁴ The security personnel in the Talwar succeeded in identifying the likely instigators of the 'Navy Day incident' but could not take action because there was no proof against them. Given the temper of the political environment in the country at that time, the authorities decided to ignore the matter for the moment. But they speeded up the process of demobilisation. The Azad Hind group also lay for

* His Majesty's Indian Ship.

sometime, there was now greater interest in their organization among the ratings in general.²⁵

Then after the popular upsurges in relation with Subhash Bose day celebrations lasting from 23-25 January 1946 events moved rapidly towards the revolt. During those days students and workers intent on celebrating the birthday of Subhash chandra Bose confronted the police in Bombay. The ensuing clashes left 22 persons dead and more than 300 injured.²⁶

The next occasion came on February 2nd 1946 when the Commander-in-chief, General Claude Auchinleck was to visit Talwar. The authorities took special care so as not have a repetition of the Navy Day. More sentries were posted; flashlights were specially arranged; all the light on the corridors were kept alight. The conspirators tried to win over the sentries but failed. But seditious leaflets were pasted on barrack walls; slogans like "Quit India, and Jai Hind" were written. These were detected at 5 am and all were removed. B C Dutt, a leading Telegraphist of HMIS Talwar, was arrested on charges of slogan writing and distributing subversive literature. After court Martial, he was demoted and discharged. His colleagues greeted him as a hero.²⁷ In the Words of B C Dutt, "The authorities held me in solitary confinement for 17 days. During this time, they held intensive enquiry to locate my associates. Finally they decided to dismiss me from the service 'with disgrace.' They released me from the solitary confinement on February 16th 1946 when they had taken the decision to dismiss me. They released me from the solitary confinement but let me stay in the Talwar barrack with the other ratings until the orders were finally signed and returned from Delhi Headquarters."²⁸

Another incident took place in the meantime. One rating, R K Singh was more in favour of open defiance than conspiratorial methods so long followed by the ratings. He decided upon open defiance. He submitted his resignation, for which he was court-martialed. At the trial he refused to defend himself and threw his cap on the ground in front of the commanding officer and kicked it, signifying his utter contempt for the crown and the services. Singh got 3 months prison sentence but his open revolt created a stir among all the ratings and in a way helped all the conspirators.²⁹

On 8th February Commander King, the Commanding officer of Talwar abused some ratings leading to the rising of anti-British feelings. Fourteen ratings made individual complaints in writings. This was to avoid charges of indiscipline that could arise from a joint complaint. There was no immediate response. Commanding officer King took up the complaints in the normal way for hearing requests, which happened to be on 16th February. He accused the ratings of false complaints and gave them 24 hours to think it over. On the night of 17th February a large number of ratings spontaneously decided on a major action. They refused food in protest against bad food and cooking and other service grievances.³⁰

The uprising thus began with a strike action by Talwar ratings who rallied round the slogan 'No food No work.'³¹ In Dutt's words we get an outline of that activity which made this strike possible. Explaining the backdrop of the revolt, Dutt wrote, "After we were brought to HMIS Talwar, which was the base for the communication ratings, I tried to organise an underground movement with the object of throwing the British out of the sub-continent. I found many like minded anti-British ratings in the Talwar."³² Dutt and his group exercised influence over the ratings of Talwar, as he was released on 16th; the ratings struck work on the 18th. The mutiny first started as a hunger strike. HMIS Talwar is the communication Ratings' Training school(a shore establishment in Bombay). It was a communication ship keeping contact with different naval units and issuing instructions and news to them. Communication ratings were drawn from the educated classes and there was a considerable number among them who had passed their intermediate or had even taken a degree in arts and science. A very large number of them were matriculates.³³ When the mutiny started, Talwar was completely under the control of the ratings with officers generally restricted to the area of gateway and cpo's and po's to their barracks. The ratings had free exit from the establishments.³⁴

On the same day at 2.30 pm Colville, Admiral Rattray, Flag officer, Bombay, General Beard, Area Commander and Butler, police commissioner met at the Government House to assess the situation. It was accepted by these officials that the mutiny

was non-violent and on a considerable scale.³⁵

According to Dutt, on 19th February the seamen ratings broke out of castle barracks with anti-British and anti-American feelings rhyming high. Dutt accepts that at this stage rumours were deliberately used by the Talwar ratings to draw out the seamen from the barracks. After starting the protest, the Talwar ratings felt the need for support in other R222IN establishments. Hence the next morning they approached the castle barracks with the following passage: "British tommies are shooting down and bayoneting your brothers on the Talwar. You spent the best years of your lives fighting the war of your foreign maters; now you are being rewarded with the blood of your brothers. Come on, don't stand there gaping like a bunch of idiots on to the rescue, on to freedom."³⁶

By dusk on February 19th the naval strike spread to all the 11 shore establishments in Bombay and the 22 ships in its harbour involving nearly 22000 ratings in them. The mutiny was significantly marked by the removal of the Union jack from the ships which was replaced by the tri-color, League and the Red flags. A meeting was held in Azad maidan by the mutineers and they marched in processions shouting slogans like 'Release INA and political prisoners' 'withdraw Indian army from Indonesia' etc. The ratings paraded the streets and did not wear their uniform caps. The official reports admitted that the mutiny was non-violent in the first days.³⁷

The news of the strike in Bombay was broadcast on the All India Radio and was also published in all the leading newspapers. This news reached places like Calcutta, Karachi, and Madras where other units of RIN were located. In those units also whispers of a sympathetic strike started. Besides the ratings used the R T and WT equipment in HMIS Talwar to communicate with other ships and establishments.³⁸

The ratings came out in the streets. They seized naval Lorries and began to roam the city, with Congress and Muslim League flags on display.³⁹ They conducted huge procession in the city carrying hockey sticks, guns, and other weapons. The demonstrators stopped the traffic on the busiest areas of Bombay-Flora Fountain, Hornbyroad, and Victoria terminus. The

ratings of some other ships also joined them.⁴⁰ Among the ships affected were HMIS Oudh, HMIS Lahore, HMIS Firoz, HMIS Neelam, HMIS Akbar etc. As seamen rushed out of their establishments, they stoned shops owned by foreigners, pulled down and burnt the American flags flying over the United States Information library. All the ships in the harbour discarded the union Jacks and in a little over 48 hours the British lost all control over a complete unit of their Indian armed forces. Some of the ratings behaved violently and caused destruction to the ruling elite, forcibly closing the shops and destroying the glasses and showcases. Some of them blocked transportation.⁴¹

Bombay was the Royal Indian Navy's principal base with big short installations, barracks and some 20 ships in the harbor. The mutiny involved the whole navy (RIN):78 ships of various descriptions stationed in Bombay, Karachi, Calcutta, Madras, Cochin, Vishakhapatnam, Mandapam and Andaman and almost all naval shore establishments in the country joined mutiny.⁴² The official reports stated that the immediate causes of the mutiny in other ships and establishments were in sympathy with Talwar ratings, inflammatory articles in the press and incitement by ratings from other establishments.⁴³ Soon massive sympathy engulfed among the people of Bombay and Karachi and spread to RIN establishments from Baharein to Port Blair. By the next day the RIN was in the grip of unprecedented naval revolt and only 10 ships and 2 shore establishments remained unaffected.⁴⁴

By dusk 19th February the rebels decided to organize their protest. They formed the Naval Central Strike Committee (NCSC) and Signalmen M S Khan and Petty officer Telegraphist MadanSingh were unanimously elected president and Vice-president. Both were under 25 years of age. They were politically inexperienced and both were completely free of the communal virus of the Indian public life of the time.⁴⁵ The committee formally renamed the RIN as 'Indian National Navy.' It formulated a set of demands.

1. The release of all Indian political prisoners.
2. Release of all Indian national army personnel unconditionally.
3. Withdrawal of all Indian troops from Indonesia and Egypt.

4. British nationals to quit India
5. Action against commanding officer and signal Bosons head for rough treatment of the crew.
6. Release of all Detenus (naval ratings)
7. Speedy demobilization of the RIN ratings and officers.
8. Equal status with the British navy regarding pay, family allowances and other facilities.
9. Best class of Indian food.
10. No return of clothing kit after discharge from service.
11. Better treatment of officers to subordinates.
12. Installation of Indian officers and supervisors.⁴⁶

On February 20th the mutiny spread further, affecting the loyalty of some thousands of ratings. The immediate provocation of the strike came from the offensive behavior of the commanding officer of Talwar. He was replaced by another British officer Captain Inigo Jones on the 20th, but ratings were not satisfied. They demanded an Indian officer to be in charge. The military were asked to guard the naval units. Talwar was put under the charge of Mahratta regiment. The authorities appealed to the ratings to return to their units; loudspeaker vans went around Bombay, repeating this appeal. Some ratings returned to their barracks. There were cases of attacks on individual Europeans and destruction of public property. These acts of destruction and looting of articles were mostly done by the anti-social elements which gathered round the ratings.⁴⁷

In the afternoon the ratings held a meeting at Oval ground near the Bombay University. M S Khan appealed the people to follow discipline and non-violence and formed a 'peace patrol corps.' On behalf of the NCSC, one of the members owed an apology to United States of America for the unhappy incident that happened on the previous of day.⁴⁸ The men hesitated fatally, however on the boarder line of peaceful strike and determined mutiny, obeying orders to return to their respective ships or barracks on the afternoon of 20th February, only to find themselves surrounded by army guards. The NCSC instructed

the sailors to observe fast until the withdrawal of troops which surrounded the castle barracks.

The RIN rebels expected that the Congress and League would uphold their cause as just in the national liberation struggle. After forming a NCSC and adopting a resolution declaring that, 'Henceforth the ratings of the RIN will take orders only from national leaders.' They expected the national leaders to respond positively. But the political leadership did not respond with the warmth to the call given by the ratings.

The Flag officer commanding the RIN (FOCRIN), Vice-Admiral Godfrey arrived in Bombay on 20th February. By now the efforts of the ratings to gain the support of the political parties had failed, although some elements of the Congress Socialist Party and other Left Congress men, the Free Press Journal and the Communist Party of INDIA did their best to give whatever assistance they could to the naval mutineers.

Then fighting started at castle barracks when ratings tried to break out of their encirclement, with the ships providing artillery support, while Admiral Godfrey flew in bombers and threatened to destroy the Navy. The same afternoon also saw remarkable scenes of fraternization, with crowds bringing food for the ratings to the Gate way of India and shopkeepers inviting them to take whatever they needed.⁴⁹ According to Sumit Sarkar, the pattern of events in fact unconsciously echoed the course of the mutiny of the Black sea fleet during the first Russian revolution of 1905.⁵⁰

In a conference of naval officers it was decided to provide Indian food to the ratings according to the menu submitted to them.⁵¹ Vice Admiral Godfrey made a broadcast appeal assuring due consideration of their grievances including demobilization. In his speech, there was also a threat of strict measures to suppress indiscipline. He ended thus "and again to make it quite plain that the Government will never give into violence." He also justified the posting of military personnel at the gates of Talwar and of castle barracks. His broadcast speech stated that the overwhelming forces at the disposal of the govt. Of India at this time will be used to their utmost even if it means the destruction of the navy of which has been so proud. Calling for an

unconditional surrender he threatened the ratings with dire consequences if they refused to obey his orders.⁵² At the same time he sent a message that he was ready to have talks with the strike committee. In response the president of the strike committee issued instruction for a ceasefire. A messenger arrived at the castle barracks conveying the information that the FOCCRIN was himself coming to talk things over the ratings. The strike leaders waited in vain and returned with the information that the authorities were discussing the situation with India's national leaders.

Fighting broke out from 21st. The call of the naval mutineers was well expressed through the Urdu song composed by the poet Josh Malihabadi popularly sung by the rating:

“kaam hai mera taghayyur, nam hai mera shahab.

mera nara Inquilab

O-Inquilab O-Inquilab,”

(My job is to change, my name is youth, and my slogan is Revolution!

Revolution! Revolution!) ⁵³

On 21st February, the NCSC gave a call to action situations and shifted command to HMIS Narbada, the flagship of the RIN. All ships manned guns, raised steam and became ready to defend their comrades on shore. Newspapers reported that the ratings raided armory in the barracks and when British troops opened fire on them, they returned the fire using artillery and grenades.⁵⁴ On 21st the military guard tried to prevent ratings coming out from the castle barracks. It resulted in open firing between ratings and military. In this encounter one naval officer and one rating was killed.⁵⁵ Meanwhile General Lockhard assumed full command in Bombay and Admiral Godfrey, the chief of the RIN (FOCCRIN) gave a command on air: “..... A state of open rioting prevails in which ratings appear to have completely lost control of their senses. I want again to make it quite plain that the Government of India will never give into violence. To continue the struggle is the height of folly when you take into account the overwhelming forces at the disposal of the Govt.

At this time which will be used to their uttermost even if it means the destruction of the navy of which we have been so proud.”⁵⁶

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, a member of the Congress Working Committee had been approached by the ratings on the 21st of February 1946 when the firing had been started by the military at castle barracks. He however declined to interfere. He was of the view that the ratings ought not to have taken up arms and he condemned their act of indiscipline in staging a mutiny.⁵⁷

In the evening came a message from Sardar Patel asking the ratings to down arms and to go through the formality of surrender which has been asked for.⁵⁸ It promised protection against victimization. Most of the newspapers gave wide coverage to his statement. His statement was, 'The strikers should lay down arms and should go through the formality of surrender and Congress would do its level best to see that there is no victimization and the legitimate demands of the naval ratings are met as soon as possible.'⁵⁹ This promise was promptly forgotten as soon as the surrender was affected. Then a messenger brought Jinnah's message which appealed particularly to the Muslims among the ratings. 'I offer my services unreservedly for the cause of the RIN men to see that justice is done to them. I appeal to the men of the RIN to call off the strike... particularly I call upon the Muslims to stop.'⁶⁰ and to create no further trouble until we are in a position to handle this very serious situation. Jinnah's statement was calculated to split our ranks⁶¹, writes B C Dutt. The ratings had in fact hailed from widely different regions and religions. They were completely free of communal virus that had infected the Indian public life of time. That slogans calling for national unity; 'Hindus and Muslims unite' and 'Inquilab Zindabad' resounded in the streets of Bombay. The ratings marching the streets with flags of Congress and League tied together were really a strange sight for the people of Bombay. To the revolvers it was the difference between the Congress and League which at that time seemed to be holding up India's independence.⁶² Hence their action of carrying the Congress and League flags symbolized national unity. The RIN Mutiny thus showed, what Aruna Asaf Ali later correctly remarked that it was far easier to 'unite the Hindus and Muslims at the barricade than at the constitutional front.'⁶³ But generally the rebels were

dismayed at the communal approach implicit in Jinnah's support, for they had presented a united front through the four battling days.⁶⁴

B C Dutt provides a dreamy picture of surrender." No one slept. Khan gave an extempore report of his talks with the leaders and the authorities ended with the personal appeal for surrender. Promises made almost simultaneously by Patel and Jinnah was visualized as a sign of Congress- League by Khan who jumping up exclaimed; they did not even for the defence of INA personnel, we have won.' When the Congress and the League both promised help to the ratings after surrender Khan thought that some measures of success had been achieved by the ratings as far as the forging of national unity was concerned. Khan requested the NCSC to accept the advice rendered by a respected leader. The majority of the members however refused to accept it. His eyes were filled with tears. Members seemed stunned by the picture Khan portrayed to them. There were a few minutes of silence. Then pandemonium broke out. All were on their feet. No one listened to anyone. The general mood was, "to hell with the leaders, the people are with us; they are fighting the tummies in the streets; Let us join them; just once more, for the sake of the country, for our sake."⁶⁵ The vote of surrender was taken in the morning and with the hoisting of black flags around 6 AM .On 23rd the uprising passed into history. Only six members opposed the decision to surrender. The NCSC in its last memorable message to the nation said: "A last word to our people; our strike has been a historic event in the life of our nation. For the first time the blood of the men in the services and the people flowed together in a common cause. We in the services will never forget this. We also know that you our brothers and sisters will not forget. Long live our great people."⁶⁶

Most of the newspapers reported that on 23rd February 1946, all the RIN ships under the control of the ratings on strike surrendered unconditionally in accordance with the advice rendered by the national leaders.⁶⁷ A signal from the strike committee that the ships are ready to surrender was received at naval headquarters at Bombay in 6.13 AM on 23rd Feb. After which the ships surrendered one by one in accordance with the terms laid down by the FOCRIN. The Indian naval ratings who

had barricaded themselves inside castle barracks also surrendered simultaneously. Thus the naval ratings strike was called off. It was officially stated from New Delhi that the ratings in Bombay had surrendered unconditionally. The surrender had been accepted. All RIN ships and establishments in Bombay fly black flags signifying their willingness to surrender.

A group of Victimized ratings described that everywhere the ratings were disappointed with the decision to surrender. They listened passively to the report of their representatives and quietly walked away. They decided to lay the decisions taken by their leaders.⁶⁸

At same time information was received that there were ratings who intended to continue the mutiny in spite of FOCRIN'S call upon them to surrender. However later in the evening, reports indicated that the men were disposed to accept unconditional surrender but were apprehensive as to what unconditional surrender meant. It was therefore decided to send Admiral Rattray who volunteered for the job to visit all ships and shore establishments, to explain what unconditional surrender meant. He was given a written statement by the GOC-in -C showing his interpretation of the term. He was also instructed to give the men all assurance that there would be no vindictive treatment of individuals. But before the final decision could be taken they wished to consult representatives from the ships. General Lockhart gave permission for the ship's representative's to be allowed through the deck gates and to go to HMIS Talwar to meet and then return to their ships. Soon after the surrender signal was hoisted by the RIN ships under the control of the strikers. Rear Admiral Rattray, Flag Officer, Bombay and Lt. Chaudhury went on board the ships and addressed the ratings.

Indian National Congress as a major political party did not give support to the revolt. They realize that it was their navy that was rebelling against authority, that 'lawlessness', once encouraged was very difficult to stop. Freedom was at hand and it needed only to be negotiated, not bought with blood.⁶⁹ The majority of the official records of the time tend to prove that Congress and Muslim League prepared to assist the British to restore 'law and order' by putting an end to the RIN revolt and the general

upsurge.⁷⁰ Natarajan, then editor of the Free press journal stated in the preface to B C Dutt's book: "I was greatly amused at one stage to receive a message from Mr. Asaf Ali who was in Bombay on a short visit. His host dropped in one evening and taking me aside said very solemnly: Asaf Ali has told me to remind you that Indians will soon be in power. It will be very difficult for the Defence minister if the strictest discipline is not upheld now. There was more of this, with the suggestion that Asaf Ali has expected to be the Defence minister himself. It was indicative of the new attitude of the Congress men who feeling that independence was at hand, feared that the last delicate negotiations would be upset by anything the British disapproved."⁷¹ Muslim League's attitude towards the revolt was the same as that of the Indian National Congress.

The CPI seemed to be the only political party which gave its whole hearted support to the RIN revolt in all its political implications. The party issued statement supporting the RIN ratings struggle against British imperialism.⁷² G Adhikari, the central committee member of the CPI and D S Vaidya, Secretary of the Bombay Committee of the Communist party were in close touch with the developments concerning the RIN revolt. Adhikari appealed to all leaders and parties particularly Congress to take up the RIN issue as important as the question of INA and see that justice was done to the ratings.⁷³ Peoples' Age, the chief organ of the CPI commented on the RIN revolt thus, 'The strike of the Indian Naval ratings in Bombay is a historical event for more than a single event; it reflects the unit of the entire people against imperialist rule.' Regarding the ratings demands of political nature, the organ said; 'The inclusion of these demands marks the identification of servicemen with their civilian brothers in the battle for Indian freedom.'⁷⁴

It can be seen that the Mutiny did not get the support of either the Congress or the Muslim League. But ordinary people fraternized with the mutineers in a show of patriotic sentiments. This was a clear indication of the masses acting on their own. It would also be regarded as an expression of their opposition to the British.

The national leaders joined with the British in stating that the rebellion was not really 'political' but only 'economic' and

that servicemen were concerned only with such minor conditions of life as the quality of the food. They reassured the men that they would support their just grievances and urged them to surrender. The organizer of the most effective revolt against British state power afterwards sank into obscurity, their conditions unrecognized within independent India. The Civil Disobedience campaigns of the Indian national movement have been well publicized. But RIN Mutiny has remained little known outside of India. These mass rebellions were spontaneous in the sense of being led by deep feelings of oppression on the part of the people and not being led by any ideologically organized party. The RIN ratings in sharp contrast to the men of the Azad Hind Fauj have never been given the status of national heroes. They are yet to receive pensions now being granted to all other freedom fighters. Though their action involved much greater risk in some ways than joining the INA as alter to an arduous life in Japanese POW camps. A glance through Wavell's Journal⁷⁵ and Mansergh documents⁷⁶ immediately reveals how worried the British officials had become particularly in the context of the RIN mutiny.

The Congress, frightened by the radical potentialities led out by the mass struggles and violent outbreaks, moved towards the path of negotiation and compromise with imperialism, even at the cost of sacrificing the unity of the country. The British too, preferred to compromise and bargain with the Congress rather than face the alternative of having to surrender power to a radical combination of political forces. The interests of both the British and Congress coalesced in the final transfer of power, which was carried out through the 'bourgeois' path of bargain and compromise, rather than through the parallel revolutionary path of mass struggle and seizure of power.

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The Evolution of Local Exchange Networks and Markets in Early Medieval Kerala as Seen from the Thiruvalla Copper Plate

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In recent years, discussions on the overseas trade network have occupied a central place in the studies on early medieval South Indian history, for which the temple inscriptions formed an important source material. This was the case with Kerala too. Though temple inscriptions were primarily religious documents emphasizing actions which affected the temple itself, by an analysis of the key words and phrases both political and economic activity as well as degrees of social interaction may be established from these inscriptions. The Tiruvalla Copper Plate¹ (here after TCP) is a set of Copper Plates, originally consisted of no less than 44 plates of which some have been lost. This plate belongs to the Vishnu temple at modern Tiruvalla. This is the largest inscription obtained from Kerala. The alphabet is *Vatteluttu* and the date of which is not available. By considering the script and its vertical variety the historians concluded that the inscription belongs to 10th – 11th Century. This inscription deals with the grants to the temple of Tiruvalla for the daily offerings, *puja* and the day to day expenditures of the temple and for the salary of the temple officials. This inscription has been published later in the Travancore Archaeological series by T. A. Gopinatha Rao.² This inscription contains the largest number of place names,

names of agricultural products, description of trade, both internal and external and interaction between the temple and its community. This paper explores the evolution of local exchange network and of markets in early Medieval Kerala. The period is between 800- 1200 A. D. This study which is based on these incomplete and fragmentary sources is necessarily a speculative one.

For a holistic understanding of the trade or exchange networks during the early medieval period, one needs to investigate into the internal exchange system of that particular period. The internal exchange system must have emerged in south India by the Iron Age itself or even earlier.³ This might have been expanded to a higher level of transaction towards the early medieval period. The earlier scholars who wrote on Kerala such as Elamkulam P. N. Kunjan Pillai⁴ Prof. M.G.S.Narayanan⁵ Rajan Gurukkal and Raghava Varier⁶ mentions the long distance trading activities of early medieval Kerala. The aspects of trade in the middle ages have been seriously considered in the works of M. Vijayalakshmi⁷ and A. P. Greeshmalatha⁸ also. But all these studies concentrated on the overseas trade on foreign goods and which was mainly controlled by Chinese, Arabs and Jews. These scholars tried to explain the integration of early medieval trade with a world system trade network. This trade satisfied the needs of a newly emerging upper class in the society, as a result of the growth in plough agriculture. The needs of the local people could not be satisfied through this trade. Though the idea of local exchange process was already put forward by Rajan Gurukkal and others, it was not taken seriously by historians and this problem remains unsolved. The purpose of this paper is to put forward some of the aspects of the local exchange network in early medieval Kerala.

A close scrutiny of the inscription shows that the exchange of certain items of local interest took place through the *angadis*, like coconut, paddy, areca nut, plantain, ginger, turmeric, tamarind, betel leaves etc.⁹ These items were provided by the *vaniyars* to the temple of Thiruvalla for the daily expenditure and *pujas*. There are references to *vaniyar*¹⁰ *vaniyan* who came from *Elam*¹¹ oil *vanikar*¹² and ennaivaniyar *puraiyidam*¹³ in the inscription. The significance of a local network within the larger system depended

on its own ability to organize internal trade and to keep goods flowing to the authorized markets. The movement of items needed for conducting *pujas* in the temple also achieved through the *angadis*. The inscriptions speak about the supplying of items such as oil, pepper¹⁴, coconut, areca nut, betel leaves, cumin seed, asafetida, lentil, flower, cotton, ghee, paddy, turmeric, akil, *vakai* powder and sandal to the temple of Tiruvalla¹⁵ which may have come through the local exchange network process where these traders played an important role. These resources were assembled at points that served as markets or exchange centers. There is a reference to one *angadi* which is the property of one Iravichirikandan of Venpolinadu in this inscription.¹⁶ This *angadi* was also granted to the temple of Thiruvalla. The evidences also proved that certain lands were given as grants to both the temples and the Brahmins to meet the expenses of the temple.¹⁷ Some of the common people were also appears as the donors to the temple of Tiruvalla. Thus the *angadis* served as the centre of the supply of goods required for the temples as well as goods for consumption for the residents of that area. Gradually, the quantity of trade increased along with the growth of temple networks. Later days these local goods would have been transferred through the market place to a wider network of commercial exchange, with links to coastal ports and later to the outer world.

The trade in the early medieval period, as we can see, existed in three levels that co-existed with the growth of agrarian economy. In the first level, exchange took place in the local level, with goods as the medium of exchange. The *angadis* or markets developed as the centers of transactions of goods. Continuous occupation of these market centers' helped its integration as centers of urbanization in later days. The references from the inscription shows that *nalangadis* and *allangadis*, which might have an earlier existence, situated there and this was not a temporary one.¹⁸ But during this period, we can see a marked change in the form of exchange. One is, the exchange undertaken by the goods produced by the local cultivators, which took place in *chantas* or *angadis*. The items like agricultural products and oil which needed for the daily functioning of the temple were included in this type of exchange. In this type of exchange, only the residential people of a particular area were involved. This type of exchange became

more complex and was fully incorporated into the agrarian society. Secondly, the role played by the traders such as *vaniyars* and *cettis*. Reference to one *cetti* who was a donor to the temple also occurred in the TCP.¹⁹ They bought the surplus produce from the actual cultivators by paying them money and later sold it in markets of distant places. The items produced by the specialized craftsmen like *Vaniyan* (*Kalavaniyan*,²⁰ *Kulavaniyan*, *Aruvaivaniyan*, *Ennaivaniyan*) *Vannan*, etc, were collected and distributed in markets of distant places. To such a society, the items from long distance trade arrived in later days, where trading corporations like *Ancuvannam* and *Manigramam* played an important role.

Thus both the local exchange process and the redistributive system, of which the temple became the centre, widened. Certain geographical advantages may also help to the growth of *angadis*, such as proximity to backwaters, rivers, and canals and isolated places where the goods could be reached easily without disturbances from outside.²¹ The inscriptional evidences show that the area was a low lying watery region, with facilities to conduct the transportation of goods. Together with this the exchange centers sprang up around big temples like Tiruvalla, to cater the needs of the temples and temple oriented societies. On the other hand the items like camphor, sandal wood and gold came to Kerala through the outside trade. The TCP records one *vaniyan* from *Ilam* who was a donor of land to the temple. The demand for the items of foreign trade increased with the growth of complexity in the nature of redistribution in the temples. This necessitated the use of money as mode of transactions. The reference to the use of *palamkasu*²² from the inscriptions clearly supports this view. The evidences from the inscriptions pointed out that the payments were made in terms of gold of specified weight and certain traders and some individuals granting gold in *kanam* and *kalanju* to the temples.²³ Certain individuals were also asked to pay gold to the temples as fines.²⁴ Thus it is clear that the money (gold) especially was used to buy the luxury items coming through foreign trade and this might have been largely the preserve of either the temples or traders.

In the third level, the overseas trade played an important role. By that time Kerala society witnessed a gradual emergence of a complex society. The expansion of agriculture, created an

increased surplus in the society that further necessitated a demand for non- essential commodities among the upper strata of the emerging social hierarchy. The non- essential goods included those consumed by the temple and other shrines such as sandal, camphor, incense as well as cosmetics, bronze, celadon and gold.²⁵ This might have been the reason for the coming of itinerant traders from other parts of India to Kerala. They brought with them various goods which might have brought by the temple and the lord and gradually such commodities might have been exchanged or redistributed in the economy through the local markets. Both the *naduvālis* and the temples played an important role in sustaining the trading activity in early medieval Kerala. The gradual increase in the complexity of the redistributive process of temples, and the generation of a consistent demand to commodities for elite consumption necessitated the traders including *Cettis*, Christians and Muslims to settle in Kerala. So there emerged an increased need to develop both trade emporiums and trade corporations towards the end of the particular period.

In conclusion, two types of exchange networks can be traced in Kerala society during the period under consideration. One is, a local exchange network based on agrarian goods which satisfied the needs of the local peoples of that particular area, which probably satisfied the needs of temples too. All these exchanges took place through the *angadis* or markets. Thus the evolution of a local market centre centering the Tiruvalla temple occurs as per the reference from the inscription shows. Together with these processes, urban centers such as *purams* were also developed. Secondly, a trade network based on luxurious goods which satisfied the needs of an upper class people which are probably an administered trade carried out by the trade corporations developed on later days. Later this was incorporated into a wider agrarian order.

Notes

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- 10 Ibid, L. 157
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- 12 Ibid, L. 320 - 373
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- 14 Reference to “ milakidangaliyal nail “, Ibid, L. 419. This was also supported b the references from other inscriptions also.
- 15 Ibid, L. 419 - 423
- 16 “Venpolinaudaiya Iravichirikandan tannudaiya Kudavurum Kudavurkkuppadum 18 variyaiyum angadiyum akappada Tiruvallavalappanu kilitu attikkoduttan”, Ibid, L. 331 – 33.
- 17 Ibid.

- 18 See *Keralacharitam...*, Op. cit, Chapter I
- 19 “Uttamacetti sirukadaitturutti valkaimel pon koduttamaicca tiruvilakkonrinu kollum pattanel 150 parai.”, TCP, Op. cit, L. 155 – 56.
- 20 Ibid, L. 428.
- 21 *Keralacharitam...*, Op. cit, P. 129.
- 22 A term used for a coin used the early medieval Kerala.
- 23 TCP, Op. cit, L. 334, 339, 376, 377, 389
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- 25 Ibid.

Dispossession, Alienation and Metaphors: Reading *Wild Thorns* in a Diasporic and Feministic Perspective

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The themes of dispossession and alienations are primal and vibrant in the narratology of Sahar khalifa, the uncompromising woman and feminist writer in Palestine. The Marxian concept of alienation is applicable to her fictions. According to Karl Marx alienation is the systematic result of living in a stratified society. It is the process of dehumanization and exploitation. It is both psychic and capitalistic. Sahar Khalifa's magnum opus *Wild Thorns* circumnavigates around Nablus, the town occupied by the Israeli regime. There are two main characters in the novel: Usama and Adil. Other characters are either less important or extended shadows of these two characters. The women characters in the novel *Wild Thorns* are extremely interesting. They have their own distinct issues and identity crisis. Unlike the male characters they are doubly alienated and dispossessed. Usama, the protagonist reaches Nabulus, after few years of working abroad, for streamlining and pioneering the attempts for resistance with a clear vision to prevent the Arab labourer going off each day to work in the Israeli dominated lands. He represents the politically sensitive and highly inflammable champion of Palestine cause. Adil also champions the Palestine cause in a passive and different way, first focussing the food for his family, then the resistance. By introducing a handful of women characters, Sahar Khalifa

asserts that in all resistant movements, the women have to be taken in to confidence, and their plight has to be considered first, since they are doubly colonized and enforced upon.

Sahar Khalifa is considered the prominent and the most widely read fiction writer in Palestine and other Islam dominated countries. Many consider her the first feminist Palestinian writer, whose style of writing is economical, cooperative, sensitive and sometimes provocative. Biographically, Sahar Khalifa resorted to reading and writing to shield up her “miserable, useless and worthless sex”¹, as she wrote bluntly once. She strongly talked against the institution developed by the society from time immemorial to incarcerate women in different socio cultural context. The success of Sahar Khalifa as a feminist writer lies not only in her treatment of the subject matter but her employment of heroism and dreams of an occupied society. The patriarchal Israeli Government confiscated many of her books and tried their level best to shun her. But she was never disillusioned by those attempts and she continued her advocacy for the feminist causes more aggressively. In addition to interviewing the ring leaders of the revolutionary movement, she had interviewed their wives, daughters and girl friends,² thus establishing her hypothesis that women were exploited ruthlessly in any society: theological or otherwise.

Sahar Khalifa's roots are firm in Palestinian soil and she writes by placing herself on the hard rock of reality. Her characters take shape out of her own disillusioned life: her divorce and resultant migration to the world of creativity. No other Palestinian writer, man or woman expressed the deep sense of belongingness to the soil as exemplified by Sahar Khalifa. Land and soil in her novels are treated as metaphors, in Richardsian³ perspective, of fertility and dispossession. In a celebrated interview⁴ once she remarked

I don't think that anyone has written about the Palestinian society in the way I did. I was determined to write about the different periods of Palestinian society especially the one after the Israeli occupation. I don't think any writer has written about the Palestinian society in an accurate way, in such frankness as I did. My novels are used in several countries as references to what was going on in Palestine.

Sahar khalifa has a nostalgic vision about her country. She is very much patriotic and never hides the fact that she loves her country more than anything else. The following extract unambiguously pinpoints this fact.

An entire nation drowning while the radio goes on spewing out songs of hope and fervour, freedom, rebirth, the happiness of man...Myopic eyes, hearts filled with thousands of regrets, hands shackled by thousands of chains...Sink into the mud, oh Palestine of mine, and suffer, my people, the bitterness of recognizing reality and being helpless before it (*Wild Thorns* 61)

Wild Thorns depicts the Palestinian society under siege. It is treated as a story dealing with love, honour, sacrifice, revolution and disappointment. At the periphery, it is a man's struggle to protect and to preserve his land from the tiresome yokes of an aggressive and regressive country, Israel. In *Wild Thorns*, Sahar Khalifa intersects and craftily elaborates upon post colonialism, feminism, life under oppression and the position of an individual in the oppressed regime etc. The basic question in the *Wild Thorns* is that of survival: the survival of the individual and the society, the survival of terrorism and counter terrorism, the survival of an individual in a diaspora, where the identity is at stake. All characters in the novel are subjectivities, and those subjectivities are in the labyrinth created by both the individual and the society. *Wild Thorns* always celebrates and places the individual in the trajectory of history. As Frederic Jameson⁸ aptly puts it, the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third world culture and society (69). There are potential and cacophonous contrasts in the novel: the individual versus the society, the military versus the civil society, the cacophony versus the solitude, the individuality versus the collective etc.

The allegoric work *Wild Thorns* impartially narrates the story of suffering of the Palestinian community in a sympathetic way. The story develops through two old friends Usama and Adil, who have been separated for many years. They reunite only to understand that how different they are in their attitude and approach towards Israel. Allegorically, these two friends are not two individuals but two schools of thought. Usama believes in

violent retaliation against Israel domination and metaphorically travels to any extreme and mechanism for attaining that goal. This approach forces him even to sacrifice his own people, whom he actually wants to emancipate from the yokes of ruthless colonialism. One of his rebellious missions involves in blowing a bus full of Palestinian labourers leading the border to Israel. Usama represents a particular violent attitude that shuns even his own people who are compelled to protect Israeli interest. Please note this extract from the text ⁽⁵⁾

Usama watched Shahda's exaggerated gestures and burned with rage. Have you forgotten the cheap cigarettes of your past? He thought. Why don't you give some of this great advice to your father, my fine fellow? God helped your poor father! Go on, enjoy yourself my friend, strut around and be happy. Let Israel strut like a turkey cock and do as it wants with us (92)

Usama believes that he can liberate his country from Israeli aggression through violent means. His unflinching patriotism may not be belittled and Sahar Khalifa never does that. The basic problem with Usama is that he is not able to identify and address the prominent issue faced by his own society. He is not even able to understand why his best friend Adil not supports him in his noble attempt for a noble cause. Usama's concept about struggle and liberation echoes Fanon.⁹

Liberation does not come as a gift from anybody; it is seized by the masses with their own hands. And by seizing it they themselves are transformed; confidence in their own strength soars, and they turn their energy and their experience to the tasks of building, governing and deciding their own lives for themselves (A Dying Colonialism 2)

Adil is characterized by his pragmatism and realization of the reality beforehand. He also dreams an independent nation with all attractions. But he gives importance to the immediate reality than distant dream. That he disagrees with Usama has his own justification. Adil strongly argues for the struggle against Israelis without dehumanising them. The domestic issues of life persuade Adil to shamefully impart his duties in a hostile land. Adil is doubly trapped. He has three layers of labyrinthine complexities. He has to consider his well being, his family's

prosperity and the independence of his native soil. Adil believes he has greater responsibility of protecting the 'typical' Palestine culture that is a passive resistance by minor adjustments. His is an oscillated life between the compromise and the rebellion. He even argues that his stand is clear and meaningful not going to extremes. ⁽⁶⁾

"Okay...convince me that what I'm doing isn't part of the struggle, that the fight has fixed ground rules." (63)

The world represented by Usama and Adil is different in vision and dream. The difference in the way Usama and Adil behave is visible in the scene where Usama stabs an Israeli on his back. Adil identifies that his way is different from Usama's. Sahar Khalifa embodies objectively the two approaches to a burning issue without taking a partisan stand.

In a wider sense all characters in *Wild Thorns* are individualistic and have distinct features. Though Usama and Adil are prominent, other characters also face dualism and individual tensions. Adil's younger sister Nuwal is lovesick and favours the rebellion. Her lover is in prison and her parents do not want her to get married with one whom she loves. She is afraid of not only of the Israeli enemy but her own family that is very much traditional and orthodox. *Wild Thorns* wonderfully dramatizes different perspectives that each character symbolizes and how the individual psyche affect the collective psyche of Palestine. Some of the characters strongly believe that two types of rebellions are necessary: one is against Israel and the other is against their own decayed community fabric. But there is a connecting and binding thread among all disunities, the hope for freedom. There is an invisible character in the novel and whose pangs are felt everywhere. The outstanding villain is war. The war between Palestinians and Israel communities. There are enemies within. As far woman is concerned, she has to wage war against three forces: her self, her family, and her occupants.

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Online Curation of News on New Delhi Assembly Election 2013 Content Analysis of 'Storify.com'

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Abstract

News curation is fast gaining popularity in social media circles in India, one of the largest social media consuming nations in the world. While news curation is comparatively new in India, little academic research has studied the phenomenon. In this work, the researcher analyses the infant level tendencies and patterns in the field, based on online curation of news on Indian politics. The study is designed as a content analysis of an online news curation service- Storify.com The political segment subjected for analysis is news related to New Delhi Assembly Election 2013.

KEYWORDS: *Content curation, Online news curation, Political communication, storify, scoopit*

Introduction

The unparalleled success of social networking sites, ubiquity of smart phones and the latest advancements in web technology permit the contemporary new media users to generate and share

content online through customized applications and services. This has led to the uncontrollable influx of user generated content in the cyberspace posing challenges not only to the audiences, but to the traditional media practitioners as well. As a result, the very concept of audience has been drastically changed in the new media ecosystem while the basic professional routines in media industry are redefined to catch up with the trends emerged day by day. The fundamental question here is how to find out the relevant information from the unlimited contents in social media platforms? The answer is curation.

Curation is the process of turning the inordinate mass of materials in chaos into an order. The process is traditionally understood as the organization of physical materials of historical value and the word is generally used against the archeological background. Gradually, it began to appear in information processing and management domains. With the advent of digital technology and its abundant use in information storage and retrieval, digital curation has become a buzzword in information science where the term is increasingly being used for the actions needed to maintain digital research data and other digital materials over their entire life-cycle and over time for current and future generations of users (Giaretta, 2005; Joint Information Systems Committee, 2003). The term digital curation is very new and together with related terms such as digital preservation and digital archiving it is still evolving. It is important to recognise that these terms still can be perceived differently by different individuals and disciplines.

The process involves manually aggregating, sharing, ranking, juxtaposing and critiquing the content available online, thus providing the users easy access to the original content. This phenomenon of content re-communication is emerged in the new media ecosystem due to the information flood caused by the profusion of user generated content and the resultant intricacies involved in retrieving the original message required by the receivers. The content is curated online by providing links to social media and other sources, through 'tweeting or 'retweeting', 'tagging' and 'recommending' or 'sharing', 'liking', or any other such activity available in the respective online media.

Though content curation for marketing purpose is in style,

news curation is comparatively a new trend worldwide. Since the social media have become prime sources of online news, curation of newsworthy content is also getting momentum impacting even the traditional journalistic profession by adding new dimensions to the creator-content-user dynamics. The new media industry has already launched an array of specialized online news curation services to propel the trend. *Storyfy*, *Scoopit*, *Storyful*, *Shareist*, *Liquidnews* and *Pinterest* are some such services. Given the current search requirements of the new media, many social media content curation solutions like *storify* and *scoopit* came into the scene in a big way and continue to be very successful offering meaningful access to seemingly endless amount of information, and easy personalization or reorganization of the content.

In new media context, curation is widely used to denote the Internet users' organization of the content for easy retrieval and for future reference. In this study, curation is defined as the process that involves collecting, categorizing, organizing and contextualizing the digital news stories created by others to facilitate easy retrieval for the end users. It also involves manually aggregating, sharing, ranking, juxtaposing and critiquing the content available online, thus providing the users meaningful easy access to the original content.

The content is curated online by providing links to social media and other sources, through 'tweeting or 'retweeting', 'tagging' and 'recommending' or 'sharing', 'liking', or any other activity available in the respective online media. Each platform has its own method and protocols for linking. While Facebook uses recommend, Google has +ing (Google+ing). Yet another platforms use specially apps available instantly.

The elements of a curated news include original content from social networking sites like *Facebook* and *Twitter* and from web versions of traditional media. Along with these posts from video sharing sites, social media platforms are combined to draft stories. The curator has freedom to contextualize the stories and provide with background information.

As mentioned earlier, the phenomenon of content re-communication is emerged in the new media ecosystem due to the information flood caused by the profusion of user generated

content and the resultant intricacies involved in retrieving the original messages required by the receivers. In addition to the massive and uncontrolled flow of information on the web, exponential growth of blogs, sites, social media and other platforms and increasing amount of personal and unexpected and distracting content also necessitate proper curation of online content.

Rosenbaum argues that the rise of spam and marketing push under the guise of blog post or media handouts on social media platforms and the increase of unconfirmed news stories are added reasons to justify curation. It is not easy to distinguish an authentic source from a spammer or market pusher. Most often low-quality content sifts through without proper verification infecting the entire content. Curation helps find new relevant sources which are unknown to the general users and are beyond their normal search boundary. Ambiguity and misinformation in metadata may misguide the audiences. Through curation, this problem can be solved since it directly leads the audiences to the target content. Diversification of sources, aggregation of points of view and proper contextualization of information are other advantages of content curation.

Previous Studies

Newman and Dutton (2012) observes that the significance of the audiences in distributing and marketing professional media content is witnessing an exponential growth. According to a study by Purcell et al. (2011, up to 75% of the online news audience in the US received news and information from their peers by way of news sharing through emails or social networks. Yet another study conducted by Hermida et al. (2012), found that a considerable number of new media users in Canada got daily news from their family, friends and acquaintances in social networking sites. According to Luders (2007) social curation as it ensures effective horizontal communication among the participants, is attuned to the new media environment.

The basic themes of audience formation, message flow and user dynamics are underpinned in the concept of content curation, especially when it is studied against the background of online news management (Livingstone 2008; Merrin 2009; Banks

& Potts 2010; Ritzer & Jurgenson 2010) and user-generated content (Thurman 2008; Napoli 2010; Wardle & Williams 2010; Singer et al. 2011) and as user-*distributed* content (UDC)(Lietsala & Sirkkunen 2008 17; Napoli 2009),

As a result, the content consumption pattern in new media environment has increasingly become a shared experience fundamentally encouraging individual differences and social categorization in content reception and processing at various levels, tempting to create what Mikko Villi (2012) calls as plural audience communities.

Digital Curation and Pluram Audience

The concept of plural audience community is justified with the nature of the reception and the form of the audience organization. Unlike in traditionally understood mass communication scenario, in new media ecosystem, content consumption is a segmented process and it takes place in de-massified, yet well synchronized groups interconnected through multiple platforms. Boyd (2011) prefers to call it as 'networked publics', and often 'networked collection of peers' considering the demographic similarities it encompasses. Hermida et al. (2012) observes that the in networked community, the dynamics of information flow is multiplied due to the very presence of advanced viral networks, sometimes dismantling the very concept of mass communication due to the segmentation.

This irresistible amount of new media content most often leaves the audiences in confusion and exhaustion. How can the audience find appropriate content among the billions of pieces of information appear online every day? The answer is content curation.

Since the traditional journalistic practices are now significantly supplemented or complemented with the new media routines, this content organization process has now become the part of the routines of communication organizations, particularly news organizations that depend on the Internet as a source of information. Twerksbyry and Wittenberge (2012) state that content curation is fast becoming the integral part of the news production and management in news organizations. Hence, the logic and

protocols of the Web compel news organizations to readjust their day to day practices in accordance with the nuances of the Web, most often through integrating social media platforms, hypertext, video streams, and segmentation to better interact with the new media users.

Motivated by these earlier attempts, the study presented herein explores the Creator-Content-Communication dynamics of the news curation process through storify.com, a well known social curation platform

Story of *Storify.com*

Launched in September 2010, *Storify* has been a major presence in news curation section. It is user friendly social network service which offers the users options for creating stories and adding timelines, based on the content on social media sites like Twitter and Facebook.

On *Storify.com* users can crawl through numerous social networking sites and collect elements of varying interest to create a story. The sites permit the users to reorder stories and text to contextualize the content with an objective helping readers. Media organizations began to use *Storify* for covering ongoing news stories like meetings, elections and natural calamities. Well known news research institutes like *Poynter* in the US recommend *storify* for successful episodic coverage of current events. *Al Jazeera's* show titled 'The Stream' that aggregates different views on news stories is a best example of the successful and professional use of *Storify* for news curation. Yet another example is of CBC's able coverage of the 2011 London riots.

The basic objective of *Storify* is to offer the users opportunity to aggregate new stories by bringing in content from multiple sources into a timeline that unfolds episodic coverage. Using hyperlinks, the users can search for content related to their original report which are sourced from various web platforms, particularly the social media like *YouTube*, *Facebook*, *Google+*, *Flicker*, *Instagram* and the like. Also, there is an option for linking other stories of *Storify* itself. It is possible for the users to contextualize stories positing them in various content premises or adding perspective or comments.

Original idea of *Storify* was developed by Xavier Damman and launched successfully in September 2010 with the financial backup of Bur Herman and started functioning in highly professional and popular way after it won the Startup Accelerator at South by Southwest in the next year and received two million dollars as a support from Khosla Ventures. It was rated as one of the 50 best websites of the world by Time magazine.

Research questions

The entire study centres on three research questions:

RQ1: What sources are used in the online news curation process through *Storify.com*?

RQ2: What is the publishing dynamics of curated stories?

RQ 3: What kind of treatment the stories get after their publication?

The study was accomplished by analyzing the *Storify* content on the Delhi Assembly Elections held in 2013. The rationale behind the selection of the Delhi Assembly Election as a case for study was the fact that it was during this election, news curation was profusely used as political communication method on digital platform in addition to the use of social media networks. Though the users of political information on Delhi Election, which attracted attention thanks to the entry of Aam Admi Party, a new political move initiated by former civil servant Aravind Keriwal and fuelled by the youth, especially techies and professional in the metros, are very much live on the new media forums, the adoption of curation sites like storify.com, scoopit.com offered them added convenience for browsing political information. More so, the Delhi Assembly election witnessed active role of new media firms in curating news in favour all the major contesting parties- Indian National Congress, Bharatiya Janata Party and Aam Admi Party.

Being a new trend in Indian political communication in general and online campaign in India in particular, exploring the dynamics involved in the process assumes significance. It is certain that the trend will catch up in coming campaigns in the existing form or in diversified schemas.

Procedures

The first step in the procedures was to sample the *Storify* content related to Delhi Assembly Election. It was not manageable to take all the content into consideration or all parties or leaders in to account. A purposing random selection was employed identifying three key names related to each major party in the fray. Sheila Dixit of Indian National Congress, Dr, Harshvardhan of Bharatiya Janata Party and Aravind Kejriwal of Aam Admi Party. This was used only to filter the content related to the Election and classify the content ensuring the adequate representation of content related to each party. Since the researcher’s objective was to find our the sources of the curated content in each item. Hence, all the curated stories from Storify.com on the above key names constituted the corpus of analysis and the individual story was the individual unit of analysis.

Measures and Analysis

After final sampling 68 stories were subjected to analysis. Of the toal stories, 28 were on AAP leader Aravind Kejirwal, 25 on BJP candidate Dr. Harshvardhan and 15 stories were on Shiela Dixit of Indian National Congress.

Table. 1: Distribution of Curated Stories by Key Names

Key Names	Political Party	Frequency
Aravind Kejriwal	AAP	28 (41)
Harshvardhan	BJP	25 (37)
Shiela Dixit	INC	15 (22)
Total	68 (100)	

Figures in parentheses denote percentage

This technique of sampling ensures the representation of all the three major parties contesting election, thereby the sample is validated. Then the contents of these stories were analysed to ensure that all the stories filtered using the key names were related to Delhi Assembly election. For this the stories were subjected

to interceding and the reliability was checked using Krippendorff's á method and inter-coder reliability was found to be at 0.96.

Curation Sources

The next was to identify the sources of the stories. The sources identified were three: mainstream media sites, social media sites and personal sites. (See Table: 2)

Table . 2: Sources of Curated News Stories

Source	Frequency
Mainstream Media Sites	18 (26)
Social Media Sites	46 (68)
Personal Sites	4 (6)

Figures in parentheses denote percentage

The data shows that majority of the stories was sourced from Social Media Networks, and incidentally all of them were Twitter and FACEBOOK . Main stream media sites were of major English and Hindi newspapers and television channels. Of these, CNN IBN site figured first with (45) and Aj Tak newspaper site (38)second.

Publishing Dynamics

In order to determine the creator-content-user dynamics (publishing dynamics), the time difference among the date of story publishing and the first original source used in the story was calculated. Following is the formula used to gauge publishing dynamics

Publishing dynamics = time of publishing of curated news – time of original creation

Based on the average time taken for each story to be published after its original creation, three types of dynamics were distinguished:

1. Instant stories – stories published within 0-3 hours
2. Daily stories – stories published within 24 hours

3. Delayed stories – stories curated and published after 24 hours of their creation by the original source

Table. 3 : Publishing Dynamics of Curated News Stories

Publishing Dynamics	Frequency
Instant	18 (26)
Daily	46 (68)
Delayed	4 (6)

Figures in parentheses denote percentage

Post publication treatment of the story clearly indicates the users’ engagement in the communicating stories. Traditionally, post publication activities are technically very much limited since the opportunities are limited. But, when it comes to curated sites with maximum options, post publication is so easy and this process itself in a nature of curation since all the options are readily available on the site itself.

Post Publication Treatment

Yet another aspect explored in this study was the post publication treatment the story gets. This dimension assumes significance as the story has options to be contextualized, commented, rated, re-tweeted and discussed. Post publication treatment is predicted by the technical options available on the platform as well as the effect the story has on the receivers. Theoretically, post publication treatment reflects the concept of feedback in traditional source-message-channel-receiver schema. Contextualization is akin to editorializing and opinionating the story adding the receiver’s perceptive to it. Rating stories bears a resemblance to the concept of priming news.

The distribution of stories on the basis of their post publication treatment generates the following data:

Table 4: Post Publication Treatment of Stories

Post Publication Treatment	Frequency
Contextualization	24
Retweet	12

Comment	24
Rating	54
Discussion	15

Most of the stories are found to be rated by the readers or viewers at various stages depending on the merits or the utility of the content and other user friendly parameters. Star marked rating is the system used in the web site, though it has some limitations. The rating indicates the level of engagement of users in reading the story as well their gratification from it. Utility of the story in terms of informational content, perspective matching and balance of interests are very much evident from the level of rating assigned to each story. In another point of view, rating stories helps new users to easily filter the significant content from plenty of related stories.

The frequency of contextualization and comment go hand in hand, each having 24 instances. Contextualization, in this context is to add perspective to the content, unlike rating or commenting to indicate the merits of the story. Contextualization is simply putting the matter in a context which the user thinks to be more appropriate and significant in the context of similar events. A kind of editorialization takes place in contextualization since the process adds perspectives to the original content. The net result after series of the process is reflecting multiple perspective of the content, with varying importance. In some cases, contextualization was done with linking stories each other, mainly in the case of stories related to the Aam Admi Party, since during the campaign, concentration of the media at large was on this newly emerged political entity which captured the attention of the public unparalleled way. Next significant question in this connection is whether the added content reset the agenda of the user diverting their attention to other stories which are not directly related to the original story on which basically the user focused. This aspect is not explored in this study though it assumes importance in the context of online browsing of news stories, particularly in the context of curated stories.

Conclusions

The most significant finding of the study is about the

curation sources. The first rated sources are social media sites followed by main stream media, including mainstream sites. It indicates bent of online journalism towards social media environment which facilitates very personal experience of news consumption and further treatment. When both sourcing and publication are heavily depending on social media, the whole process will have far reaching implications in news industry.

The speed of the post publication communication throws light into yet another important facet of the publication dynamics. Most of the stories are re-communicated on daily or instant basics while only 6 % of the stories had to wait for more time. It indicates the vibrancy of the users as well as the salience of the content. Apart from these two parameters, technical options, user awareness of the site preferences and such other aspects are also important.

The matrix of curation process, though relatively new in online news premises, offers interesting insights into the user's online news consumption behaviors, particularly, about their control over the stories. The user activities from contextualization to comment indicate that once published online and curated in full option sites, the stories are under the control of the users in terms their further communication and evaluation. The technical parameters like rating and retweet options actualize this process giving way for further viral communication for the stories. In fact, post publication treatment of the story is an unexplored area though it is highly potential in coming days depending on the technological advancements that trigger more avenues for users to further the communication of original content adding multiple preferred perspectives after proper filtration. This aspect of the entire phenomena provides new insights into the gatekeeping possibilities in online news process, in contrast to the argument that online process of stories, especially in the case of user generated content, gatekeeping is very less or not at all. The curation of stories with proper technical options for user engagement actually paves way for the return of the strict gatekeeping of the content, with a difference that this happened not on the part of the sender, but on the whims and fancies of the user/s.

Though the study was conducted in a very limited setting limiting the e sample into less than one hundred in numbers,

considering the newness of the phenomena in Indian context, it has relevance since online new consumption is fast catching up in the country.

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Empowerment of SC/ST Children in South India Through Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

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Abstract

Many developing countries, including India, have been struggling to achieve the goal of Universalization of Elementary Education. Universalization implies providing free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of fourteen years. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA-Movement of Education For All) has been implemented across India to achieve the long-cherished goal of Universalization of Elementary Education through a time-bound integrated approach, in partnership with the States. One of the major Objectives of SSA was to bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage. The present study is an analysis of the role of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Programmes for the development of SC/ST children in South India.

Analysis of the data related to the SC/ST Education revealed that the intervention of SC/ST Education programmes conducting by SSA is successful to a great extent in empowering girl students of Kerala and Tamil Nadu states. Programmes such as Learn to Earn, Community living camps, Exposure trip etc. are highly beneficial to the students. More activities can be planned for the development of SC/ST students under SSA with the help of NGOs or different groups from the community.

Key words: *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan(SSA), Development of SC/ST children*

Introduction

The Constitution of India provides several strategies to improve the situation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Such measures as are required to enforce equality, to provide punitive measures for transgressions, to eliminate established practices that perpetuate inequities. A number of laws were enacted to implement the provisions in the Constitution. Socially disadvantaged group of SC/ST have received special focus over the years for their social and economic advancement. Government has taken several steps for farming appropriate policies needed to design and implement various welfare programmes for achieving the objective of creating favorable environment to ensure speedy socio economic development of SC/STs.

Nevertheless the development in all aspects of life has not been brought to the expected level in the SC/ST Communities. Provision of quality education is the only remedy for the uplift of this group. To educate and empower them Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) had envisaged and implemented specific programmes for SC/ST children all over India.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Movement of Education For All) is a massive movement and efforts towards the education and empowering to all children up-to the age of 14 years. It is also a national Mission and constitutional provision which reflects in the right of children to free and compulsory education act 2009.

SSA has been implemented across India to achieve the long-cherished goal of Universalization of Elementary Education through a time-bound integrated approach, in partnership with the States. Also, it is an effort to recognize the need for improving the performance of the school system and to provide community owned quality elementary education in mission mode. It also envisages bridging of gender and social gaps.

One of the major Objectives of SSA was to bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage i.e., to bridge social, regional and gender gaps, with the active participation of the community. The educational development of children belonging to the Scheduled Castes and /or Scheduled Tribes is a special focus in the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

The interventions for children belonging to SC and ST communities have to be based on the intensive micro-planning addressing the needs of every child. The SarvaShikshaAbhiyan provides flexibility to local units to develop a context specific intervention.

SSA conducted the following programmes in Kerala state:

- ♦ Distribution of free learning books
- ♦ Physical training
- ♦ Sahavasa Camps- community living camps
- ♦ Remedial teaching
- ♦ Learn and earn programme
- ♦ Padanaveedu (Learning Houses) in selected areas.

The better implementation of SSA programmes increased the participation of various stake holders, attendance and retainment of students, improvement of general awareness and academic improvement of students in the category to a great extent.

In Tamil Nadu, the progress in respect of enrollment and participation of SC/ST children has been quite satisfactory over the past seven years. Much emphasis has been given to the improvement of access in remote, tribal areas through AIE programmes. This issue has been addressed on a priority basis by opening centres for conducting Residential bridge courses,

wherever needed. The SC/ST children who are already in the system of regular schools have been given the following additional interventions.

i) Supply of Self Learning Materials

Three-dimensional materials based on Montessori system (Self Learning Maths Kit) have been provided to all primary schools to enable children to actively involve themselves in learning simple arithmetic concepts

ii) English Communication Skills

Children are exposed to various lessons in the CDs for improving their listening skills. Workbooks for children have also been prepared and supplied to all children to give series of practices in language.

The educational development of children belonging to the Scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes is a special focus in the SarvaShikshaAbhiyan. Every activity under the Project must identify the benefit that will accrue to children from these communities. The SarvaShikshaAbhiyan provides flexibility to local units to develop a context specific intervention.

Objective of the Study

To analyse the contribution of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan programme to the empowerment of SC/ST children in South India.

Methodology

Tools Employed for the Study

The following four tools were used for collection of data:

i) General Data Sheet

ii) Observation Schedule on Innovative activities for District Project Office

iii) Format for Focus Group Discussion for a focus group consisting of SC/ST students, parents, teachers and Head Masters

iv) Format to Block Resource Centres

Sample Used

Six districts each are selected from Kerala and Tamil Nadu states as a representative sample for the study. Random Sampling method was used to select the samples for data collection. 400 SC/ ST children from Kerala and 600 SC/ ST children from Tamil Nadu constituted the main sample of the study

Statistical techniques:

Percentage analysis was used as the statistical technique.

Major Findings

To get a clear idea of the intervention of SSA to the education of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, the investigators analyzed the information obtained from the General Data Sheet and Focus group discussion and details are presented below.

1. Important Activities carried out by SSA for the Development of SC/ST Students

Responses from the General Data Sheet of Kerala and Tamil Nadu revealed about the important activities carried out by SSA for the empowerment of SC/ST students, as given in Table 1.

TABLE 1

**Activities carried out in Kerala and
Tamil Nadu for the Development of SC/ ST Students**

Name of the State	Important activities	Percentage of Schools Conducted the Activities
	1. "PadanaVeedu" (programme Learning House)	96
	2. Guidance centres	8
	3. Sahavasa camps (community living camps)	46
	4. Cultural and heritage museum	24

5. Lean and earn programme	88
6. Film Making	24
7. Drama Camp	16
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1. Life skill training	56
2. Exposure visit	36
3. English communication training	22
4. Distribution of dictionaries	10
5. Exposure visit to Chennai	82
6. Tailoring and embroidery training	10
7. Candle making	6
8. Health programme	32

Table 1 shows that in Kerala, 96 percent of schools conducted “Padanaveedu”- Learning House programme. Eight percent of schools formed guidance centres, 46 percent conducted community living camp, 24 percentage formed cultural and heritage museum, 88 percent conducted Learn and Earn programme, 24 percent organized film making and 16 percent , organized drama camp in Kerala.

In Tamil Nadu, 56 percent of schools conducted life skill training. 0306

percent of schools organized exposure visit, 22 percent conducted English communication training, 10 percent of schools distributed dictionaries, 82 percent conducted exposure visit to Chennai. 10 percent schools conducted tailoring and embroidery classes, 6 percent organized candle making and 32 percent organized health programme.

2. Programmes for development of SC/ST students

Table 2 gives details of programmes for the development of SC/ST children by SSA.

Kerala

TABLE 2

Programmes for Development of SC/ST students

Sl. No	Activities Conducted	Percentage of Responses	
		Kerala	Tamil Nadu
1.	Learn to earn programme	67	83
2.	Exposure trip	83	67
3.	Cultural friendly TLM	83	24
4.	Enrichment programme	100	100
5.	Remedial teaching	68	83
6. Tamil Nadu	Community Living Camp	100	100
	Cultural meet	17	11
	Distribution of free learning aids	18	68

Details presented in Table 2 shows that all districts conducted different types of programmes for the empowerment of SC/ST students. Among these Learn to Earn programme, exposure trips and remedial teaching are conducted by a higher percentage of schools. All the districts reported to have organized community living camps and enrichment programmes both in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Selection of SC/ST students for Community living camp

Responses from the focus groups regarding the criteria for selection of students for community living camp revealed the details as presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3

Selection Criteria of SC/ST Students for Community Living Camp

Criterion	Percentage of Responses	
	Kerala	Tamil Nadu
Based on the class division	14	41

Special selection considering the ability of students	42	10
Based on curricular and co-curricular performance	21	13

It can be seen that 42 percent of the schools from Kerala selected students for community living camp considering the ability or performance of the students. 21 percent of schools from Kerala and 13 percent from Tamil Nadu considered their performance in curricular and co-curricular activities. 13 percentage of schools from Kerala and 41 percent of schools from Tamil Nadu selected SC/ST students based on their class division.

Benefits of the Community Living Camp to SC/ST Students

Responses of the focus groups revealed the benefits for community living camp. Table 4 gives the details.

TABLE 4
Benefits of the Community Living Camp

Benefits	Percentage of Responses	
	Kerala	Tamil Nadu
Opportunity for sharing personal experiences with others	18	13
Helped to develop social feeling and cooperative mentality	27	8
Helped to increase leadership	15	27
Helped SC/ST students to reach in the mainstream	8	15

Majority of the groups revealed that the Community living camps helped to develop and increase social feeling and cooperative mentality among SC/ST students and also, it was an opportunity for sharing personal experiences with other students. 27 percent from Tamil Nadu responded that it helped to increase leadership.

Benefits of Exposure Trip

Responses of General Data Sheet and Focus Group Discussion as given in Table 2 revealed that exposure trip was conducted by 83 percent of the schools in Kerala and 67 percent in Tamil Nadu. They also reported that the exposure trips were beneficial to SC/ST students in different ways. Table 5 reveals the details.

TABLE 5
Benefits of Exposure Trips

Benefits	Percentage of Responses	
	Kerala	Tamil Nadu
Development of personality	10	18
To increase knowledge	18	8
To increase self confidence	18	18
For mental development	18	8
For increasing leadership	8	16
For becoming self-reliant	8	8
For developing co-operative mentality	8	8

It can be seen that majority of the schools from Kerala and Tamil Nadu reported the benefits of Exposure Trips as to increase knowledge, self-confidence and mental development. It also helped SC/ST students to increase leadership, to become self-reliant and for developing cooperative mentality.

Other Activities Conducted

For empowering SC/ST students some other activities are also conducted by schools of Kerala and Tamil Nadu as detailed in Table 6.

TABLE 6
Other Activities Conducted for SC/ST Students

Activities	Percentage of Responses	
	Kerala	Tamil Nadu
Training programmes/classes	36	18

Field trips	15	16
Yoga classes	6	3
Distributed learning materials	22	37
Awareness classes/counselling	12	38

It can be seen that 36 percent of the schools in Kerala and 18 percent in Tamil Nadu conducted training programmes or classes to the SC/ST students, 21.33 percent of the schools from Kerala 37 percent from Tamil Nadu distributed learning materials to the students. 15 percent from Kerala and 16 from Tamil Nadu conducted field trips and 12 percent from Kerala and 38 from Tamil Nadu conducted awareness programmes/ counselling to the SC/ST students.

Programmes for keeping the cultural identity of Tribal Students

The study examined whether any programme to keep the cultural identity of Tribal students have conducted or not. Responses obtained from focus group discussion are presented in Table 7.

TABLE 7
Programmes to Keep Cultural Identity of Tribal Students

Programmes to Keep Identity	Percentage of responses	
	Kerala	Tamil Nadu
No activities	30	50
Folk song/ Archery Competition	16	8
Awareness classes	9	9
Festival celebrations	4	2
Meeting with cultural leaders/artists	7	9

30 percent of the respondents from Kerala and 50 percent from Tamil Nadu reported that no activities were carried out for keeping cultural identity of the Tribal students. But 16 percent reported that folk song competition, Archery competition etc.

were carried out. Awareness classes, festival celebrations and meeting with cultural leaders/artists were also carried out.

Conclusion

The study revealed that many activities were conducted by SSA for the benefit of SC/ST students by all districts in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. These programmes were helpful in increasing self confidence of the students. Among these, community living camp, learn to earn programmes, exposure trips and remedial teaching are the major activities. Community living camps and exposure trips were beneficial to increase leadership and to develop social feeling. Learn and earn programmes were beneficial to develop work culture and for financial benefit. Other activities conducted for the group include training programmes, awareness classes, yoga classes. But a very few activities were carried out to keep the cultural identity of Schedule Tribe students. More activities should be conducted for the empowerment of SC/ST students by SSA in all states.

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***Vyākaraṇa* as a Philosophical System**

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The goal of the Indian grammarian's philosophy is not mere intellectual knowledge, but the direct experience of ultimate truth. Knowledge of grammar, resulting in correct speech, not only conveys meaning but also enables one 'to see reality'. This is the philosophical meaning of the Indian term '*Darśana*', which literary means 'sight.' All aspects of the world and the human experiences are illuminated by language. Indian Philosophy has also postulated that the language possesses both phenomenal and metaphysical dimensions. Although there was a deliberate concern for the phenomenal or outer aspects of language, the Indians always paid equal attention to both the inner and metaphysical aspects of language. Though the grammarians like Pāṇini and Patañjali and etymologists like Yāska had their concern with human speech in the empirical world, they also made room for metaphysical study. The great Indian Philosopher of language Bhartṛhari, begins his *Vākyapadīya* with the metaphysical enquiry into the nature and origin of language in relation to Brahman, but in the second and third chapter he explores technical grammatical points involved in the everyday use of language. In classical Indian thought on language the study of a particular phenomenon and the contemplation of it as a metaphysical mystery are not mutually exclusive. They are both considered as parts of a *Darśana* or systematic view of truth.

Language is the object of study of *Vyākaraṇa* and one cannot go outside of language to examine it objectively. Language

must be used to study language within *Vyākaraṇa*. It does not go back from this difficulty but realizes its challenge. All knowledge of ourselves and all knowledge of the world come to us through language. Thus the correct knowledge of language is basic to all other approaches to reality i.e. all other *Darśanas*.

***Śabdabrahman* and its manifestation**

It was Bhartṛhari who in *Vākyapadīya* first systematically equated *Brahman* with language going on to argue that everything else arises as a manifestation of this one *Śabdabrahman*.

अनादिनिधनं ब्रह्म शब्दतत्त्वं यदक्षरम् ।

विवर्ततेऽर्थभावेन प्रक्रिया जगतो यतः ।। ब्रह्मकाण्डम् ¹

But equating Brahman with language is found much earlier in the Vedic literature. The *Aśvāmīya* hymn (*Ṛgveda*) states that the ultimate abode of language is Brahman. Language is described as being at the pinnacle of the universe. Language is related to cosmic order, and it is understood as logos, which manifests itself as both the uttered word and the inner word that reveals truth. The equation of *Brahman* with language is also found within the *Upaniṣad*-s: *Brahman* is identified as the one reality, without as second, which is identical with language. *Veda*-s occupy a primary place in the manifestation of *Śabdabrahman* as well as being the means by which *Śabdabrahman* may be realized and experienced. The *Veda*-s though one, is divided into many and spreads out through its various recessions and manifesting sounds (*Dhvani*) to the diversity of people.

एकमेव यदाम्नातं भिन्नं शक्तिव्यापाश्रयात् ।

अपृथक्त्वेऽपि शक्तिभ्यः पृथक्त्वेनेव वर्तते । ब्रह्मकाण्डम्-²

Although the experience of the *Veda*-s may be many, the reality they reveal is the one *Śabdabrahman*. Vedic language is at once the creator and sustainer of the world cycles and the revealer of the divine. Language is taken as having Divine origin, as spirit descending and embodying itself phenomena, assuming various guises and disclosing the truth to the sensitive soul. *Vyākaraṇa* has the special task of keeping the *Veda*-s uncorrupted so that the manifestation of *Śabdabrahman* remains available to all in

pristine form.

Vyākaraṇa is described by Bhartṛhari as more important than other *Darśana*-s. Indian Philosophy is based on oral traditions. *Vyākaraṇa* is providing the rules and teaching that keeps the oral forms of language pure is of fundamental importance to all other philosophic schools. Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī* is a grammar founded upon oral usage rather than upon etymology or derivation. The same stress on languages oral character is found in the discussions offered by Patañjali in his *Mahābhāṣya* and Bhartṛhari in *Vākyapadīya* as the way uttered words which convey meaning. *Vyākaraṇa* plays the important role of keeping the oral form disciplined and pure in its presentation. In the Indian condition language is only fully alive when spoken. Thus knowledge of the *Veda*-s includes and requires the ability to speak the words with correct accent and metre. The *Vyākaraṇa* provides the training rules for the oral learning of language and for the presentation of the Vedic word in its pure form for *Vyākaraṇa*, then spoken language the medium through which *Śabdabrahman* is manifested and the *Veda*-s are the criterion expression of that manifestation.

The Function of Time

In the Bhartṛhari's systematization of *Vyākaraṇa* Philosophy, time (*Kāla*) is assigned the function of enabling the one *Śabdabrahman* to appear to as many. In *Vākyapadīya* Bhartṛhari describes the creation of the objects of the universe as occurring in the first instance through the creative power of *Śabdabrahman* - *Kāla* or time power. *Kāla* is not different from *Śabdabrahman* but is that aspect of *Śabdabrahman* which allows manifested sequence to come into being.

व्यापारव्यतिरेकेण कालमेके प्रचक्षते ।

नित्यमेकं विभु द्रव्यं परिमाणं क्रियावताम् ।। कालसमुद्देशः ।

When such time sequences appear as differentiated objects then time as a power seems to be different from *Śabdabrahman*, but really it is not. *Vākyapadīya* states that all other powers within the created universe are in the first instance governed by the creative power of time. Through time things come to be and

pass away. Time is the efficient cause by which *Brahman* controls the cycles of the universe. *Kāla* has full control over the running of the world. The power of time in the creative process is like that of the wire puller in a puppet play. The objects of the created world are controlled by the 'string of time.' In *Vākyapadīya*, Bhartṛhari presents his detailed analysis of time. Time is the cause of the birth, existence and decay of everything. Time in its own nature, as one with *Śabdabrahman* to similar with *avidyā* in *Vedānta*. The preceding description of time sounds very similar to Śaṅkara's notion of '*māyā*' in relation to *Brahman*. In Bhartṛhari's view time as a power of *Śabdabrahman* independent of all beings and object yet also inherent in them—pushing them through the successive changes of life. Time as an independent power of *Brahman* and discuss its ontological status in relation to '*avidyā*.' According to Bhartṛhari time is the '*svatantraśakti*' of Brahman. Due to *avidyā* there is first of all appearance of diversity. Diversity is temporal and special. The former come first. The consciousness at the stage '*paśyanti*', is without any sequence. According to Bhartṛhari the ontological level is pure *Brahman* without sequence or diversity. Although time is inherent in *Śabdabrahman* at this stage no sequence has yet occurred. The next ontological level in descending order in '*madhyamā*.' It is at this level that time begins to push or drive delimited portions of *Śabdabrahman* into sequence. It is in this third or '*vaikhari*' level that the power of time as the sequence evidenced in ordinary course effect relation is fully experienced.

Vyākaraṇa as a means of release

For the Hindu the ultimate goal of Philosophy is liberation (*mokṣa*). Before Bhartṛhari, Patañjali in his *Mahābhāṣya* included in the aims of grammatical study the attainment of heaven through the correct use of words and liberation from bondage. Bhartṛhari emphasizes the aim of grammar as leading both to heaven and to liberation not only in the *Vākyapadīya* but also in his commentary on Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya*. At the beginning of the *Vākyapadīya* Bhartṛhari says that grammar is the door leading to liberation. It is the straight royal road those who desire salvation and by means of it one attain the supreme *Brahman*. At the end of the first chapter Bhartṛhari returns to the topic and states

that the purification of the word is the means to the attainment of the supreme self. One who knows the essence of its activity attains the immortal *Brahman*. In *vaikharī* breath is very active in producing the sequence of altered sounds. At the level of inner thought (*madhyamā*) breath is still active, though in a more subtle way, in fashion sequences of thought. *Paśyanti* lies beyond the activity of breath and sequences. The mind is quiet and focused, allowing the *pratibhā* or intuitive perception of *Śabdabrahman*.

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