

The Special Issue of *Social Science Gazetteer* is a humble remembrance of these 'foundational bricks' and 'bricks within bricks'. The deeper understanding-based revelations by Radhakamal Mukerjee, D P Mukerji, A K Saran, R N Saksena, Indra Deva, Ramkrishna Mukherjee, Rajeshwar Prasad, Yogesh Atal and Amitabh Kundu stimulate us to construct "*Imagining India*" *sociologically*. These articles and introduction framed by Professor Brij Mohan also give direction to frame a sociological model of '*From Imagining India to Re-imagining India*'.

This collection of articles arranged in Special Issue [Vol 19 (2)] in three (3) Parts of *Social Science Gazetteer* is now before the readers for critical evaluation. It is pertinent to note here that articles in Special Issue Part 1 have been taken from the personal archives of Professor Rajeshwar Prasad. Your observations, views and suggestions will encourage us further. It can be argued without any hesitation that when (some) foundational bricks speak, the entire construction is supposed to listen and react so that construction could get further strength. Now, **Indian Social Science Association - ISSA** through, '*Social Science Gazetteer*' requests you all to listen the voices of some foundational bricks and generation of Present Sociologists with deep academic regards.

Introduction

Indian Sociological Thought

Continuity and Change

Brij Mohan

[Plato] speaks of illumination; he does not like some mystics see it as the special "prerogative of a privileged few, but grounds it as a permanent possibility in human nature itself."

Raghavan Iyer (1979: 37)

"The only way one can activate the higher faculties is by a conscious and continuous attunement to universal principles."

Raghavan Iyer (2007: 24)

Much of Western philosophy is Platonic. Anchored in the post-Enlightenment ethics, I may be called Anti-Platonic in line with Richard Rorty's "Leftist Thought in Twentieth Century" (1998). Raghavan Iyer's work (1979; 2007) helps understand how *Indian Sociological Imagination (ISI)* predates Western philosophy. The rise and demise of civilization is a reminder that humans are trapped in Plato's Cave under the shadows of a perceived reality. Experiencing life beyond the shadows is an incomplete journey toward comprehension and truth. It took me a lifetime of disciplined work to see beyond *Plato's Cave*.

"Suddenly, I fall from the pavilion into a place where I see ugliness...There is one who can help, who turns the wheel from Nonexistence to a sweet-breathing emptiness." (Rumi, 2006)

This Introduction is a reflective prologue to signify the emergence of Sociology as a discipline in India. The genesis of *Indian Sociological Imagination*, (ISI), however, lies in the classical myths and primordial thoughts. *Indian Social Science Association* (ISSA) was organized as a major platform to synthesise cognate social sciences to study the dynamics of Indian culture and society. Its founding father Professor Rajeshwar Prasad, an alum of Lucknow University (LU), was my teacher at Agra University's Institute of Social Sciences (ISS). I graduated from ISS in 1960 and joined Lucknow University's premiere doctoral program in Social Work. I tend to focus on LU's contribution to Indian Sociology for two reasons: First, in the geopolitics of Indian academia, Mumbai, Delhi, and Madras frequently eclipsed the seminal contributions that Lucknow University's sociologists made. I am privileged to be a Lucknow University product. Secondly, intellectually attuned scholars at Lucknow University sought an interdisciplinary discourse that is not yet duly appreciated. "Knowingness is a state of soul which prevents shudders of awe. It makes one immune to romantic enthusiasm" (Rorty, 1998: 126).

Lucknow University's Department of Sociology and Social Work embodied a conflicted marriage of two rivalrous partners who would be ultimately divorced to acquire an independent domain. On the surface, it looked like an interdisciplinary discord. It was a caste and communal conflict. Since Radha Kamal Mukerjee happened to be its Godfather, the two estranged partners settled down for co-existence. Sociology, principally, remained the realm of Sushil Chandra, S. P. Nagendra, A.K. Saran, and Suresh Varma while Social Work progressed and developed under the legendary leadership of Dr. Zafar S. Hasan, my mentor, and guide. I owe my loyalty to Lucknow University and its Sociology and Social Work.

Sociology in India is an outcome of the colonial need to understand the nature of the ruled in the wake of the 1857 Mutiny. Several Western scholars and missionaries began to study society and its culture they needed for varied vested interests. Ethnography,

anthropology, and modern economics sprouted out of this colonial creed.

A journal is usually a mouthpiece of a certain school (of thought) or organisation. About two decades ago I submitted one of my best articles to the *Social Service Review* (Chicago). The Editor wasted no time (to read) and returned it with an impolite regret. That was my first and last submission.

Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* published by *Foreign Affairs* (1993) continues to bedevil humanity: The Christian West against the entire Muslim (underdeveloped) world? Strachey and Churchill must be enjoying, vicariously, the mayhem and genocide that has ravaged the Middle East. A Western Journal opined that "Israel will save the Western Civilization." Atlanticism continues to expand its influence in nation-building, which has been a failure in the past. Its impact on sociological research has not yet surfaced anywhere.

C. Wright Mills, the inventor of *Sociological Imagination*, famously wrote:

"The sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society. ... No social study that does not come back to the problems of biography of history and their intersections within a society has completed its intellectual journey." (2000: 6)

Denial of the 'history of biography' is an act of either ignorance or pretense. Ignorance is the fount of knowledge. It's bliss in disguise. Pretense is a proxy for indefensible moral dissonance. As I write this Introduction, the dreaded Third World War is about to break out if Israel nukes Iran to assert his illegitimate power. Manifestations of this dystopian narcissism imperil humanity.

We make no pretenses to comprehend, let alone solve, all the societal problems. We don't even know how to define "Social" in a world inhabited by incomplete homo sapiens. It's Sociological Imagination that helps us find a door out of this existential darkness. In other

words, Sociological Imagination opens the doors of inquiry and truth. *Social Science Gazetteer (SSG)* is a small boat in turbulent water.

This *Social Science Gazetteer* was founded by Professor Rajeshwar Prasad, one of my favourite professors at the Institute of Social Sciences, Agra University (1958-1960). I learned not only “Social Research and Disorganization” but also theatre and drama. *Social Science Gazetteer (SSG)* has been a forum for all social scientists for half a century. It’s time to celebrate its challenges and triumphs. It’s my distinct honour to contribute to it.

A journal is both a fulcrum and forum of different, divergent voices regarding the complex human conditions that call for attention in and beyond academia. An article, like the one I have written for this volume, is a painting rather than a photograph. It can never be complete; it’s always a work in progress. Unlike many other prestigious journals where only VIPs contribute, *Social Science Gazetteer (SSG)* is an eclectic, objective, and non-partisan interdisciplinary journal with a strong proclivity for inclusiveness. *Social Science Gazetteer*’s review process is equally diverse and dynamic. It’s with this mindset we announced a Call for a thematic Special Issue on **Indian Sociological Imagination**. The response has been overwhelming.

I am painfully aware of my *Otherness* in social sciences, especially Social Work and Sociology (Mohan, 2025). It took decades to learn the power of humility. My hubris as a Dean at Louisiana State University (1981-1986) nearly destroyed me. It was like a Greek tragedy. I learned early how to use my adversity to my advantage. In my post-dean decades, I taught and published over two hundred papers and articles and twenty books. Being Dean Emeritus is an honour. As a full-time writer, speaker, and advocate, I pursued my passion for publishing and editing. I have mentored many academics who have matured professionally. My editorial obligation transcends the traditional “accept” or “reject” model. I encourage and advise rising authors to achieve a measure of relative renown. Social Science

Gazetteer is a platform that facilitates our explorations to achieve this goal.

As I see it, Indian Sociology is a hybrid of the Western mind and the Indian soul. It’s an about one-hundred-year-old odyssey in search of its epistemic authenticity as a discipline. I learned the first lessons in Sociology from Professors R.N. Saxena, Yogendra Singh, and J.P. Mistry.

Sociological Imagination predates C. Wright Mills. If history and biography are crucial dimensions at the crossroads of a journey, social scientists are obligated to sustain the integrity of this intersection. A modest attempt is made to highlight and disseminate certain findings and viewpoints that signify the continued relevance of *Sociological Imagination* at this point in history. As we set out, SSG has zeroed in on *Indian Sociological Imagination (ISI)* searching for pathways that unravel Indian Sociology. What we have been doing during the last 75 years or so is a prelude to exploring India’s culture and psyche, sociologically.

Aphorisms of Sociological Imagination have yet to establish their existence. “*A good aphorism is too hard for the tooth of time and is not consumed by millennia,*” wrote Frederick Nietzsche. ([1967]1989: 176). As I assayed in my first article, Indian Sociological Imagination’s aphorisms are hidden in the spatiotemporal treasure of a lost paradigm.

The design of this thematic *Special Issue* on *Indian Sociological Imagination (ISI)* is integrated within a unified structure of a three-fold format: entitled ‘**Indian Sociological Thought: Continuity And Change**’. Part 1 of the Special Issue anthologized some of the pioneers of Indian Sociology, the proud legacy of Lucknow University’s ‘School of Sociology’. This volume includes important articles by Radha Kamal Mukerjee, D P Mukerji, R N Saksena, A K Saran, Indra Deva, Ramkrishna Mukherjee, Rajeshwar Prasad, Yogesh Atal and Amitabh Kundu followed by a recommended reading by Rajiv Gupta. Note from the President Rajiv Gupta precedes my Introduction.

For Part 2 and Part 3 of the Special Issue of Volume 19(2) July – December 2024 the contributed articles--authorially--follow this sequence: Part 2: B K Nagla, Ambika and, Anand Kumar, Brij Mohan, N Rajaram, V. Basil Hans, Rajiv Gupta, The Contents of Part 3 include contributions by Liladhar Soni, K. Gulam Dasthagir, Poornima Jain, Jyoti Sidana, Manisha Swami, Prayag Sharma, Sanchita Agrawal, Ambika, Sandip Kumar Roy. I have submitted an Essay, 'Empathy as an Empty Vessel'. 'Autobiography of a Journal' is the lived experience of an editor who swam against the hegemonic establishment of International Social Work, Policy, and Comparative Social Welfare. It's an untold story of strife, sacrifice, and triumph of Otherness in an ironic world of social development. Articles are followed by Book Reviews submitted to SSG.

It's difficult to overstate the vision and prescience of the scholars who have richly contributed to this Special Issue. I am delightfully overwhelmed by the single-mindedness of selfless attention that Abhinay Prasad and his team have devoted to the outcome of this historical publication. It's my honour to have served as the Editor-in-Chief of *Social Science Gazetteer*.

“Those having Lamps will pass them on to others.”

Plato

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Editor-in-Chief, *Social Science Gazetteer* (ISSA), Dr Brij Mohan's seminal contribution have earned him international renown. His twenty-six books and over four hundred research articles, papers and reviews represent an unmatched Zeitgeist in social sciences. What distinguishes him from all other social scientists who acclaimed renown is that he earned an enviable status in the US without owing anything to the US academic establishment. He earned his doctorate from Lucknow University on a UGC Scholarship and served in academic positions that earned him enviable epitaphs: "Sartre of Social Work," and "Habermas of Social Work." The Indian Social Science Association proudly—and gratefully—applauds his continued creativity and support.

Managing Trustee, ISSA