Society, Culture, the Indian Psyche: Unravelling Indian Sociological Imagination

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Abstract: *Modern Sociology as a discipline is a Eurocentric American invention. From Comte and Durkheim to Parsons and Srinivas, sociologists evolved in different directions. The classic Manu, Kautilya, Buddha, and Gandhi lost their musings in this odyssey. The Sociological Imagination posited by C. Wright Mills has been a force to reckon with the other side of Weberian tradition. Uncritical adherence to the legacy of Western sociologism has thwarted the development of The New Indian Sociological Imagination (NSI) which is deeply rooted in the depth of Indian, i.e., Vedic, philosophy, and culture. The primary goal of this paper is to rivet ISI's redux and aphorisms that help us explore the many-faceted evolution of Sociology in India.*

Keywords: Indian Sociological Imagination (ISI); Vedic Tradition; Caste; Sociologism; Hindutva, and the 'Otherness.'

Introduction

"Compassion is the key to achieving a deeper level of morality, yet how can we help others when we are ourselves beset by wrong attitudes? … . You are already equipped with basic qualities needed to attain complete enlightenment--the luminous and cognitive nature of your mind."

His Holiness Dalai Lama (2002: 95-96)

Indian Sociological Imagination (ISI) predates the birth of Sociology. The Greek stoic philosopher Epictetus might have intutioned some of ISI's insight but there is no record of this Indo-European interface shrouded in the fog of antiquity. The sociological *"Otherness"* is a discovery of the *"third ear"*. The aporias of *Sociologism* -- the *"third eye"* -- open vistas of *imagination*. Empathy, likewise, is an empty vessel unless filled with transformative substance. I grew up near Mathura, closely situated in a triangulated--mythical and real--landscape between Aligarh, Agra, and Lucknow. Raised by loving parents in Brahmin culture, my education and consciousness developed as a hybrid of traditional Hindu-Muslim tradition in a feudal town, Mursan, founded by one of the Jat Kingdoms during Aurangzeb's regime.

I was in third grade when India attained Independence. I vividly recollect August 15, 1947: Colourful processions, decorations, the emptiness of joy, and school prayers and buntings crisscrossing mango and neem trees. I lost my enthusiasm in the sweltering heat; I returned home thirsty and tired with two boondi *laddus* in a small, leafed bowl. As I grew, my curiosity about 'freedom' and 'kingdom' on the one hand and 'partition' and 'Pakistan' on the other morphed into morbid fears after Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated soon after. The horrors of communal slaughter and the flood of refugees from Punjab further confounded my anxiety about things beyond my comprehension.

My consciousness was shaped by the conflicts and contradictions I have lived through in search of unanswered ruddles. Though abysmally funded, my GSAS Higher Secondary School gave me the first --perhaps the last--break in life. I obtained a master's degree, MSW (1960), and PhD (Social Work, 1964) from Agra and Lucknow Universities. I had hoped to make a dent in the corroding structure of Indian Society.

Imagination is more than a dream and less than a plan. It obtains credence when thoughts are matched with creative actions. The birth of *praxis* is an outcome of this reality that I find existentially basic to conceptualizing *Indian Sociological Imagination* (ISI).

Starchy, Churchill, and Kipling depicted India--Starchy even questioned it--as an ungovernable mass of people, less than humans. Most Western writers have never understood India's *Unity from Duality* which, I strongly believe, is the fulcrum of ISI. I quote from Chakravarthi Ram-Prasad's[1] brilliant *India: Life, Myth, and Art:*

"Among the most powerful representations in Hindu thought of unity that is believed to lie at the very heart of existence are the sacred symbols of the linga (the symbolic phallus...) and the encircling Yoni (the vagina and womb...). The god Shiva is sometimes worshiped in the form of the androgynous deity Ardhanarishavra, who is [[sick]] the synthesis of these male and female principles. But he is most often worshiped through the linga, which protrudes from the yoni. Together, the two symbols signify the union of male and female and the totality of existence. Sexual love was accorded a respected place within human life, as commemorated in the erotic friezes that adorn the walls of the eleventh-century temple complex at Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh" (2006: 12)

It's shocking to realize how mindless Stracheyans' barbarism was. What transpired one hundred generations ago is beyond the *Sociological Imagination* of the colonialists.

'Matter' represents the familiar world, the world of relativity, whereas 'voidness' represents the goal of spiritual longing, the ultimate, the transcendental, the infinite, the eternal," writes Robert Thurman, the renowned Buddhist philosopher ([1976]1992: 1). "[T]he equation of 'matter' with 'voidness' tells us something about the condition of matter, "not that matter does not exist at all.... [I]t emphasizes the fact that this teaching is, far from being nihilistic, the very cure of nihilism" (Thurman, 1992: 1).

Dalai Lama's words epitaphed at the outset posit a way to achieve 'enlightenment' which stems from the earliest wisdom offered by the Buddha. As I see it, Buddhist praxis was a challenge and threat to the Vedic myths and mantras. Not until the 17th century, did the West capture the sense of *Enlightenment* which invented 'Science'. It was the dawn of Reason after the ages of darkness. Attainment of

Buddhahood is neither the goal nor the target of ISI. The main burden of this brief monograph is three-fold:

- Explore the genesis of *Sociological Imagination* (SI) in the Indian tradition.
- Demystification of the "*Otherness*" in discourse, and,
- Rediscovery of the Science of Society is a transcendental *sociologism* and its dialectic.

This critical exposé is an exploratory review and formative narrative about the identity and horizon of a disciplinarity that stands unexamined at the crossroads of knowledge. My allusion to ancient Hindu (Vedic) culture is a modest albeit honest exploration of the pearls lost in the depths of oceanic knowledge[2].

"An intimacy of strangers" - borrowing the expression from Salman Rushdie's *Knife* (2024:15)- is a reflective version of *Imagination*. Self-credentialization is unwarranted since I have spent my entire life within a realm where Sociology developed as an academic specialty. My work has been compared, charitably, with Sartre and Habermas which I view as an exaggeration[3]. Radha Kamal Mukherji, a pioneer ecologist and frontiersman, is usually called the Father of Indian Sociology[4]. Radha Kamal Mukherji became a full professor in his twenties and commanded an enviable status as a career guru. At Lucknow University (L.U.), his former colleagues and disciples fondly called him *Aaqah* (akin to a god). An auto-didactical analysis is crucial to signify my experiential narrative of the sociological setting that shaped my "Otherness" as a social scientist[5].

I joined Lucknow University's premier doctoral program in social work in 1960. My mentor and guide, Zafar S. Hasan, was one of Aaqah's luminary disciples. I lived on the campus in Narendra Dev Hall and frequently walked the road beautifully surrounded by bungalows occupied by VIPs (including R.K. Mukherjee, Kali Prasad, Baljit Singh, R.U. Singh, H K Awasthi, Ramesh Mohan, Sushil Chandra and G.S. Mishra. When I left the Institute of Social Sciences (ISS), Agra to join Lucknow University, my professor Chandi Prasad

advised me to see Radha Kamal Mukherji if I wanted him to be my research supervisor[6].

Lucknow University's Department of Economics served as a motherly institution to its cognate offspring, J. K. Institute of Sociology, Ecology, and Human Relations and Department of Sociology and Social Work and subsequently two separate departments of Sociology and Social Work-- respectively, were headed by Sushil Chandra and Zafar Hasan[7]. This bifurcation was like India's partition. Since Zafar Sahib--a proud secular Muslim--was my mentor, Hindu sociologists of Lucknow and beyond never acknowledged my innate *Sociological Imagination*[8]. The paragraphs that follow will reflect the ontology of my "Otherness" as well as my understanding of ISI.

Aphorisms and Dialectic of Discourse

"The quality and fecundity of discourse are perhaps measured by the critical rigor with which the relation to the history of metaphysics and to inherited concepts thought."

　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Derrida, 1966 (in Kamuf, 1991)

Evolution of a Pantheon

Aphorisms of Vedanta permeate Hindu philosophy. Atlanticism and sociological discourses did not emerge until the end of the 19th Century. After Frederich Nietzsche declared 'god is dead,' the doors of reason began to open. My research seems to indicate the impact of Buddhist thought when Nietzsche heralded the age of *Übermensch,* a reasonable extension of Krishna of Bhagavad Gita. Hitler bastardized Nietzschean *Superman* as an Aryan god. The ancient Hindu symbol of Swastika (peace) embodied the Nazi's pernicious metaphysics of racial superiority. This speculative interpretation is not a fictional fantasy. Understanding this centrifugalism nexus of micro-macro-cosmic ethos would unveil how time and space evolved this timeline[9].

Present: Leadership and Hindutva

The above-abbreviated trajectory of the evolution of India is a depiction of the rise and fall--vicissitudes, triumphs, tribal wars,

colonial subjugation, and struggles for freedom--of a "wounded civilization."[10]

History is the reservoir of myths and epochs that have driven the forces of change. One can discern from the above timeline how migration, invasion, social intercourse, and colonialism helped develop people's imagination and life. Rig Veda, Manusmiriti, Gita, Ramayana, Bible, and Quran mainly enlightened, transvalued, and proselytized frontiers of humans before primitive societies leaped into their future. At each stage, imprints of violence and mayhem are left in the name of religion and territorial quests. The advances of modernity accentuated conflicts and cooperation amongst people in cultural, commercial, and educational directions. Enlightenment and its innovations extended techno-scientific advancements which ultimately created silos of knowledge as specialization. The birth of Sociology is an outcome of this entire process.

The Zeitgeist

Indian Sociology is an outcome of the education system established by the British. One of the greatest triumphs, as commonly said, is the establishment, propagation, and spread of English. By the laws of serendipity and dialectics, English became a unifier as well as colonizers' nemesis. The rulers did not introduce English to 'educate' and /or 'emancipate' the indigenous "barbarians." They manufactured *Baboos* to help govern Indians. The brown anglophones replaced the white masters and continued to 'rule' India as IAS, IFS, and IPS officers. Western sociologists thus became the originators and models for the Indians.

Ramachandra Guha has an uncanny historical perspective:

"If, for Indian students, history comes to an end with Independence and partition, this is because Indian adults have mandated it that way. In the academy, the discipline of history deals with the past, while the disciplines of political science deal with the present. ... The difficulty is that in the Indian academy, the past is defined as a single, immovable date: 15 August 1947. Thus, when the clock struck

midnight and India became independent, history ended, and political science and sociology began" (2007: 12).

When Swami Vivekananda lectured on Vedanta in Chicago, he spoke English. Subhash Chandra Bose's genius was manifested in English when he competed for Indian Foreign Services (IFS). Narendra Singh Sarila, Lord Mountbatten's secretary, published the untold story of India's partition. I learned English literature to compete for an IAS Examination[11].

Sociologists in power have promoted their professional sycophants at the expense of discipline. I recall several instances in India and elsewhere where reviewers (editors, publishers, and rivals) have excluded or rejected my work for less than professional reasons[12]. It's this *Otherness* that is contextualized here.

Sociology's zeitgeist is an array of rational and irrational, mythical and real, past, and present, Eastern and Western beliefs, and imagination. The genius of Epictetus, a philosopher born and raised under the Roman slavery, is a case in point. My association with Sociology, both personal and professional, conceptualize how dynamics of society and culture have shaped a gamut of social institutions and imaginations.

Yogendra Singh wrote: "Initially, Indian sociology was influenced by colonialism and Indology. After Independence, Indian sociology moved towards indigenization on the one hand and critical examination of the Western theories, concepts, and methods of study on the other." (2014)13 In the 1st Volume of a Survey undertaken by the Indian Council of Social Science Research: "The essays included in this volume scrutinize a gamut of contemporary and critical themes and concepts in Indian sociology. They contextualize sociological knowledge-building and theorization of both the key structural elements of Indian society, such as caste, class, community, and the processual changes of the rural-urban divide. This survey marks the emergence of new conceptual tools and outlines and reviews the growth of literature capturing India's social, economic, and cultural transition in the last decade." (Singh, 2014)

In his Ideology and Theory in Indian Society, Yogendra Singh analysed "processes and problems of modernization in contemporary India" (2004). T. N. Madan's discussion of "methodological pluralism" in Indian Sociology included caste, Hinduism, Islam, and secularism (2011). Sociological Bulletin has been a favourite forum for extrapolating, formulating, and presenting many pertinent issues that merit attention in this essay. K.L. Sharma's Observations in Indian Sociology at the Threshold of the 21st Century (2019) is an example.

It's beyond the intent and scope of my article to offer a global critique here. Many other sociologists, economists, anthropologists, social workers, and intellectuals have written volumes to unravel what sociology is about. M.N. Srinivas' Sanskritization is a frequently referenced theme that pervades the sociology of caste in India.

About two decades ago, C. Lakshmana, an eminent sociologist, once told me that India's problems mainly involved the demographics of Muslims. Thanks to successive leadership's *Hindutva* Movement, the Muslim question continues to be at the core of a new manifesto of change[14].

In sum, *Indian Sociological Imagination* (ISI) has emanated from classic social thought which evolved through the ages. Since the *Golden Age,* [15] one discerns a slow but steady decline that muffled the glory that was India. The Great Partition (1947) embodied the long, tortured history of colonial ravages and the politics that "balkanized" an otherwise old civilization. The two-nation theory--Hindus and Muslims can't coexist--was a wolf-child of the British mind that planned to perpetuate its hold on the Indian psyche[16]. No sociologist in India has attempted a critical appraisal of coloniality that has fogged *ISI*. Preoccupation with central issues like Caste, *Karma,* and *Dharma*--thanks to Srinivasan and Andre Beteille--has reinforced the beliefs and notions that paralyze *Sociological Imagination*. V. S. Naipaul was a scholar. See what he observed while visiting his lost homeland in *The Area of Darkness:*

"Class is a system of rewards. Caste imprisons man in his function. From this it follows, since there are no rewards, that duties and

responsibilities become irrelevant to position. ... Service is not an Indian concept, and the providing of services has long ceased to be a concept of caste. ... Caste, sanctioned by the Gita with almost propagandist fervour, might be seen as part of the older Indian pragmatism, the 'life' of classical India.... Every man is an island, each man to his function, his private contact with God. This is the realization of Gita's selfless action. This is caste." (Naipaul, 1964: 79-83).

Neither Naipaul nor Sarila are sociologists. Their penetrating, indelible *imagination,* however, transcends much more than all departments of Sociology- Mumbai, Kolkata, Lucknow and Madras-- have produced.

The Class has secularized *Caste* and its corruption. The poverty of sociology is inevitable if it is critically examined. The Indian *Caste* has become a glorified classist system without clear awareness[17]. In America, it's the reverse[18]. In *India's Social Problems,* I explored the feudal-colonial basis of most basic social issues" (Mohan, 1972). I surmised rhetorically in my debuted sociological imagination that India's destiny would have been different had Tulsidas not written the *Ramayana* in Awadhi (a Hindi dialect spoken by common people).

Positivism, as acclaimed by a few, is incongruous with Indian ethos. What is germane is often lost sight of. This cognitive dissonance and moral neglect--marginalization of the voiceless--is an innate problem. I have not come across a social scientist or an intellectual who might emulate the radical imagination and struggle of Frantz Fanon in India[19],[20].

India's "wretched" ones are orphans of a predatory culture. The politicization of education confounded by the unfathomable complexity of Artificial intelligence (AI) and pervasive digitalism has further expanded the realm of Sociological implications and challenges society confronts today. Indian sociologists-- 'careerist sleepers'-- wallow here in a racist and violent country with American Passports or Green Cards. They embody the identity crisis of their calling.

At Agra University, I met an acquaintance of mine from the College (ISS, Agra, 1958-1960), who baptized his 3-year-old kid 'Talcott Parsons.' He "knew nothing about Parsons," our professor Chandi Prasad told me at lunch at his residence (1973). Yes, I was there as an external examiner for the graduates in Sociology. Sushil Sahib did not like my presence in Agra (impolitely, he didn't let me honour an official luncheon arranged for the other External Examiner (then Dean of Kashi Vidyapith). Thanks to Chandi who offered me an omelette while taking to a 3-year-old Parsons.

Our culture is the womb of 'life' and 'imagination.' India has drastically changed ever since Naipaul wrote about a "wounded civilization." (2003). LGBT issues have seldom been in ISI even though facets of these 'issues' have always existed. Gentrification and urban development have created an underground culture at the cost of the poor and the displaced[21]. The looming towers of Ghaziabad and Gurgaon have replaced the skylines that defined India and her humanity. Gurgaon was a village on the outskirts of Delhi where a bus from Mathura would stop for a break. Taj Ganj was a pristine neighbourhood in Agra. As a child, I would walk into the Taj from its tiny back door near a Bagichi. The same street is now overcrowded with filth and cheap 'lodges' and 'hotels.' The hospitality business is booming. Five-star hotels offer all the creaturely comforts that the rich and powerful want. Consumerism, inescapably, is the new religion especially when the caste becomes the class. One of the world's richest men in Mumbai spent nearly US$600 million on his son's wedding, recently. His 27-story house is the Taj Mahal of new affluence generated by the unholy nexus of the political leadership and corporate business class. For entertainment, the 3 Khan- celebrities of Bollywood danced like apes. The fabled Bachchans attended the fabulous wedding in their spectacularly vulgar sherwanis. This, several would argue, is the result of Hindu revival.

Where have the old sweepers (aka *Harijans*), and red-light dwellers gone? The Hobbesian *Leviathan* is reborn in the hollow of Skyscrapers of Delhi and Mumbai and in between. *Delhi Crimes*[22] and *Ghazipur*[23]

depict the real and surreal[24] that should be the focus of modern Indian Sociology.

An Indian sociologist owns a double consciousness. S/he wants to be recognized in the West for authenticity and known as Indian at the same time. This is emblematic of an unrecognized crisis. Many significant areas of sociological inquiry remain unexplored: The collective West against Russia and China, post-pandemic paroxysms, staggering rise of inequality, conspicuous neglect of climate issues, and the serious crisis of democracy in the Trumpian era, are genuine gaps that ISI may critically investigate. *Cultural Treason* is a travesty of truth. Emulating this model of change increase the prowess of the *'billionaires'* club at the cost of one-fifth of humanity. It would be perilously reckless to emulate this delusional model in the world's most important democracy. A new surge of *'decolonization'* masquerades as a pretext to *Indianization* which ought to be distinguished from *Indigenization.* A few years ago, when I emphasized this difference, certain Hindu sociologists wrote to me about this 'cultural treason.' If Sociology in India must emerge as an academic discipline, it should be liberated from its 'professional' naivete and arrogance.

This paper, based on primary and secondary resources--punctuated by anecdotal references--is more like a painting than a photograph[25]. Joseph V. Ricapito, the late Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Spanish, Italian, and Comparative Literature, Department of English, Louisiana State University, wrote in his Foreword to my debuted Novella: "The term 'magic realism,' used with respect to the work of Garcia Marquez…. Mohan has expertly charted this voyage from early urges for permanence in an impermanent world." (Mohan, 2013: x-xi)

Between 'nihilism' and 'absolutism,'--the two main pathways to conceptualize social reality-- Indian Sociology sprints on the razor's edge of reason. It's a discursive discipline's real ethos and delusive function. As I assayed earlier, it's time to rewrite both *Manusmiriti* and *Genesis.*

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[1] Ram-Prasad, Chakravarthi, taught in the Department of Religious Studies, Lancaster University. He was a research fellow at Oxford and Cambridge Universities.

[2] I part company with the 'Hindu Lobby' that engineers bigoted propaganda, programs, and policies as a "resentment' against the historical domination by Muslim invaders. It's disturbing to read 'How Hindu nationalism spreads in America' (Cockburn, 2024: 38-43). The "Samosa Caucus" is a force to recon in U.S. politics. This Hindu-Supremacist offshoot is rooted in India's casteist contradictions of an otherwise democratic nation.

[3] "Brij Mohan, worthy disciple of the great Evelyn Burns, is in many ways Jurgen Habermas of Social Work." wrote Thomas D, Watts of the University of Texas in Arlington (Mohan 2003).

[4] "Years later, I was struck by the attention it paid to the impact of the natural environment on the social and economic life of Indian villages. Mukherjee was perhaps the first Indian scholar to recognize the vital importance of common property resources to the sustenance of peasant agriculture. While cultivated land was owned by individuals or families, canals were traditionally held and managed by the village, as were woods and grasslands. Thus, as Mukherjee wrote, 'where private ownership might confer a privilege against the rest of the community, their use has never been allowed to be exclusive." https://scroll.in/article/1035690/ramachandra-guha-india-would-do-well-to-heed-the-warnings-radhakamal-mukerjee-offered-80-years-ago (Retrieved 9/12/20240

Historian Ramachandra Guha wrote: "In 1922, a professor at Lucknow University named Radha Kamal Mukherjee published a book called Principles of Comparative Economics."

[5] *See* Hasan, S.Z. 2010. 'Brij Mohan: Evolution of a social scientist.'

[6] My other favourite professor, Rajeshwar Prasad, however, gave me an introductory note to approach Dr. Zafar since he had awarded me the highest marks as an external examiner. I followed the latter for professional reasons alone. Chandi Guru had advised me to approach RKM with a box of *Mathura Ke pedhas* (small, sweet balls of cream cheese, *khoa*) and prostrate before introducing myself. RKM was a giant intellectual nearly worshiped by

everyone, from Chief Minister C.B. Gupta to Bhusailee, his chauffeur cum peon and cook. The first time I saw Dr. Mukherjee was in Nainital where I was vacationing after collecting data from Bareilly's mental hospital. He was nice to me when I visited him at the Grand Hotel. He praised Zafar as a very competent teacher and guide.

[7] It's an urban legend: Sociology and Social Work can't coexist, even physically (in the same building).

[8] My alienation from Sociology was imminent due to tribal proclivities of sociologists I worked with at Lucknow University (1960-1975). Dr Zafar's power and influence threatened the Hindu hegemony of the Department. A dominant politician's daughter was groomed to be at the helm against a Muslim sociologist, a student of A. K. Saran. The backlash against Zafar Hasan's eminence adversely impacted his protege's wellbeing: Prem Sharma, even though a PhD student of Sewa Ram Sharma, was fired after she resumed her Lecturer's position after a birth-related leave. Then Dean, Faculty of Arts Baljit Singh--the Patriarch-- my own guru's guru, maintained that birth-related leave was not allowed to non-tenured faculty, a contention that the High Court dismissed with full reinstatement. Two years of fighting against the establishment turned me into a renegade. I decided not to raise my children in an academic milieu that wickedly punished a young sociologist-- the mother of my son (born 1972) --for being a woman. I left India, March 1, 1975, having burnt all bridges that connected me to my work at L.U.

[9] 2500 BC: The rise of the Indus Civilization; c.1500 BC: The Aryan Invasion with their Vedic faith; c. 1500-1000 BC: Rise of Caste with ritualized Vedas; c. 800 BC: Upanishads are composed; c.500 BC: Buddha's teachings and Mahavir's Jainism; c.400 BC-AD 400: Two epics, Mahabharata & Ramayana are composed; c.AD 320-550: The "Golden Age of Hinduism" (Gupta Dynasty); AD 700-AD1828: Hindu Kingdom in Java & Indonesia; Shankaracharya teaches Upanishads; The Cholas of South India build incredible Hindu Temples; and Raja M. Roy's *Brahmo Samaj* reforms Hinduism; c.AD1784 : The British Raj is established; c.1600-1700 AD: Christianity arrives with British, French, and Portuguese colonialists;1570sAD: Tulsi Das writes *The Ram Charit Manas*; AD 1556-1605: Mughal Emperor Akbar founds his religion unifying Muslim, Hindu & Christian beliefs; AD1469: Guru Nanak, founder of Sikhism, is born; AD1875: The 1st Indian War of Independence against British rule; AD1896: Vivekanand established the Ramakrishna *Mission* in Calcutta; AD1947: India's Independence, Partition; the Birth of Pakistan; AD1948: Mahatma

Gandhi is Assassinated; 1950s-1960s AD: Indians begin to leave for the USA, England, and Canada; 1990sAD: Hindu-Muslim violence erupts after the demolition of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya; Present: Modern day Hindutva (Cf. Ganeri, 1995)

[9] My critical sociological 'heresies' earned me the reputation of an *Outsider*—a philosopher than social worker-- which, painfully, was a compliment.

[10] Cf. Naipaul, V.S. (2003)

[11] If I had not met R.N. Saxena at Prakash Bhawan at Agra University's first Youth Campy in Mussoorie (1958) and, had I not joined Lucknow University (1960), I probably would have retired as an administrator rather than a Dean Emeritus, School of Social Work at LSU**.**

[12] *See* Allen, Priscilla. (2009). 'Brij Mohan by Himself.' *Journal of Comparative Social Welfare.*

[13] It seems Yogendra Singh was commissioned by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) to undertake publication of a three-volume survey of Indian Sociology.

[14] Any criticism of social and political milieu is not viewed kindly these days across the globe. Right wing forces and populist government are a common feature of many countries.

[15] **.** AD 320-550: The "Golden Age of Hinduism" (Gupta Dynasty)

[16] Cf. Sarila, Narendra Singh (1995)

[17] P. C. could not get admission in LU's Social Work doctoral program because he had a third grade in MSW. He was a Harijan and a Railways employee. I was able to get him admitted as an exception. When asked by the Department of Railways, Government, to certify that P.C. was not getting any other financial funding, P.C. wanted me to cover him from his departmental policies. I declined and he became violent. This kind of *Sanskritization* implicates Hindu culture as an incubator of rising classism.

[18] *See* A New York Bestseller, *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* by Isabel Wilkerson NY: Random House, 2020.

[19] *Cf.* Shaft, Adam (2024)

[20] The landless people in Naxalbari and other areas in Assam and Bengal were systematically eliminated as "terrorists."

[21] *See,* https://www.imdb.com/title/tt21626774/:Sector 36. Prem Singh, a cannibalistic serial killer, dwarfs *Dexter.* Balbir Singh Bassi is a mobster who harbours human traffickers under the protection of higher-ups in the Police.

[22] A TV Serial based on true events: Four young men raped and killed a medical student in a bus. The details of this crime would horrify the viewers. Who were the killers? People leaving small towns and villages in search of work. They find daily wages in construction, petty jobs without any place to go to sleep.

[23] A popular steaming action crime thriller mostly shot in Uttar Pradesh (See, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mirzapur_(TV_series). Prem Singh, a cannibalistic serial killer, dwarfs *Dexter.* Even Dahmer would fall short of PC's standard in cannibalism.

[24] Sector 36 (2024:) https://www.imdb.com/title/tt21626774/: "A fictional story inspired by true events; several children go missing from a Basti (slum) in Sector 36."

[25] Joseph V. Ricapito, the late Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Spanish, Italian, and Comparative Literature, Department of English, Louisiana State University wrote in his Foreword to my debuted Novella: "The term 'magic realism,' used with respect to the work of Garcia Marquez…. Mohan has expertly charted this voyage from early urges of permanence in an impermanent world." (Mohan, 2013: x-xi). See, also, For the record: ten questions for Brij Mohan Kirpal S. Soodan and Usha R. Srivastava, JCSW, 2009: 26: 281*

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Indian Sociology at the Crossroads - Different Predicaments and Difficult Choices

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Abstract: *In the second decade of 21st century, Indian sociology finds itself at the crossroads. There are four predicaments being faced by sociologists in India today. Firstly, some of the leading lights of sociology in India, like Ghurye and D P Mukerji, viewed that Indian culture could be understood only through Hindu texts. They continue to have influence today. The second predicament is the growing gulf between teaching of sociology in institutions which are English medium and those teaching in Indian languages; and the kind of knowledge production that is taking place. The third predicament is to do with the growth of cultural identity of Hinduism. This can be traced to the developments in 1970s & 1980s, when governments claiming to be secular were in power. Hindu identity got solidified in that period and gave fillip to Hindu nationalist politics. Lastly, in the last two decades, the state control over academic institutions has increased, and its policies to privatize has had further impact. This has made the world of sociology in India vulnerable. In this situation, the choices that confront sociologists in India in 21st century are very difficult*

Knowledge production in sociology in India has involved different epistemic positions and theoretical frameworks. It has ranged from Indological, to the structural-functional and the Marxist approaches