MODERNITY AND IDENTITY
A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO LINGUISTIC IDENTITY IN INDIA

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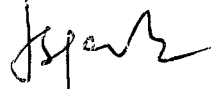**NEW DELHI - 110067**
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Certified that this dissertation entitled "MODERNITY AND IDENTITY:

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in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY, has not been previously submitted for any

other degree of this or any other University and is her original work.

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners

for evaluation and consideration.

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1. INTRODUCTION

When I joined Jawaharlal Nehru University, one of the things that I was really looking forward to was the hostel life. Joining such a prestigious University which was not only well known in India but all over the world was a matter of great pride. I knew students from all over the country came to study at JNU, so I was really looking forward to meeting people from all over India and learning more about our country and its culture through this experience.

But the kind of hostel life that I found in JNU came as a shock to me. There were various groups in the hostel, each one was based on linguistic identity. Girls from each linguistic area of the country formed close knit cliques, into which people from other linguistic areas, were not particularly welcome. They did have friends from other regions of the country, but, they preferred to stay with the group from their own linguistic area. Each year as a batch of new girls from that linguistic area joined the hostel they were indoctrinated and absorbed into that group. Senior students from a particular region would seek out the juniors from their region and make them feel comfortable and at home. When they spoke to each other they would use their mother tongue. While going for meals they would come together as a group and usually occupied the same table. I have heard that the situation if the boys hostel is worse, and, that there are certain tables which are almost reserved for certain regional groups. For example, they have an Oriya table or a Bihari table etc.

Apart from this segregation and sharp distinction within the hostel. There are various regional associations at the University level. To which only students from that region subscribe as members. There is no written

rule that students from other regions cannot join but it is very obvious that, they would feel out of place and awkward. These organizations celebrated and organize the various festivals that are typical of that state. There is an open invitation to all the students of the University to join the festivities, but however this rarely happens. Sometimes celebration of these festivals reaches absurd levels. For example, Saraswati puja is a festival which is celebrated almost all over North and Eastern India, including, Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal. One year there was an instance when accordingly, three separate pujas were held, in three different places on campus. It came as a great shock that three pujas were held to celebrated the same festival only because of the difference in political territory. In an institution of higher learning even the Goddess of Learning could not bring the students together. Many people justified it as an expression of religious activity and therefore each state had its unique way of celebrating, and thus, there was no harm in having three pujas. At one level the argument seemed all right, but not convincing enough.

Another thing that is very prominent is the gender difference. The boys are more cliquish than the girls. In a group if you know that one boy is from Bihar, you can almost without doubt claim that the whole group of boys is from Bihar. They do have students from other regions as friends, but only on the fringes, the core group is always from one linguistic region.

The other very glaring division is between the North Indians and South Indians. The whole of north-central India is subsumed under the category - North Indian. The Bengalis stand out as a group themselves and the North-Easterners form their own group. All the South Indian from all four states are usually clubbed together as 'Madrasis', as is

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normally done in the North. But they can differentiate the Keralities, be ause they some how stand out as the most prominent South Indian group. People from Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu were usually grouped together.

The whole atmosphere is such on the campus is such that one unconsciously starts asserting their regional identity. For the first time in my life I became very conscious of the fact that I was a South Indian and found my self asserting my identity. All this suddenly inspite of the fact that I come from a cosmopolitan city like Bangalore. At one time the assertion of my identity, made me behave in ways that were absurd, now that I look back. For sometime I had refused to speak and made a conscious effort not to speak in Hindi, inspite of knowing the language fluently.

JNU is supposed to be a modern University, set up in memory of the builder of modern India - Nehru. It is in Delhi which is essentially a cosmopolitan city and is thus, in modern settings. The University is the seat of higher learning, it is here that some of the best students from all over the country come to study and it has the best academicians in the country. Under these circumstances on would expect that the University would be one united centre of learning; and as a result of education and exposure to different cultures, one would rise above the primordial ties and interact with each other as fellow students and fellow Indians.

The scenario in JNU disturbed me and I began question a number of things - why were primordial loyalties still so important even in this day and age? Is there a possibility that Indian can rise above these differences and have a pan-Indian identity? Is it really important to have a pan-Indian identity? If these regional identities began asserting themselves

wouldn't it be detrimental to the unity of the country, as there is a possibility that it would lead to cessation? Is it possible to accommodated all the plural identities and still have a pan-Indian identity? And this is what lead to the formulation of this dissertation and I have thus realized that JNU is not an island by itself, but, only a reflection of the situation the country is in.

Modernity as a concept developed in Europe after Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution and Renaissance from where it spread to the rest of the world. Modernity can be understood as the body of social knowledge that was an outcome of these movements. It refers to a radical new way of looking at the world and is a break form the traditional world view. It refers to a rational scientific outlook which questioned the domination of religion and the clergy over all aspects of life. Modernity refers to the period since the Middle ages and the Renaissance and is associated with the replacement of traditional society by modern social forms. It lead to changes in the political, social and cultural sphere of life.

The process by which ideas associated with modernity influenced and changed society is known as modernization. It is the over all societal process, including industrialization by which previously agrarian and contemporary systems became developed. It also includes the overcoming and replacement of traditional values and patterns of motivation hostile to social change and economic growth.

According to the International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, "modernization is the current term for an old process of social change whereby less developed societies acquire characteristics common to more developed societies. The process is activated by international or

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intersocietal communication."[1] During the colonial era the colonized got a glimpse of the modern developed world through interaction with their colonizers and as projected by them. Till World War II, Europe was representative of the modern world since Enlightenment, which gave birth to the idea of modernity. After World War II America became the most powerful country and began to dominated world politics. Thus there was a diffusion of modern American ideas and its associated culture to the rest of the world. Therefore this was often referred to as 'Americanization' of Europe and as 'Westernization', when applied to the rest of the world. But the term 'Westernization' did not clearly explain the process that was swiftly changing the world. This lead to the evolution of the new term 'modernization'. It reflected precisely the similarities of achievement common to modernized societies all over the world, and at the same time showed what all the modernizing societies were aspiring for regardless of location and tradition.

Economy became the single most important factor in a modernized society. Thus modernization began to be perceived as the process of social change in which, development is the economic component. Economic goals became of primary importance. And wealth acquiring behaviour began to change and ultimately reshape all social values of the society. Thus there was an increased interaction between economic, and non-economic factors in development which lead to modernization being conceived as, the contemporary modern of social change which is global in its scope.

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[1] Sills,D. (ed.), International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, Vol. 10, p. 386.

There is no single criteria for modernity or a modern society; but there has been a general agreement that the following are among the important characteristics of modernity:

1. A degree of self-sustaining growth in the economy, or at least growth sufficient to increase both production and consumption.

2. Some extent of public participation in the political system or at least a democratic representation in defining and choosing policy alternatives.

3. A diffusion of secular-rational norms in culture.

4. An increase in mobility in the society - in the sense that there is freedom for physical and social movement.

5. The society should allow and make the corresponding changes in personality which will equip the individual to adjust to the changing nature of society itself.

In this dissertation the words 'modernity' and 'modernization', have been used interchangeably. It essentially means accepting the social and economic changes that took place in Europe in the eighteenth century after Enlightenment and Renaissance. It also means adopting modern institutions which thus resulted, not directly, but by adapting and modifying them to suit the Indian situation. It also refers to the changes in the social and cultural aspects of society which are a consequence of this adaptation; the ways in which our traditional institutions have responded and adapted to the changes brought about by modernity or the modernization process.

An individual has a personal identity which is his own and thus is exclusive. He also has a psychosocial identity which allows him to identify psychologically and socially with a particular group. As an individual grows, develops and is socialized in a community of people, their traditional values become significant to the growing person, he

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begins to identify with that community as its member. "Psychosocial identity thus depends on a complementarity of an inner (ego) synthesis of the individual and of role integration in his group."[2] The psychosocial identity is always defined by the past and by the potential future.

The International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences states that, of all the psychological process directly relevant to political behaviour, perhaps none is more important than a person's identification with a group, regardless of whether the group is political or not. According to Freud identification was the earliest expression of an emotional tie with another person. Identification is usually limited to a single characteristic and this results in the multiple identities in a pluralistic society. Any kind of identification is dependent on the socialization within the family. The strength of identification towards a particular characteristic of a group depends on the culture of that group.

Here identify means, the sense of belonging an individual feels towards a group, as a result of some common characteristic. The characteristic is basic, so much so, that it becomes a part of the individual's personality through the process of socialization. It is this characteristic that makes the individual's group different and distinctive from the other groups in that society. It is this identity that makes an individual's group unique and in some cases gives it its status. It is by identification with the unique characteristic of the group that the individual develops loyalties and close emotional ties. He thus feel proud to belong to that particular group. He becomes proud of his unique identity and thus is willing to defend, and fight for the right to assert his identity if, it should ever be threatened by

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[2] ibid p. 61.

some other identity. In India identification with one's caste, language, religion, ethnic group etc. become part of one's primordial loyalties.

According to the International Encyclopedia of Social Science the idea of 'nation' was also an outcome of modernity or the modernization process, which began with European Renaissance and spread all over the world. Modernization lead to realignment of borders and loyalties on a large scale. This lead to the formation of modern 'nation-states' which had a well defined political system which allowed for equality of opportunity, comprehensive division of labour as a result of the development of modern science and industry. Thus, the term 'nation' which was commonly used in the Middle Ages in Europe became the universal ideal of the modern age.

The nation has been accepted as the most important political concept in modern times. In its regular usage in English and other languages a 'nation' is used synonymoulsy with a State or its inhabitants or it denotes a human group bound together by some common solidarity - a group whose members place loyalty to the group as a whole over any conflicting loyalties. The idea of a nation became universal after the French Revolution. The word 'nation' stems from the Latin verb *nasci* , meaning "to be born", and originally meant a group of people born in the same place. Scholars have pointed out certain objective characteristics of nationhood - common geography, history , economic structure, and the subjective characteristics includes consciousness, loyalty, will etc. Thus common language, history are likely to promote feelings of nationality. Nationhood is a matter of degree; under particular circumstances people of a certain nation may identify more with their nation than under other conditions. Geography, history, language and popular will, are all

significant in the formation of national identity. Language is not seen as such an important factor for national identity, since most of the nation-states in the world do not have a single common language. Usually the largest spoken language is made the 'national language'. And different linguistic groups within a 'nation-state' form independent 'nations'. "Thus the conventional determinants of nationality in history, geography, language and popular will has posed as many logical problems as it has resolved."[3]

To begin with people belonging to a State and living within certain political boundaries were considered belonging to a 'nation' and thus forming a 'nation-state'. Now it is an accepted fact that within a 'nation-state' there can be different 'nations'; i.e. people who come together to form a group on the basis of some commonality, some strong loyalty, with which they identify strongly enough, and have an emotional attachment example language, caste, religion ethnicity etc. These loyalties can exist apart from national loyalty; as in loyalty towards the State and country. It is this meaning of 'nation' that is applied here. Like any other loyalty, national loyalty may change and thus several loyalties may conflict at a given time.

This dissertation is completely based on secondary sources. As at the M.Phil. level we are not allowed to do any primary research or work with empirical data. As a result it is based on theoretical literature. The relevant literature has been studied and ideas have been evolved as a result, which forms the basis of this dissertation.

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[3] ibid p. 11, Vol.11.

The M.Phil. dissertation is meant to lay a strong theoretical foundation for further research. This work is essentially meant for clarification of theory for further enquiry. There is no empirical field study involved. It is the theoretical basis to be substantiated at the Ph.D. level. This is a basic foundation for further research. The lack of primary data and empirical research I think is the serious limitation of this work. And since on has to work on previously published material, one cannot accurately state what the current situation is like. Thus one cannot make predictions or make concrete suggestions.

This dissertation tries to study the dilemma that many Indians find themselves in today's modern world. Indians have a plurality of identities, all of them are sacred to them, each identity is trying to assert itself in its own right. At the same time they have an 'Indian identity' which is over and above all the other identities. This 'Indian identity', is an identity which is given to every citizen of the modern nation-state. So an individual has to maintain a balance between his various identities and his 'national identity'. This has often lead to tension while trying to accommodate and compromise conflicting identities. This dissertation specifically studies the linguistic identity of Indians and tries to study the reasons that have the assertion of this identity to become so forceful under the modern nation-state. And if there is any means of accommodating these plural identity so that each has its own space and its sphere of activity, in such a way that it does not clash with the 'national identity'.

2. SOCIOLOGICAL MEANING OF MODERNITY AND IDENTITY: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As we try to understand the relationship between modernity and identity, it is important to make sense of the modern world. What it means to live in a modern world. This means that we require a sociological comprehension of the phenomena called 'modernity'. Modernity refers to the modes of social life and organisation which emerged in Europe from about the seventeenth century onwards. The process of modernity started after Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution. During the Enlightenment, there developed new ways of looking at the world which were a radical break from the traditional world view - this is what is called 'modernity'. This subsequently became largely world wide in its influence. Modernity is one thing that all societies are inevitably moving towards, though at different rates of development. The whole concept of 'modernity' is seen as a Western one. Since it began in Europe and then diffused to the rest of the world. This chapter intends to initiate a discussion on the sociological meaning of modernity.

2.1 ORIGIN OF MODERNITY : EUROPEAN ENLIGHTENMENT/ FRENCH REVOLUTION/INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

"When we use the term 'the Enlightenment' it is generally accepted that we refer to a period in European intellectual history which spans the time from roughly the first quarter to the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Geographically centred in France but with important outposts in most of the major European states, 'the Enlightenment' is composed of ideas and

writings of a fairly heterogeneous group who are often called by their French name 'philosophes'"[1]

Enlightenment can be understood as a movement lead by intellectuals, which led to the formation of new ideas by questioning the existing ideas and beliefs. The main aim was to use one's own reason and intellect and not have blind faith in the traditional world view which was dominated by the Catholic Church. Enlightenment was mainly the creation of new ideas about man, society and nature by challenging the prevailing conceptions rooted in tradition and dominated by Christianity.

The Church had the right to interpret the Bible and the clergy became the custodians of the Bible, only they had the authority to interpret it. Once interpreted by the priests of the Church, it then became the divine authority of the clergy who acted in the name of God to oppress the people and to deceive them that the Enlightenment was a legitimate reaction.

Enlightenment was anti-tradition with people speaking out against outmoded and scriptually based ways of thinking and viewing the Universe. This did not mean that these intellectuals were not religious people, but that did not stop them from writing against blind religious faith. The intellectuals wanted to redefine what knowledge was socially important free it from, religion and give it new meaning relevance. It was a conscious effort to bring people out of their ignorance.

The Enlightenment was the work of three generations of intellectuals. Among the first generation intellectuals were Voltaire and Montesquieu

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[1]Gieben, B. *Enlightenment and the Birth of Social Sciences*, in Hall et.al.(ed.), Formation of Modernity,Polity Press, Cambridge,1990,p.24.

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their ideas were influenced to a large extent by the works of John Locke and Issac Newton. The second generation includes men like David Hume, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Denis Diderot who as Gay says, developed a 'coherent modern view of the world.' The third generation is represented by Immanuel Kant, Adam Smith, Anne Robert Turgot, Marquis de Condorcet and Adam Ferguson these people helped to develop a series of specialised disciplines like economics, sociology, political economy, legal reform etc.

According to Kant Enlightenment is leaving immaturity which is self-inflicted and using one's intelligence . "Have the courage to use your own intelligence" and "dare to know"[2]; were Kant's two famous slogans. He said that man must make use of his reason in such a way that the public benefit from it and the State will be influenced by it and treat man in accordance with dignity and not as mere machines.

The Enlightenment challenged a whole range of accepted values of the day and played an important role in shaping the confidence in the established order of educated circles. The philosophers saw themselves as a small group of crusaders against the traditional institutions and ways of thinking. They believed that the society was steeped in ignorance prejudice and superstition which they had to work at to, eradicate. The means of doing this was propagation and popularization of rational an empirical principles of inquiry. They began discussing complex ideas in simple terms that the moderately educated could understand. They made deliberate attempts to reach the new reading public of the eighteenth century. They were helped by the fact that the authorities did nothing to curb or prevent them from discussing sensitive issues. They advocated a

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[2] Kant,I. in *What in Enlightenment*, in Friedrich,C.J. (ed.), The Philosophy of Kant : Immanuel Kant's Moral and Political Writings. Modern Library, New York, 1949, p. 45.

change in outlook at the world which was less dependent on religion and tradition. They urged people to judge things not according to their familiarity or as dictated by authority but rather according to whether they were useful to humanity and functioned reasonably.

The success of the Enlightenment philosophy culminated in the French revolution. It is believed that the ideas that developed during the Enlightenment and the existing socio-economic and political factors lead to the Revolution. The state which upheld the established order came under comprehensive criticism. The society was dissatisfied with most aspects of the old order and eager to demand a complete reform as soon as the opportunity presented itself. Nothing was beyond discussion or criticism and the old order had made little effort to respond to criticism, and did not try to suppress it either. As a result the disillusionment with existing institutions and the way they worked spread down through society from narrow highly educated circles, where it had originated and out of Paris into all provinces of France at all social levels and prepared it for far-reaching changes, which they seemed eager to bring about. The great writers of the period were popular and they articulated discontent well, but they planned no Revolution. The Revolution was a spontaneous outcome of all these factors.

Many major movements in Western thought and culture contributed to the emergence of the new conception of modernity. "The Reformation and Protestantism which set the individual conscience free from the religious insititution of the Chruch and exposed it direcly to the eye of God, Renaissance, humanism which placed man at the centre of the universe,the scientific revolution which endowed Man with the faculty and capacities to inquire into, investigate and unravel the mysteries of

Nature and the Enligtenment, centred on the image of rational scientific Man, freed from dogma and intolerance, before whom the whole of human history was laid out for understanding and mastery."[3]

2.2 SALIENT FEATURES OF MODERNITY

1. Modernity is that unique form of social life which is characteristic of modern societies. Modern societies began to emerge in Europe about the fifteenth century, but did not exist in any developed form until the idea of 'the modern' was given concrete formulation by the Enlightenment process. In the nineteenth century modernity became synonymous with industrialism and the sweeping social, economic and cultural changes associated with it. In the twentieth century many non-European societies also joined the group of industrial societies. After which modernity progressively became a global phenomena.

2. Modernity has had a long and complex historical evolution. It was a result of a number of different historical process, working together in a unique historical circumstances. These processes were the political (the development of the secular state and polity); the economic (the global capitalist economy); the social (formation of classes and an advanced social division of labour); and the cultural (the transition from a religious to a secular cultural). We can say that 'modernity' is the amalgamation of these different processes and not a result of any single process.

3. Modernity developed as a result of the interaction between national and international conditions and processes. It was a result of both 'internal' and 'external' forces. The West developed its identity and interests in relation to internal developments in Europe and America

[3] Hall, S. *The Question of Cultural Identity*, in Hall et.al.,(ed.), Modernity and Its Furtures, Polity Press, Cambridg, 1992, p.292.

and through a relation of unequal exchange (material and cultural) with the rest of the world; which included the conquered, colonised and exploited countries.

4. Modernity can be characterised by cluster of institutions each with its own distinctive pattern of change and development. Among these are - nation state; capitalist economic order based on private property; industrialization; growth of large bureaucratic systems of social organization and regulation; the dominance of secular materialist rationalist and individualist cultural values; and the formal separation of the 'private' from the 'public'.

5. When we talk about modern capitalism though the conception is of international market; capitalistic market relations have increasingly become global in scale. It is capitalist relations which provide modernity its economic basis for growth and development, though forms of mass production and consumption are changing. Industrial capitalism has generated distinctive patterns of social inequality, in particular,distinctive class relations based on who owns and controls the means of production and those who have the labour power to sell. These social divisions have stood the test of time while only becoming more complicated as a result of the emergence of new social strata and occupational groups. Modernity has also produced characteristic social patterns of gender and racial division, as well as other social division which intersect with but cannot be reduced to class. This has given rise to complex patterns of disproportionate life chances, within nation-state and between them.

6. Modern societies are becoming characterised by their complexity, by the surplus of consumer products and by a variety of lifestyles. The hold of tradition has weakened and has given way to individual choices and creating one's won aims in life, the individual has also become aware that it is possible to construct new identities.

Importance of personal life has weakened the boundaries between private and public. Cultural pluralism and individuation have been accompanied by a growth of organisation seeking greater regulation and surveillance of social life.

7. Power is an important dimension of all modern social relations; social struggles between social classes, social movement etc. is an intrinsic part of the society as well as the structure and policies of the states. Modern states are largely interventionist, they intervene to organise large areas of social life. Liberal democracy is the prevailing type of political systems in industrial societies. It is partly a result of the struggle between different social groupings and interests and partly the result of opportunities and constraints created by power politics and economic competition both nationally and internationally. State socialism the attempt to replace central planning for the market is on the decline everywhere. Social democracy with its attempt to regulate the market and social justice and welfare is still widely supported.

8. Globalization a process which dates back to the earliest stages of modernity, continues to influence politics, economics and culture to a large extent. The extension of globalization process operation through a variety of institutional dimensions (technology, cultural and legal) and their increased intensification within these spheres, create new forms and limits within 'modernity' as a distinctive form of life.

Modernity has a universalizing tendency stretching itself all over the world and imposing its forces globally. The globalization process does not mean that modernity looks the same everywhere. The differences between regions, social strata and subcultures are as enormous as they ever were. But certain features of life culture and society that are part of the 'modern project' are today visible everywhere in the world in isolated villages and in cities. Spread of communication systems, of people, goods

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and messages, have spread modern traits widely and made the whole world more accessible than ever. Modernity does not imply a universal standardization however but rather a growing universal differentiation in society between state, market and lifeworld, between individual and society, between spheres like art, science, religion and politics etc.

The model of life brought in by modernity has changed the traditional social order drastically. In both the extent and intent, the changes involved in modernity are greater than most changes characteristic of prior periods. Taking the extent variable into consideration the changes brought about by modernity have established forms of social interconnection which span the globe and in intentional terms they have transformed some of the intimate and personal features of our day to day existence. Definitely there are continuities between the traditional and the modern and it is a grave mistake to contrast the two in absolute terms.

Characteristics of The New Era :

1. Reason - importance was given to reason and rationality as a means of organizing knowledge. Enlightenment gave importance to 'critical rationalism', which is the application of reason to social, political and economic issues with a view to bring about progress and improvement and is therefore critical of status quo.

2. Empiricism - the idea that all knowledge about the social and the natural world are based on empirical facts.

3. Science - the idea that all knowledge about the social and the natural world are based on empirical facts.

4. Universalisim - the idea that reason and science can be applied to any and every situation and their principles would be same in every

situation. They believed that the laws of science governed the whole universe.

5. Progress - the idea that by applying science and reason to natural and social conditions of man's life and well being could be improved.

6. Individualism - the idea that individual is the starting point of all knowledge and that society is nothing but the sum total of the thoughts and actions of a large number of individuals.

7. Toleration - the idea that all humans are essentially the same despite differences and no race is inferior to the European.

8. Freedom - freedom in all aspects of life no constraints and restrictions on beliefs, social interaction, communication etc.

9. Uniformity of human nature - the idea that human nature is essentially the same everywhere.

10. Secularism - the idea that knowledge should be free from religious influences and opposition to traditional religious authority.

The intellectuals of the Enlightenment period had immense faith in science and reason. They believed in the pre-eminence of empirical and materialist knowledge and the progress of science and technology. They promised that once the authority of the Church was opposed and people put their belief in reason and science it would lead to the end of all human problems. They had so much faith in science, reason and empirical knowledge that they thought social institutions could be created to make people happier. The main promise of the 'Enlightenment project' was that science and reason would help people to solve all problems and even control society. They thought with the help of science and critical rationality we can create a natural and social world which would be perfect and without any problems. As Enlightenment ideas of reason and self-knowledge spread all over the world people would realise that they are all essentially same and universalization would take

place. They thought that with the help of science and reason they would be able to control and direct the destinies and futures of their societies.

2.3 MODERNITY AND IDENTITY

The ideas of identity really developed after Enlightenment. It was this movement that gave great importance to the individual and his independent identity as a thinking rational being. As a result of modernity each individual has acquired a number of identities. According to P.C. Chatterji there is one primary identity given to each individual by his family and the other identities are established as a result of the individual's capacity to grow out of and beyond the primary identity. As the individual interacts at various levels and enters various social relations they acquire different identities and begin to identify with different groups and ultimately with the world.[4]

A distinctive feature of modernity is the dichotomy between the 'private' and 'public' sphere. There are various identities that an individual has in these sphere especially so the public sphere. The individual will have to learn to manage his multiple identities in the public sphere. Most of the time it is the context of interaction which decides which identity has to be manifest at that particular moment. As a result of modernity, the individual has to constantly negotiate with the situation on hand and decide which of his identities must come to the forefront.

According to Berger as a result of modernity there is plurality in the life world and the degree of integration between the various aspects of the life world is much less than compared to traditional systems. And this has

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[4] Chatterjee, P. C. *Identity : Personal and Group*, in _Self-Image, Identity and Nationality_, Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla, 1989, p.10.

lead to multiplication of identity. Pluralization is a result of secondary socialization which takes place after the 'self' is formed by primary socialization. It deliberately leads a person from one social world to another in which he will have to be socialsed differently in order to face the new social relationships.[5]

Berger says that the way a person plans his behaviour depends on "in order to" and "because of motives"[6] and this to a large extent influences his identity formation. For Berger identity means the way an individual defines himself in a particular situation. As a result of modernity, identity has acquired a peculiar character. Even as an adult his primary socialization is not complete. The identity can objectively change and the individual is subjectively aware of this fact. Hence modern individuals are very "conversion prone"[7] and man finds himself in a permanent identity crisis. Berger says that this crisis can be dealt with by "mediating structures"[8] which are the various institutions in our private life whose numbers are decreasing and which is a cause for concern.

According to Stuart Hall cultural identities are those features of our identities which are a result of our 'belonging' to a particular ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious or national culture. "Identity in the sociological conception, bridges the gap between the 'insider' and the 'outsider' - between the personal and the public worlds. The fact that we project ourselves into these cultural identities, at the same time internalizing their meanings and values, making them 'part of us' helps us to align our subjective feeling with the objective places we occupy in the social and

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[5] Berger, P. L. and Berger, S. Homeless Mind : Modernization and Consciousness, Penguine, Middlesex, 1981, p.66.
[6] ibid p.72.
[7] ibid p.73.
[8] Berger, P.L. Facing Upto Modernity : Excursions in Society, Politics and Religion, Penguin, Middlesex, 1979, p. 169.

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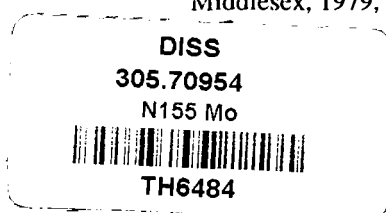
cultural world. Identity thus stitches the subject into the structure."[9] Influenced by modernity the identity which was once stable and unified has become fragmented today and is now called 'shifting'. Identity has now become transformable according to the relations we have in the cultural systems and we assume different identities.

Identity is something that is formed by unconscious processes over time. It is not innate as a part of our consciousness at birth. Identity formation is a continuous and on going process. Our identity not only represents our 'inner-self' but has aspects which we have taken from the external cultural systems and by the ways we imagine ourselves to by seen by others.

Our national identity is also not something we are born with but something we learn by interacting with others who are part of the 'nation'. A nation is not only a geographic and political entity but also a system of cultural representation. A nation is a symbolic community which gives it the power to instill a sense of identity and loyalty. The identification and loyalty which was shown towards one's tribe, religion etc. in the traditional systems; has gradually in modern Western systems transferred to the nation. All the ethnic, regional, religious differences are absorbed by, what Gellner calls the political concept of nation-state which becomes the source of modern cultural identities.

Hall says "national cultures are composed not only of cultural institutions, but of symbols and representations. A national culture is a discourse - a way of constructing meanings which influences and organises both our action and our conceptions of ourselves. National

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[9] Hall, S. op.cit. p.276.

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cultures construct identities by producing meanings about 'the nation' with which we can identify. These are contained in stories which are told about it, memories which connect its present with its past and images which are constructed of it."[10] There are deep internal divisions and differences within a national culture, it is 'unified' only through the exercise of different forms of cultural power and thus national identities continue to be represented as unified.

Anderson gives us another view as to how nations are formed. He begins with the universal need to over come death, which the old religions tried to tackle and explain. But with the decline of religion and the rise of the printed word under the new technology of 'print-capitalism'; it has become both possible and necessary to 'imagine' communities st once sovereign and limited, through which otherwise anonymous individuals can identify. Through the printed word individuals who do no know each other appear to inhabit the same homogenous empty time and an identifiable space by belonging to an imagined community and posterity. Such 'imagined communities' or nations hence come to serve vital psychological as well as economic needs under the peculiar modern conditions of secular capitalism.

In the twentieth century modernity and identity has had peculiar manifestations, especially so in ex-colonial societies like India. In our societies the project of modernity has been integrally related to the project of nation building. The idea of modern nation-state itself is an integral part of the project. The modern state has nation building as its main agenda. The aim being to build a strong nation which has its own place and standing with the rest of the nations of the world. Which meant that

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[10] ibid p.292.

there had to be a development of modern forms of nationalisms. This includes one national identity; a standardized and uniform national culture; shared symbols; single universal language which would be the means of communication through out the nation. All these forms of nationalism would be a means for identification with the nation. And it was expected that all citizens of the nation would accept them; adopt them and make them an indivisible part of their identity as citizens of that nation. Along with these, various means for the development and progress of the nation were visualized like industrialization, modern networks of communication all of which were impossible without modernity.

As a result of the aim to adopt the project of modernity even in India, nationalist ambition became to have a national identity which, was seen as a natural and inseparable part of the unifying mission of modernity. One of the chief promises of modernity was its universalizing aim, according to which all differences would be wiped out and there would be uniformity and homogeneity all over the world as a result of modernity. So the goal of the modernist nationalist who were greatly influenced and readily accepted the modernity project and wanted to apply it to India; became to have one pan-Indian identity which would overcome all the divisions and sub divisions within the Indian society and thus give rise to a universal and homogenized modern national identity.

The nationalist made every effort possible to overcome local differences, primordial loyalties and made becoming loyal to the nation of paramount importance. In their effort to develop a single pan-Indian identity they overlooked and maginalised all the particular, local and contextual identities. They thought having a single Indian identity would unify the country and bind the people together as they had a common means of

identification. They tried to give India a common language and a common culture which are the most important means of integrating any nation. They standardized the Hindi language and saw it as the universal link language which would unite the country. In their effort they unwittingly played into the hands of the dominant group within the country. This dominant group was of caste Hindus from the Hindi speaking belt of North India. The modernist nationalist in their aim to have a common culture never realized that, culture that they were presenting as the 'national culture' of the country; was infact the culture of this dominant group. The other minority cultures were marginalised and forgotten to a large extent. In their effort to make India a modern country they imposed a universal homogenized identity and thus paved the way for the hegemony of the dominant group.

The modernist nationalists did not foresee that the local contextual and primordial identities would sooner or later assert themselves and stake their claim for their rightful position as they saw it; at the national level. The universal identity being projected by the nationalists scared the minority groups that they would lose their unique identity and would have to merge with this homogenized identity. The fear of being erased as a unique and distinctive group lead to assertion of identities along various divisions within the country. Every group wants to be different and unique and does not want to be clubbed with an undifferentiated mass identity. All these factors have lead to the strong reassertion of identity along divisions of caste, language, region etc., which has subsequently put the dominant brand of nationalist modernity which wanted a single unified India into a crisis today.

3. MODERNITY IN INDIA AND IDENTITY POLITICS

After a conceptual discussion on modernity and identity we now need to understand the meaning of the Indian modernity. A careful study of the development of Indian modernity will enable us to examine some of the complex issues relating to cultural differences and nationalist/modernist ambition of unification, local aspiration and the nationalist/modernist demand of universality and uniformity. In other words, we would be able to arrive at the domain of identity politics.

3.1 COLONIALISM, ENCOUNTERS WITH THE WEST AND ARRIVAL OF MODERNITY

After the Enlightenment, Renaissance, Reformation and the Industrial Revolution had taken place in Europe the ideas, values and results of these processes began getting diffused to various parts of the world and thus had a widespread and far reaching impact on the rest of the world. Almost the whole world was in some way or the other influenced and changed by these ideas which originated from Europe. The whole concept of modernity and its consequences were an outcome of these process, engulfed the world as nothing else had done before. The whole world was forced to respond to the concept of modernity and India was no exception.

India's response to the West was largely evident only after being colonized by the British. So here, we shall consider India's response to British rule and its civilization as essentially its response to the West. To begin with the response was one of awe and admiration for the British who seemed so much ahead of the Indians scientifically, technically and

economically. They were seen as the mighty conquerors who, with the help of science and technology had industrialized and progressed to such and extent that, they had left their homeland in search of new territory to establish their supremacy.

With the advent of the British came the European civilization as well . They opened a whole new world of knowledge to the Indians which they were unaware of. With the introduction of English education the Indians were exposed to a whole new range of ideas which lead them to critically analyze, assess and evaluate the state of their own civilization. The people who could really reap the benefits of the introduction of English education were the upper caste elite in India who already had a tradition of literacy behind them. But these were the people who spear headed the transformation of Indian society. These early reformers realized that the West had a great deal to offer India, but seemed confused how much and to what extent the West should be accepted and made part of the Indian civilization. This lead to divergent ideas as to how the Western civilization must be adapted and integrated with the Indian civilization so as to maintain the essence and the character of the Indian civilization.

When the British came to India they had absolutely no knowledge about the inhabitants of the country. They soon realized that Hindus and Muslims were the two largest groups on the country and Hindus being the larger of the two; the British had to define them if they planned to govern India. The Hindus obviously did not like the biased definition given by the British and decided to give an alternative one.

So many of the Hindu intellectuals of the time tried to define themselves and realized that they had to see themselves as a single group. which they had not done in a long time. Thus a Hindu consciousness slowly developed during the British rule. It was the colonial rule which forced the Hindus to look at themselves objectively and while doing so they became aware of the inherent flaws and weakness of their civilization.

Bhikhu Parekh classifies the responses of the Hindu intellectuals into various categories depending on the nature and kind of response into - traditionalists, modernists, critical modernists and critical traditionalists.

The traditionalists advocated the culture and glory of India's rich tradition and defended every custom whether good or bad as being part of the culture and therefore worth following. They believed that there was nothing wrong with Indian society, and that British had no right to interfere with it and for them, the British rule was of little importance or consequence. The modernists on the other hand though that Indian society was degenerating and the only means of saving it from complete decay was to radically restructure the society on modern European lines. The critical modernists adopted a more middle path. They were of the view that there should be a comprehensive synthesis of the two civilizations. Whereas the critical traditionalists emphasized that India should mobilize its own indigenous means by drawing form its culture and tradition but were not averse to the idea of borrowing from Europe but only when it was absolutely necessary.

Traditionalists believed that India had nothing to learn from the British and they had gained control over India by the use of force, unfair means

and cunning methods. Therefore the Indian should continue to have faith in our own traditional order. The traditionalists maintained a high level of self-esteem and great pride for their culture which was a source of strength for the Indians especially in the context of colonial rule. Inspite of all this even the traditionalists could not deny the sorry state in which their society was.

A large number of Hindu leaders acknowledge the fact that the Indian society had degenerated and some drastic measures were required to reform the society and improve its condition. One of the main problems that these leaders pointed out was that India was divided and sub-divided a long so many lines, that, they could not even relate to each other as a homogenous group of Hindus, and much less as Indians. As a result the British made best use of the situation and played one community against the other which it did with great ease and gained more ground during the ensuing confusion. Gokhale has very aptly commented "If we are deficient in any quality more than another it is the instinct and habit of cooperation."[1] Each individual was only interested in furthering his own interests or that of his family or that of his caste and in order to further their own interests they were willing to go to any lengths. This resulted in their inability to form associations and cooperate with one another. Even if they did form an association, distrust and suspicion crept in so soon that the organization died an early death.

The Hindus were not only divided amongst themselves but had differences with other religious communities especially the Muslims. The British rulers were quick enough to see great advantages for themselves

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[1] Quoted in Parekh, B. Colonialism, Tradition and Reform : An Analysis of Gandhi's Political Discourse, Sage Publications, Delhi, 1989, p. 40.

and started exploiting this divide as well. All Indian leaders including the fanatically Hindu ones, realized that the country would degenerate if some means of uniting the various communities was not found. They recognized the fact that they had to build a collective identity which transcended the caste, ethnic, religious identities if they had to use it for political articulation. Which meant they had to instill in the Indian masses the vision of looking beyond their own petty interests and think of the country as a whole and try to develop a collective Indian identity.

Many leaders especially the modernists thought the flaws were in the traditional foundations of Indian society itself - the inequality of the caste system, excessive importance given to religion and asceticism and the subsequent lack of the spirit of enquiry. A large number of Hindu leaders blamed the Muslims rule in India as a cause for the degeneration of the Hindus. They believed that it was a result of the Muslim rule that the Hindus became religious, subdued, timid and they began to rigidly follow their religion lest they should be exploited. So rigidity became a means of survival, holding their own and keeping their identity intact under foreign rule. The British historians furthered the view that the Muslim rule in Indian was a period of tyranny.

Thus the Hindus leaders began looking for new principles for restructuring the whole society and as a result modern science and anything scientific became very popular. Instead of attempting an in-depth enquiry they decided to examine how Europe which was also degenerating managed to set its house in order and subsequently make such rapid all round development. The leaders decided that the means of saving India from complete degeneration was to embrace modernity. The

aim was to create a strong political Indian state, with rapid industrialization based on modern science and technology . Since Britain had modernized and subsequently conquered the world, India could learn from their experience. Many leaders thought it the good fortune of India that the British were already present in the country. But some other leaders thought that the colonization of India was as a result of its degeneration and it was time to improve the condition the country was in. They also believed that India had a great deal to learn from its colonial masters. But at the same time the Indian leaders were not unaware of the various drawbacks and evils of having the British rule the country. They knew the extent to which the British were exploiting the country and how their policies had drained and crippled the economy. Inspite of being well aware of all the disabilities as a result of the British rule in India, most Hindu leaders strongly believed that their rule was a God send which, had lead to political stability and security within the country and had made available to India science and technology, rationality, the English language etc. which the country would not have had access to but for the British.

The modernists leaders though convinced that the only road out for India was to adopt modernity were unsure as to how to adapt it to India's traditional society. Some of them thought that India would have to completely give up its traditional way of life only then would it be able to overcome its narrows differences and begin to form a single national identity.

Critical modernists believed that India should modernize but should continue to preserve all those aspects of its culture and civilization that

are worth the while. They did not want to modernize indiscriminately as the Europeans had done in their view. They wanted to synthesis India's traditional past with modernity and the resultant synthesis would be a source of inspiration to the rest of the world. They thought that they could easily combine the good points of both the civilizations but overlooked the complications it would lead to. Finally to a large extent the critical modernists were in no way really different from the modernists as they were also all for science and technology but their grand plans for a synthesis some how never did materialize.

Critical traditionalists unlike the others did not believe that all civilization could be judge with the same set of universal criteria, as they believed that each civilization was unique and, ultimately even the universal criteria were derived from some other civilization. And some aspects which were functional for one civilization need not necessarily be functional for another. They said that each civilization had to identify their own problems and then find means of solving them. Either by using indigenous means or by borrowing from other civilizations if it was necessary. Their ideas on industrialization adoption of science and technology were unclear. They did not want to reject this outright but were unsure how it should be adapted to Indian conditions without radically changing the Indian civilization. They wanted India to develop its own alternatives to the various European institutions.

The critical traditionalists believed that the Indian civilization was essentially built up by the Hindus though it has been definitely influenced by others. They regarded Hindus as the guardians of the Indian civilization and the trend setters as far as India's culture goes.

They believed that India had so many ethnic groups who were so proud of their independent identities that it could never become a nation-state in the European sense. They saw India as having a common legal and political entity but a different cultural entity. The critical traditionalists believed that Hinduism had to radically restructure itself and rid itself of its evils. They were the ones that were most critical of the Indian and spared no opportunity to critically assess and evaluate the Indians and their civilization.

But most of the leaders who shared these opinions were educated in Britain and shared some values of the British. In most cases, their interests were tied up with that of the Rulers. The British had systematically won them over by giving them places in the administration.

Tapan Raychaudhuri in a detailed study has considered the nineteenth century Bengali intelligentsia as a case for India's response to the West. This study also proves that it was undoubtedly true - that a large section of the middle class educated in Indian during the colonial period were, great admirers of many aspects of European culture and this was explicit among the new elite of West Bengal. They were in awe of the knowledge they acquired for the first time, but it at times did cause tension and conflict with their own traditional heritage.

They did resent attempts by the British to change many of their ritual and religious practices. They feared the motives of the Christian missionaries and made reforms within Hinduism in order to prevent conversions to Christianity. But all this was over shadowed by the admiration for the

knowledge and civilization of Europe. There was no uniform response or influence to the impact of European ideas and knowledge. Some of them were even willing to embrace Christianity while others aggressively defended their beliefs and practices against the onslaught (as they saw it) of Christianity and even began to look for faults in the European culture. But still the new intelligentsia was short of confidence and looked for assurance and preferably from European sources so as to improve their own self esteem.[2] They were willing to go to any extreme in order to protect Hinduism even if it meant blindly criticizing European culture as inferior to Indian culture.

Raychaudhuri is of the opinion that it was the educated elite that had accepted the version of Indo-Muslim history which was presented to them by the British historians which increased the divide between the Hindus and Muslims. Though attempts were made by some individuals and groups to absorb the Muslims into the mainstream, by and large there was a negative attitude towards the Muslims.

It was the result of the impact of the European ideas of political liberty that the nationalist movement took roots in India. But it was not a simple replication of ideas , but had been adapted to the conditions of India. The nationalists began to question and criticize the British rule in India while at the same time it pointed the damages done to the Indian society as a result of the British regime.

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[2] Raychaudhuri, T. Europe Reconsidered : Perceptions of the West in Nineteenth Century Bengal, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1988, p.20.

A section of the educated intelligentsia actually accepted and enjoyed the regime as it provided them with good opportunities of employment and means of upward mobility and they seemed to be dependent on the British for everything. Inspite of being aware of the various disabilities like discrimination, racist attitudes they were still loyal to the British in India. "A weak and dependent intelligentsia looked up to the master race which was perceived as the source of the imported elements in their ideology and the models they sought to emulate" [3]

Asish Nandy has studied the psychological effect colonial rule had on Indian. He has shown how the West was projected as being superior to the East and how the West would civilize the uncivilized and wild East. Nandy says that Colonization has such a profound impact psychologically that it enslaves the mind of the colonized and changes their culture on a permanent basis. The changes brought about during the colonial period are so deep rooted and pervasive, that even today, after fifty years of independence its effects can be felt. The ideology of colonialism is still alive today and aspects of Indian culture bear testimony to this fact. A lot of leaders were overwhelmed by the West and accepted it. Some of them made "attempts to explain the West in Indian terms and to incorporate it in Indian culture as an unavoidable experience" [4] Others identified the Western civilization as the superior civilization and as something desirable. For Nandy the more important meaning of colonialism is its psychological state, in which the West is everywhere in the structure of the colonized society and the minds of the colonized people. The most dangerous and everlasting effect that colonialism has had, is its

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[3] ibid p. 22.

[4] Nandy, A. Intimate Enemy : Recovery of Self under Colonialism, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1983, p. 22.

psychological effects which lives in many aspects of the lives of the colonized for years and years after the colonizers have left.

Gandhi's response to Western civilization is clearly documented in his book 'Hind Sawraj'. In this book Gandhi explains the kind of country he would India to be once it was independent . His ideas about Western civilization and how and to what extent India should adopt it are stated in this book.

Gandhi was against modern civilization and calls it a disease which India could do without. He says that India can survive and prosper without modern civilization and states that imitating the Europeans in every way possible need not be called civilized. Somehow he thinks that India can manage without it, but does not give clear means of insulating India from Western influence. There seems to be an underlying fear that India will forget its tradition and culture once Western civilization makes in roads into India. A lot of importance is given to India's glorious past and in some ways Gandhi seems to think that disrespect and disregard to our cultural heritage has put India in the sorry state it is today.

Gandhi found fault with every invention of civilization. The impression one gets is that he looked for them and searched them out. It is true that every mechanical invention of man will have faults and bad fall outs but at the same time they will have advantages as well. Gandhi seems to have overlooked the advantages and only picked on the faults.

Gandhi wanted India to develop its own method of ruling the country. Unlike Nehru, who thought that the pattern of parliamentary democracy followed by the British would be the best for India; Gandhi was of the view that if India tried to emulate the British in any way it would spell doom for it. Gandhi was against large scale industries, whereas Nehru thought large scale production was the only means to develop India. Gandhi's aim was maximum employment to maximum people only through traditional method, Nehru advocated mechanization for the same end. Nehru upheld the West as a model and a goal where India must ultimately reach and his dream was to make India as advanced as the European countries. Gandhi thought that the Western way of life was completely unsuitable for India and therefore it had to develop and plan its path depending on its requirements and its unique conditions.

Gandhi gives too much importance to religion to the extent that he asks people to shun materialism beyond basic necessities. Too much importance was given to other worldliness than this world; which is too much to expect from the common man. Not every person will be able to lead such a strict and principled life like Gandhi. He claimed that as a result of the fall of religion from its position of importance India had become decadent.

Gandhi's whole approach to life and the ideas about how one should lead one's life is very ascetic. Only a man with great will power will be able to lead a principled and moral life as Gandhi laid down. He somehow seems to have the idea that India can be insulated from the changes taking place in the rest of world especially modern science and technology. Gandhi wants to be very selective about the kind and extent of technology

that should be allowed into India. But he is not very clear about how to go about this delicate process. Gandhi seems to believe that India of the past was the best and everything must be done to restore India's ancient glory. He almost emphatically says that everything of the past was good and everything in the present is evil, immoral and harmful to man. Gandhi's philosophy of living is too difficult for the average man to abide with.

Motilal Nehru admired the English and their ways so this lead to the increased westernization of the Nehru family at in the early years, which could have also influence the attitude and ideas that Jawaharlal Nehru developed about the West. The environment at home must have been such that it enabled young Nehru to become favourably inclined towards the West and to be in awe of the West. And as Jawaharlal Nehru was greatly influenced by his father; his father's ideas and attitudes would have definitely made and impression on young Nehru's mind.

"India was in my blood and there was much in her that instinctively thrilled me. And yet I approached her almost as an alien critic full of dislike for the present as well as for many of the relics of the past that I saw. To some extent I came to her via the West and looked at her as a friendly Westerner might have done I was eager and anxious to change her outlook and appearance and give her the garb of modernity. And yet doubts arose within me. Did I know India? I who presumed to scrap much of her past heritage? There was a great deal that had to be scrapped, that must be scrapped, but surely India could not have continued a cultured existence for thousands of years, if she had not

possessed something very vital and enduring, something that was worthwhile. What was this something?" [5]

The above paragraph describes the tragedy that was Nehru. Nehru's basic failing as far as understanding India , was the fact that he looked at India from a Western perspective - which he himself admits. He looks at India and tries to understand it as a foreigner would. Nehru has this Western paradigm in mind into which he tries to fit India and points out the problems which are a result of India's inability to fit into his paradigm.

Nehru tries desperately to identify with India but somehow he is never able to completely and whole heartedly. There seems to be some sense of sorrow sometimes that he an Indian, even though at times it is very evident that he is very proud of being one. The pride seems to center mainly around the fact that India has a rich cultural heritage and a long interesting history which is almost unmatched by any other country. Nehru seems to identity and is proud of the India of the past and unhappy and sometimes irritated with the India of the present. In this sense as Nehru himself puts it he comes across as a "friendly Westerner"[6] - as they are the ones who are very impressed with our glorious past and our cultural heritage and pity us for our sorry present conditions. It is a very colonial way of looking at India as a country who has lost all her old glory and is at the mercy of the British.

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[5] Nehru ,J. The Discovery of India, (Edition 4), Meridian Books, London 1956, p. 50.
[6] ibid page 50.

Nehru became so westernised that he could never get his finger on the pulse of the Indians as Gandhi managed to do. Therefore he could never communicate or build up a rapport with the common man as Gandhi did. Nehru's thinking, his ideas and his outlook had really been influenced to such an extent by the West that inspite of being an 'insider' he was to a large extent an 'outsider'. Nehru became an 'outsider' from within. He seemed more at home in England than in India, but this could have also been due to the pressure of the National Movement and the demands on him as a national leader that he seemed to only get respite from his heavy schedule only when he was in England.

Nehru had great faith in modern science and technology and also believed that science would be able to solve all problems of life. Nehru was sure that using science, scientific methods and new technology would help India overcome her social and economic problems and put her on par with the other 'modern' countries of the world. He thought that science buy virtue of its very nature would eventually even take over areas of life or questions which were presently being dealt with by religion which usually merged into mysticism which Nehru disregarded greatly, but this did not mean he was against religion. Nehru like a true product of the Enlightenment Era emphasized the fact that there must be a rational explanation to very act and one must not do anything blindly, he must question and reason before acting. And this was his approach to religion as well. It was as a result of his undying belief that science was the only means to progress that he advocated the idea of 'scientific temper' in every act and aspect of life.

Nehru was in awe of the West and held the West in high esteem and thought it should be emulated but was unsure to what extent. At the same time he could not forget his culture and tradition and comes across as quite confused especially where adapting the Western institutions to Indian situation without cutting one's self completely off from one's roots. Dilemma of being caught in between two worlds and not knowing where to go.

3.2 NEHRUVIAN AGENDA OF MODERNITY AND NATION-BUILDING :

It is a well established and accepted fact that Nehru was the man who put India on the path of modernization and development. He had a particular agenda of modernity for India in which, nation-building was the most important element. Nehru had always thought of the West as superior, as a result of its enlightened and rational scientific outlook and hence was influenced by it through out his life. Thus the fact that Nehru accepted the European brand of modernity does not come as a surprise. He gladly accepted what the West had to offer and then tried to modify and fit it to his vision of what an ideal nation-state should be like.

Nehru had to build a strong unified nation-state out of a country which had just won its freedom after a long and exhausting battle with its colonizers. The country was also just about recovering from the traumatic experience of partition. Nehru had realized that the diversity in the country had caused the people to suffer the partition. India had so many divisions and subdivisions that if mobilization took place along any one of the divisions it could be detrimental to the country. Historical compulsion can be seen as one of the main reasons for the emphasis given

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to an unified identity, unified culture, or the basic aim to remove all differences and contextual identities and making India a single undifferentiated unified whole.

Nehru used all possible means at the disposal of the Government to make India a single unit, a nation with one identity. Nehru took up the challenge of building a new nation which was facing a crisis not only economically, but socially and culturally as well. He wanted India to develop into a civilized, modern unified country; where all the primordial loyalties had been overcome and the citizens only paid allegiance to the nation. Nehru used the economy and development as means of unifying the people. He believed that once the standard of living of the people was improved they would easily rise above their fragmented identities and identify with the nation. For Nehru the process of planning became a means for determination of priorities on behalf of the nation. Planning was the domain of the rational determination and pursuit of universal goals. Through planning the State would claim its legitimacy as a single will and consciousness - the will of the nation - pursuing a task that was both universal and rational. The aim being, the well being of the people as a whole. The State as the planning authority would promote the universal goal of development. Planning was seen as a means of resolving conflict.[7] Nehru saw industrialization and development as having a universalizing tendencies. He used various State mechanisms to homogenize the country and to reduce differences to their bear minimum.

Nehru developed a form of Government where the Centre could continue to have a say in the functioning of the federal governments inspite of decentralization of governance. The Centre could continue to issue

[7] Chatterjee, P. The Fragmernts of the Nation : Colonial and Postcolonial Histories, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1994, pp 205-215.

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directives to the state governments on various issues and for implementing various programmes initiated by the Centre. This is where the idea of a planned economy played an important role. Planning was done by the Centre, for the entire country and all sectors of the economy, so as to ensure that all regions and section of the Indian society benefited from the developmental programmes and no sector lagged behind, thus creating new differences. State plans would be comprehensive and universal and thus no sector would be able to complain of negligence. Even for administering the country there was the pan-Indian Civil Services, according to which people from any part of the country qualifying these exams would be able to administer any part of the country, as a result training imparted to them. This would thus ensure uniform administration of the whole country.

The partition had lead to the communal division of the country. Many Muslims had by choice decided to stay on in India and not migrate to the newly created Pakistan. In Pakistan there were reports of Hindus being persecuted only because of their religion. The country had permanently divided on the basis of religion and fear and suspicion had been planted in the minds of people. Nehru realized that religion was the greatest threat to the country and that the communal division must be kept under control as far as possible. Therefore he declared India a Secular State. All Nehru plans had universalizing effect as its main aim. He wanted India to be strong unified with no further scope for division and subdivision and he made an all out effort to achieve this goal.

For Nehru a nation building agenda was important to unite the country and direct its development. And especially a country as diverse as India

which had just become independent needed a definite set of goals and objectives towards which the country had to work. According to Nehru the whole country required reorganizing which meant modernization of India based on the model set by the European countries

Bhikhu Parekh has meticulously examined the various components of Nehru's nation building agenda and has tired to show how he worked to get public acceptance of this ideas in order to implement them without major opposition from the public. What follows has its main ideas taken from Bhikhu Parekh's paper, 'Nehru and the National Philosophy of India'.

Uniting the country was of primary importance to Nehru. He wanted the people of his country to rise above regional, linguistic, ethnic loyalties and to identify with a universal Indian identity. Nehru's main aim was to make the people overcome their primordial loyalties and identify with the supreme 'Indian identity'. He thought that the modern state and its Constitution would take care of this objective to a large extent. For the same reason Nehru thought linguistic reorganization of the country was a mistake as it would lead to more narrow loyalties. Besides he though that it was a non-rational way of dividing a country. Nehru thought the country should be divided rationally in such a manner as to facilitate easy administration there it was only reluctantly that he agreed to the linguistic reorganization of the states. Another factor which he saw as a great equalizer was the economic development of the country. Nehru thought that industrialization would lead to economic interdependence within the country which would in the process unite the country.

Bhikhu Parekh has pointed out that Nehru thought that, like Gandhi, he too was a symbol of the nation and loyalty towards him would translate into loyalty towards the country. But Nehru did not realize that loyal to him was marginal and was not as mass based and strong as the loyalty towards Gandhi. Nehru never considered culture as a unifier, for one unlike Gandhi, Nehru did not have extensive knowledge about folk culture and he did not think it was compatible with his vision of 'modern India', as it was too traditional for his liking. One other factor Nehru neglected was the use of education as a unifying force, which the European societies made full use of. Nehru gave too much importance to higher education and consequently primary education suffered. There was no uniform primary education which lead to schools having varied curriculum across the country which resulted in students all over the country having very little in common as tar as the understanding of India's history and culture was concerned.

Nehru considered Parliamentary Democracy the best means of holding a diverse country like India together and it was to him a means of making India's large population take active part in the governance of their country. Nehru was against Gandhi's ideas of a loose-knit political structure as he thought that it would lead to the disintegration of the country. He was for a strong central government with relatively autonomous federal governments. Nehru saw Parliamentary Democracy as unifier which could overcome all the difference existing between people. At the same time Nehru knew for Parliamentary Democracy to function soundly there has to be a strong opposition which would take considerable time to develop in Indian politics. So he encouraged the press to act as critiques of the Government and to a certain extent was self critical and accepted his mistakes in public.

Nehru believed that it was only industry and industrialization which could put a country on the path of economic development progress. He unquestioningly accepted the European idea that industry and not agriculture was the foundation for economic development. Nehru believed that agriculture was a primitive and traditional occupation and it was a result of excessive dependency on agriculture that the Indian people were so ignorant traditional and possessive. Nehru thought that the villages were responsible for the degeneration of India and one of the main concerns of independent India was to change the existing situation which could only be done by industrializing the country which would also change the outlook of the people. Nehru recognized the importance of cottage and small scale industries, but saw them only as a short-term measure to tide over India's economic problems. For a permanent solution to India's poverty and unemployment problems what was required was a large scale industrialization. Nehru believed that one of the reasons for the British rule in India was that India was technically and industrially behind Britain which as a result of its superiority easily dominated India. He thought that if a country was industrially advanced then it would not fall prey to external domination. Besides Nehru wanted India to 'catch up' and as fast as possible be at par with the modern advanced and industrialized West which was becoming indispensable in an increasingly interdependent global economy.

For Nehru like Marx all activities were influenced and based on economic activities. He explained the British domination of India in a purely economic framework. Nehru even tried to explain the Hindu-Muslim conflicts in India as being a result of economic conflict and that once the economic causes for the conflict were resolved the religious conflicts

would naturally come to an end. In this respect Nehru failed miserably as he could not explain why economic demands were articulated through religion.

Nehru saw Socialism as a means of transforming civilization. Socialism would lead to a classless society, provide all the means necessary for the development of man, it would encourage cooperation, private property would reduce greatly. Production would be planned and carried out on co-operative lines with the view to meet the needs of the maximum number of people without any profit motive in mind. Nehru however was against any kind of dictatorship even if it was of the proletariat and he was against the use of violence to overthrow capitalism. He was committed to democracy and he tried to fit in Socialism within the boundary drawn by democracy. Nehru realized he could not directly confront the capitalist so he introduced the idea of planning the economy and tried to bring in Socialism though planned economy.

Ultimately Nehru had to make a number of concessions and compromises where his Socialism was concerned. He realized that he could not nationalize everything as it would discourage private investment, so he finally did a balancing act and tried to keep everybody happy and tried to lay some kind of foundation for a socialist society. Public sector were given all the key and heavy industries which required high investment. Private sector was also welcomed in certain areas so as to give the public sector healthy competition lest they should become unviable. Some areas were reserved for the cottage and small scale industries in order to ensure employment opportunity in the rural areas. Nehru stressed on planning as a means of making efficient use of limited resources and state control of

the economy. He stressed more on increasing economic production than eliminating poverty or ensuring equitable distribution or providing minimum needs to the masses. Nehru's idea of Socialism had a number of loop-holes and was geared more towards the industrialization and economic development than the upliftment and welfare of the people.

Nehru's idea of 'scientific temper' is a much popularized one. By this he did not just mean the development of science and technology but more so developing an ability to question and rationally look at all aspects of life. Nehru was against blindly and uncritically accepting anything. He wanted rationality and the spirit of inquiry to become a way of life. At the same time Nehru cautioned at the temptation to accept science as the only form of knowledge. Nehru claimed that there were somethings even science could not explain and therefore there was a necessity for spirituality to which we could root ourselves. Science should be 'tempered with spirituality'. Science should be supreme in areas in which it was most equipped to deal with. Nehru more or less equated science with rationality.

Nehru wanted India to be a Secular state. Nehru was against the institutional aspect of religion but all for the ideological aspect of religion. He believed a great deal in the spirituality in all living being though he never really elaborated about what he meant. For him spirituality dealt with the questions beyond the preview of science and religion dealt with the same issues and was close to spirituality. Nehru saw his ideas of spirituality as being very close to the advita philosophy. He also thought spirituality had a role to play in politics but gave it a largely psychological role. According to him, since India had so many religions

the state would have to be indifferent to religion; he said that religion must be restricted to the private sphere and must not be allowed to enter the public sphere. He tried as far as possible to keep religion and religious influences outside the functioning of the Government. At the same time Nehru realised that the sate cannot remain completely indifferent to religion. If some religious practices prevented the fulfillment of the goals laid in the Constitution then the State would have to step in, in order to ensure that the Constitution is upheld. It was on this ground that he made the practice of untouchability punishable by law. Though Nehru wanted to reduce the amount of influence religion had on the State, he was not able to do this satisfactorily as he knew that dealing with a sensitive issue like religion was very dangerous and he did not want to antagonize members of any religious community.

Nehru wanted the Indians to become rational is their outlook. He had the greatest regard for modern science knowledge. He wanted people to develop a scientific temper and the spirit of enquiry. Nehru wanted India to break from its traditional roots. He said tradition had an important place in the lives of people, but it must be limited to that space and should not be allowed to encroach onto other areas. Tradition must not cloud our vision and prevent us from accepting modern means and methods which will improve our lives. Nehru wanted the Indians to overcome the burden of the past, the idea that India had a glorious past and all that glory is now lost. He wanted the Indians to break free from the image of 'the wonder that India was' and carry on with life instead of living in the past. Nehru wanted the country to develop industrialize and be at par with any other modern Western country.

Nehru had an image of a 'new Indian' who he visualized would be a clear and rational being whose knowledge and ideas would be based on science and would have a well developed scientific temper. The 'new Indian' as Nehru visualized would have transcended all his petty identities and would have one single identity - the one given to him by his nation. He would be a rational thinking being who would not discriminate on the basis of narrow loyalties. As result of his modern education he would be actively engaged in the process of nation-building and the nation would have his loyalty first and last. The modern Indian as a result of his reason and intellect will have a universal outlook and would have risen far above the narrow parochial outlook. His universal outlook would extend beyond the boundaries of his own nation and thus allow him to see the entire world as one homogenous unit of people. This would naturally increase universal brotherhood among all nations of the world and would encourage peace co-existence; which were some important views of Nehru on International politics.

Nehru envisaged a 'new Indian' free from the chains of tradition having adopted a modern outlook. This Indian would use his reason and intellect before making any judgment. This Indian would have no fragmented identities but one single strong identity - the 'Indian identity'. He would rise above all his narrow primordial ties and parochial views and adopt a rational and universal view. With this image of an India in mind Nehru tirelessly embarked on a mission of creating a modern, homogenized universal identity for both India as a nation and Indians as citizens of that nation.

Nehru's who Nation building agenda was a very shrewd and well thought out plan . He made sure that while the plan embodied the ideas and vision that were closest to his heart, it also was accepted by and large by most sections of the Indian society. Nehru wanted to modernize the Indian society and at the same time ensure a socialistic pattern of economy.

Nehru's ambition to modernize India was once again to a great extent based on his admiration for the West. He wanted India to be on an equal footing with the European societies and he wanted India to feature as an important player in international politics. Nehru knew that if India wanted to make her presence felt in international affairs it must advance both economically and socially. Being a socialist he thought that once India's economic problems were solved it s social problems would naturally come to an end. As he saw it all India's social problems had economic origins. Nehru could never get over his awe for the West and had long since accepted the superiority of the West; he wanted to be seen as the man who freed India from the clutches of tradition, modernized it on the lines laid down by the European societies and brought it to a stage where it was at par with any of the Western countries.

Seeing the popularity and loyalty Gandhi had Nehru thought that he too could convert the loyalty towards him into support for his nation building agenda. He began to completely identify with this plan of his and backed it with his entire political authority. He wanted to see his plan implemented and used every available opportunity to advocate it. He fought elections on this very basis and used his victories to reinforce it. As there was no real strong opposition to it Nehru succeeded in making it

part of India's development programme. And he has succeeded in doing it so well that though many of ideas have been modified none of them have been completely rejected. And in a country like India where a great amount of importance and respect is attached to the ambitions of dead leaders and to their memories Nehru's nation building agenda still continues to influence, guide and hold sway over India even to this day.

3.3 EMERGING CONFLICTS : NATIONALIST MODERNITY AND IDENTITY POLITICS

The trauma of being colonized for over two hundred years, is something the Indian will never get over. Being ruled by a foreign power for such a long period has lead to some permanent changes in the Indian was of thinking and viewing the world. Even today there are various aspects of our social and cultural life which we continue to perceive through paradigms originally used by the British. There are certain political and social usages that the British applied to Indian society for their own benefit, and these have survived to this day and continue to be used by our political system. There are somethings handed down to us as a result of our colonial past and as a result of historical compulsions which we cannot get rid of no matter how hard we try.

We must not forget that the idea of modernity was first introduced by the British to India. and it was as a result of colonization that the Indian were influenced and accepted the project of modernity. The nationalist wanted India to develop into a rational modern nation-state along the lines already laid down by Europe. With this goal in mind nationalist modernist embarked on the mission to unify India into a single unit during the colonial period itself, so that, by the time India gained her

freedom she would be a strong nation-state. The man who was most involved in this project was Nehru. Nehru had this grand design of modernity into which he wanted to mould India. His project was essentially universalizing, with the aim of removing all differences. There was resistance from the various cultural groups against this move. But, the nationalists had always rejected the idea that India could never be one single nation. The resistance which started during the colonial period continued during the Nehruvian era and now in the post Nehruvian era is posing a challenge to the unifying mission of the nationalist modernist. The Nehruvian idea of modernity, ever since its conception has always been opposed, but today it is in crisis. In India today, various identities like caste ethnicity, language, religion etc. are asserting themselves thus threatening the notion of India as a unified nation-state.

There is danger to the unifying tendencies as a result of the resurgence of nationalism indifferent parts of the country. The unpredictable force of primordial loyalties are threatening the orderly clam of civilized life. Some centuries ago, nationalism, was considered one of Europe's most magnificent contributions to the rest of the world. Nationalism as we know it today, whether good or bad, is wholly a product of the political history of Europe; this is true inspite of the fact that Europe today has been propagating various unifying tendencies. this universalizing effect has spread all over the West, but they seemed to have forgotten that the idea of nationalism in fact, has its origins in Europe.[8]

According to Benedict Anderson nations are formed as a result of various sociological conditions such as language or race or religion. The models

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[8] ibid pp. 4-5.

of nationalism have already been set up by countries like Europe, America etc. and all subsequent forms of nationalisms, are chosen by the national elite of the concerned country according to what they like. Chatterjee sees postcolonial world as perpetual consumers of modernity. Europe and America have already accomplished whatever is required to be accomplished and the rest of the world just borrows and adapts these ideas to the particular situation in that country. "Even our imaginations must remain forever colonized."[9]

Chatterjee disputes this idea and argues that the most significant aspect of anti-colonial nationalism was not based on identity like the European nationalism; but on differences which is opposed to the 'model' form of nation-state, propagated by the West. The colonized societies were being dominated by modern institutions like economy, science and technology of the Western colonizing society and the colonized country had no choice but to accept it. But at the same time the colonized countries managed to keep intact the essential bearers and symbols of their own cultural identity. The more they imitated the West in the material aspects of life the more they strived to assert their distinctive culture.[10]

This is true even today nationalism defines certain boundaries and will not allow any kind of intervention or interference within that boundary. The State will be kept out of this inner domain, inspite of having political authority to govern them. A nation will contest political power when its cultural identity is threatened.

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[9] ibid p. 5.
[10] ibid p. 6.

The colonizers used caste and religion to describe Indian society and this laid the foundation for distinction being made along these divisions and the other divisions which went to make up Indian society. And it is along these divisions that mobilization has taken place in postcolonial India seeking representation in the state on the basis of caste, language religion etc. Even in today's politics we find some traces of colonial ideas. The most significant is the distinction between majority and minority communities; defined on the basis of religion, language or tribe which is applied from the smallest district to the entire country.[11]

The criticism of caste system was also drawn from the works of various Europeans. The critique of caste system by the liberal European has been the basis of the constitution of the postcolonial State in India. By providing for special reservations on the grounds of caste the modern State seems to have replaced the unifying force of 'dharam'(there is a popular belief that the dominant 'dharma' unifies the 'jatis' into a harmonious whole); by the concept of nation envisaged by the State. The forces of 'dharma' have been replaced by economic needs. "On the one hand, the new capitalist agricultural relationships established in the modern state only reinforces the traditional caste divisions. On the other hand we have the low caste groups asserting their very backwardness in the caste hierarchy to claim discriminatory privileges from the State and upper-caste groups proclaiming the sanctity of bourgeois equality and freedom (the criterion of equal opportunity mediated by skill and merit)"[12] The caste system has been used by various political parties to their advantage. The various castes themselves, have mobilized

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[11] ibid p. 224.
[12] ibid p.198.

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according to caste differences in order to demand various benefits from the State.

Colonialism in fact generated many new social and political patterns in the Indian society. One of them was the eventual unification of linguistic subnationalisms. In the early pre-modern period elites from one linguistic area moved easily into other regions where they were more or less absorbed into the local socio-political system. Under British rule this elite movement continued, but the 'outside' elites found themselves challenged by the local groups and linguistic territory emerged as a major political arena. This process culminated in the demand for linguistic states after independence.[13]

Language is another means of distinguishing oneself from others. Language becomes a means of identifying with one's culture and loss of language is seen as the death of culture itself. Language is very important for the development of a nation as it is the means of communication. Print-capitalism enormously helped the development of language. The elite play a very important role in the development of language into a means that, is adequate enough to express the nation's 'modern' culture. It is the intellectual influence of the new elite which gives the language its modern and standardized shape. Thus language becomes an indispensable part of cultural identity and no intrusion into this territory is tolerated. "Language therefore becomes a zone over which the nation first had to declare its sovereignty and then had to transform in order to make it adequate for the modern world."[14] As language is directly linked

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[13] Omvedt, G. Cultural Revolt in Colonial Society : The Non-Brahman Movement in Western India 1873 to 1930, Scientific Socialist Educaiton Trust, Bombay, 1976, p. 66

[14] Chatterjee, P. op.cit., p. 7.

to the culture of the nation, any attempt on the part of the State to influence the language used for communication will immediately be resisted. The nation will resist any attempt by the State to legislate, in a way that would affect their identity. They will assert themselves and emphasize the fact that only they have the right to intervene in aspects that are essential parts of their cultural identity.

With the beginning of modernity in Europe there was the rise of public sphere as well. it is in this sphere that cultural identity of the people is constructed as a single unified whole. It is in this sphere that, through the medium of print-capitalism, the homogenized forms of national culture is built - through standardization of language, aesthetic norms, culture etc. As modern State developed, it did so on the pattern already laid down by Europe. Once the modern State was established it embarked on a hegemonic project of forming a homogenous nation which included the normalization or unification of culture, language, identity etc. But this hegemonic project of nationalist modernity has had numerous fragmented resistances to that normalizing project. If the State tries to universalize and suppress the various communities then these communities will start asserting the claims for an alternative nationhood with rights to an alternative State.[15]

The whole project of modernity with its unifying an universalizing aim was seen by a section of the Indian society as representing the aspiration of the dominant Hindu Brahmin castes. The idea of having a single identity, a standardized language and a universal culture was looked upon with suspicion and considered a reflection of the ideas of dominant

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[15] ibid p. 236.

Hindus. The minority groups and the lower and backward classes thought they would not have a say in any matter concerning the State. Their ideas and aspirations would fall by the way side and never find expression in country run by the dominant caste. The caste Hindus seemed to have retained the sole right to be the primary cultural and intellectual class even after independence.

In India caste identity is another important identity for any individual. The sense of belonging and unity within each caste is very strong. It is the caste system which gives the individual his status in society. The caste system is what decides an individual's life chances and life style. Historically it has been the upper castes who have invariably been the dominant castes and thus occupied positions of importance whether in the social, cultural or economic spheres. As a result of the more or less uniform domination of the upper castes, the lower and backward castes have started revolting against this trend. There was an unprecedented increase in the importance of the upper castes once the country was colonized and it was during this period that organized assertion of backward caste identity first began and has been carried on even after independence.

Colonial society was in many ways a new society as it brought ethnic and religious communities together in new ways. It has disrupted the basis by which old social structures and values had been maintained. Old cultural traditions remained significant. Initially the Indian maintained their traditional relationships as a defense against foreign conquest and commercial capitalism which was breaking down the ties that bound the village communities together. As colonialism spread its influence and a

new class developed the modernized elite tried to maintain their traditional values in order to resist challenges to their power. But the groups that were challenging the dominant upper classes themselves used both modern and traditional symbols in an attempt to unite their respective caste groups. The mobilization of the castes that were challenging the system of dominance, partly arose out of categories defined within the traditional caste hierarchy. But it was the pluralizing effect of colonialism which had set these groups against one another. These movements fought the cultural tradition which the upper caste intelligentsia was actively attempting to maintain and to do so it used both symbol of equalitarianism and traditional symbols of Indian history in an attempt to create new symbols of identity.[16]

Colonialism created a typical plural society, ethnic divisions tended to coincide with class divisions. Groups with opposing economic interest often found themselves culturally and ethnically differentiated as well. But whether they asserted themselves as a class or as a cultural group in plural society depended on how they were mobilized. In India most of the assertion of the various cultural identities started during the freedom struggle and continued after independence. Initially it was against the domination of the national movement by a section of intellectual elite. They were drawn from the high caste Hindus especially Brahmans particularly from Bengal, Madras and Maharastra. Therefore nationalism was perceived as exclusively dominant caste nationalism. Groups who were disproportionately represented such as Muslim, lower and backward castes and elite from other linguistic areas of the country began

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[16] Omvedt,G. op.cit., p. 34.

agitating primarily against the dominant indigenous elite who blocked their chances to occupy positions of power and influence.[17]

Under the influence of the Western concept of modernity and the Western pattern of State, the various ethnic groups in the country began to be influenced by the Western unifying tendency and adopted many western patterns of living. All this lead to psychological reaction which resulted in the process of re-emphasizing indigenous cultural identity. This process began under colonialism itself where cultural differences of group were both created and emphasized. The uneven development that had been created by colonialism, between the various communities, both in economic and socio-cultural terms was continued in almost an identical fashion by the new postcolonial State. The communities which had already been marginalized during the colonial period due to historical compulsion found their position had not changed under the new political regime. They realized that they had to make their presence felt and thus started asserting themselves as a groups and agitated for a greater representation in the public sphere.

The manifestations of caste in modern Indian society is quite different from that of traditional Indian society. It involves the unification of scattered members of a caste category over a wide territory usually under the leadership of its educated men and invariably takes the form of a 'caste association', which develops an ideology of the caste identity and its relationship with other Hindus castes; partly with the help of traditional features and partly with modern features. Often it also involves a process of setting one caste association in competition with

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[17] ibid pp.30-31.

others which is not a traditional character of caste of all. The unification of groups on the basis of caste is not a feature of traditional caste system but belongs to the colonial period.

The mobilization of caste in modern Indian has not been limited to one village or a small area but it has been on a wider regional basis. It implies an identification and involvement of a large number of lower castes in an entire region or state so that the influence and pressure they could wield would be effective and thus immediately addressed. The movement itself contains its own elite and masses. The elite are the ones who are usually educated and can easily articulated the demands of the group to the Government. As the more educated they are the more aware they are of the discrimination against their caste and are able to spread this awareness and mobilize people in order to fight discrimination.

"In the West primary political organization of the last few centuries has been the nation-state, the establishment of a sovereign, bureaucratic state based upon one "nationality" or a people unified by culture, language, ethnic identity. In the non-western world, however colonialism both held out the nation-state as an ideal and at the same time made it impossible to achieve in practice. This was because the process of colonialism had intensified the differences between groups within a single geographical territory (example Hindus and Muslims in India) and intensified the worldwide movement of cultural-ethnic groups (Indians to Africa and the West Indies; Africans to the Americas; Chinese through out South-East Asia) to the point where the resulting "plural society" has made the focus of a state upon a single nationality almost impossible. Colonialism has in

addition intensified the differences between elite culture and mass culture within a single ethnic group"[18]

The above quote clearly shows the dilemma that the new non-western post colonial state had to face. The modernist nationalists in India had accepted the Western idea of a 'nation-state'. But in trying to convert India into a modern nation-state, they had to face a number of obstacles created by colonialism itself. Colonial rule had divided and sub divided the country along various lines. These new identities were asserting themselves, more so after independence as they feared a loss of identity, as a result of the Nehruvian agenda of modernity. The dominant upper caste Hindu identity was threatening to engulf and merge the various minority identities without allowing them their own space in the modern nation-state.

When the Indian upper caste elite dealt with the question of 'Indian nationality' and 'Indian culture' - their idea of 'nation' the 'national culture' was basically Hindu and essentially derived from the Sanskritic Vedic culture. By doing so they were not only representing the culture of the upper castes, but more so that of the North Indians. Not only were they accepting this culture to be representative of the whole country, but were projecting the same idea as well. And this lead them to invariably choose high caste religious symbols that represented high caste culture and interest. The lower castes felt marginalized by dominant Hindu and this demonstrated that Brahmanical culture had no place for marginalised groups.

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[18] ibid p. 113.

The liberal modernization of Hindu culture and the capitalist development of India did not represent the interest of the minority and backward groups. The marginalised groups had a very different view of India from those of the upper caste thinkers. "Any culture after all rests upon the class society and the dominance of a particular class. Hence the total transformation of culture requires the destruction of this dominance. In terms of India, Hindu culture and the caste system rested upon Brahmanism..."[19] Nationalist modernity began to be perceived as dominant caste Hindu nationalism representative of North India. Nehruvian modernity began to be viewed as a project of imposing North Indian Hindu ideas on the rest of the country in order to make it representative to whole . Hence various, ethnic, religious, caste groups began voicing their dissent against what was being projected as the 'rational, secular and pan-Indian identity'. They began asserting their individual identity and demanded that the State recognize them as well and give them their proper place of dignity in the nation-state. The protest and agitation which began after independence against Nehru's plan to have a single identity, culture and language is still alive today and has only intensified and has emerged more forceful and strong. The spread of education since independence has lead to the emergence of leaders at the local level who have started voicing the demands of the marginalised groups and forced the State to take notice of voices which were earlier either ignored or given very little importance. Various identities on the basis of caste, ethnicity, religion are asserting themselves and posing a challenge to the unifying mission of nationalist modernity.

In this dissertation we will take up the specific example of the problem of linguistic identity. After independence once Hindi was adopted as the

[19] ibid p. 100.

'official language' of the country, it at once raised the status of the language. This caused a lot of dissatisfaction among the speakers of other regional languages and they not only saw it as a decision which would marginalise their respective languages, but also as a move to impose Hindi on the country. The move to adopt Hindi as the language for communication through out the country was perceived as another victory for the dominant upper caste Hindu North Indian in their attempt to make their culture the pan-Indian culture, and an attempt to universalize and homogenize the medium of communication by removing the regional languages from mainstream communication. This lead to a number of linguistic groups asserting their linguistic identities demanding that the State recognize their respective languages at par with Hindi. Language became a means of gaining power and wresting demands from the State.

4. INTERROGATING MODERNITY : AFFIRMATION OF LINGUISTIC IDENTITY IN INDIA

As we have already suggested, we wish to take up linguistic identity as an example and try to see what it means in the context of modernity. We want to examine whether in a multi-lingual society one's emotional attachment to one's own language and the resultant resistance to other languages poses a challenge to the vision of 'united India' as perceived by nationalist modernity.

4.1 LANGUAGE AND PERCEPTION OF SELF/CULTURE/COMMUNITY

"Language is the most powerful and the most effective instrument of culture. The first and the most important thing it does is to foster the sense of belonging in human beings. If the language in its positive role serves as a vital instrument of social cultural and national integration then conversely in its negative role it can also serve as a powerful divisive force."[1]

Language is the means through which we express ourselves. It is this ability to speak and articulate ourselves that makes us different from the higher apes. A distinguishing feature about human beings is that they are thinking beings and language is the means through which we express our thoughts. It has been proved without doubt that language is a social phenomena and includes the widest area of human activities. It is one of

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[1] Prasad, N.K. The Language Issue In India, Leeladevi Publications, Delhi, 1979, p. 9.

the basic things that is common to all humans. Even the earliest and most savage people had some means of vocal communication which remotely resembles speech or language.[2] It is the basic means of communicating one's feelings and social experiences - both as an individual and as a member of a group.

Language becomes the proud possession of the group that uses it and thus becomes a means of identification for the individual with a particular group and for the group to identify members from non-members. It becomes the means through which culture is accumulated and transmitted to the future generations. The single most important element of culture is language as, it is a means of storing what has been learnt and acquired by the present generation for posterity. Language binds one generation with another generation thus leading to a continuity of culture, history and tradition. Language has been the sole means by which the socio-cultural progress of man has been recorded.

Language is a part of man's individual self and his group consciousness, which includes both his subjective thought and world view. Language in the crux of culture and a manifestation of man's attempt and desire to preserve his past and plan his future. Language plays the vital role of linking all the phases of social life of man. To become a member of society an individual must have command over language as it is only through language that he can interact and communicate with other members of society. To begin with a child first communicates information and then slowly begins to communicate ideas feelings and thoughts.

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[2] Husain, E. *Multilingual Aspect*, Seminar, July 1960, p. 19.

There is such a close relationship between language and culture that one cannot be understood or appreciated without the knowledge of the other. Language is such a characteristic part of culture so much so that each culture will have language usages that are peculiar only to that culture. The structure of language determines the way in which speakers of that language view the world. The language does not exactly determine the world-view, but is extremely influential in predisposing speakers of a language towards adopting a particular world-view. The culture of a particular group is reflected in the language they use. Each group values certain things and do things in a specific way, they begin to use language in ways that reflect what they value and what they do.

Each language express a definite set of behaviors, attitudes and values which are unique to it and it only. The culture of a group determines the language - the way words are used, meanings are created and interpreted, so much so that the same linguistic item may evoke different responses in different cultures depending on the important values of the culture. As a matter of fact the life world is to a large extent unconsciously built by the language habits of the group. We see, hear and experience things as we do because the language habits of our community predisposes our choice of interpretation as well.[3]

It is not just the community which has a specific language, but different classes within a society will have its own speech repertoire that is specific to their social status in that society. Language develops according to the culture of that class in society. For example it is usually seen that the elite class uses either a very refined form of the native language or a foreign

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[3] Wardhaugh, R. An Introduction to Sociolinguistics, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1986, p. 212.

language like English or French as a means of communication and interaction; whereas the lower classes usually use a dialect of the native language and may not even know the foreign language used by the elite. Even if they did use the same language there will be certain words and usages which are typical only to that class and to no other class in that society. Users of a particular language not only perceive the world in a certain way but this perception is also limited by language. You perceive only what your language allows you or predisposes you to perceive. Your language controls your world-view. Hence speakers of different languages will have different world-views.[4]

It is a well known fact that through the process of socialization that the biological being is converted into a social being. And a greater part of the socialization process is totally dependent on the use of language. Language is used to instill the values, norms of the community in the child. The entire heritage and culture of the community is passed onto the younger generation with the help of language. It is only though language that a major part of culture can be preserved. The language that the child learns first is called the 'mother-tongue', since it is usually the mother with whom the child spends most of his time and it is from her that he learns to understand and speak the language of the community for the first time. The mother tongue is the language through which the child will sustain itself in future and deal with all personal and emotional situations in life as it becomes an indivisible part of his personality and there is no way he can separate himself from this language. An individual has special emotional attachment to his mother tongue. He will be proud of it and loyal to it and even willing to defend it against external threat with his life if need arises.

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[4] ibid p. 214.

The language moulds the character of the members of the community as required by it. And this it does without taxing and with utmost ease. It is with the help of language that the child begins to identify himself with his community and simultaneously the community recognizes him as a member of that community. It has been said that each role repertoire in a community has a specific linguistic repertoire attached to it which will be unique to that community.[5] As the child grows older the more he identifies with the language and hence the speech community. He slowly begins to realize that it is his language that makes him and his speech community unique and different from other speech communities. Through the process of socialization pride for one's language as a cherished value is instilled in the child.

To begin with children pick up a number of languages other than their mother tongue informally from their family, neighborhood and peer group. Hence they can be considered multilingual to a certain extent. But once they become part of a formal institution like school they tend to increasingly become monolingual especially in relationships that are not primary. Ultimately the language of the school and Government replaces the language of the home and neighborhood because it provides higher status in all domains.

Language Planning

With the growth and development of the modern nation-state, it became important to have an 'official' or 'state language' with the help of which the business of the state maybe carried out. The State requires a language

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[5] Fishman, J. Sociolinguistics : A Brief Introduction, Newbury House Publishers, Massachusetts, 1970, p. 78.

through which it can communicate with its citizens. An 'official language' should be one that majority of the people in that State know and understand. 'Official language' is required to bind the people together and integrate them. 'Official language' is meant to be one with which all citizens can identify and be proud of as the unique possession which gives them a distinct identity when compared to other States.

The State has to find a language which can be used as the common means of communication by all citizen. This is no problem in monolingual states i.e. countries with a single language, example France; as it does not create conflict on the basis of language or between languages claiming to be the one accepted by majority of the people. For monolingual State the 'mother-tongue' of the inhabitants becomes the 'official language'. Every State has and needs a 'Lingua franca' which can be defined as a language to indigenous languages as a means to develop interlingual interaction.[6] 'Lingua franca' maybe developed at the cost of other languages or some languages have to be suppressed; then the members of the disadvantaged speech community will not accept the 'Lingua franca' as their 'mother tongue'. This problem will invariably occur in a multilingual state, where one language will have to chosen over others to be used as the 'Lingua franca'.

Thus in order to have a common link language the Government will have to plan and develop a certain language and this may lead to the neglect and hindrance in the growth of other languages. According to Wardaugh language planning is a deliberate attempt to promote a language. This attempt is either based on the status of the language with regard to other

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[6] Husain, E. op. cit., p. 21.

languages of the country or the internal condition of that language with a view to change that condition; or it is based on both. If based on status it is called 'status planning'; if based on internal conditions of the language it is called 'corpus planning'.

Status planning changes the functions of a particular language and the rights of those who use it. For example, when a Government decides that two languages instead of one will be officially recognized, then the newly recognized language has gained in status. Corpus planning aims at developing a language, usually to standardize it so that it becomes a means for serving every language function of that society. Hence Corpus planning may involve new sources of vocabulary, dictionaries and a literature and the deliberate attempt to cultivate the use of the language; may include the extending of its use into areas such as Government, education and trade.[7]

Each country has its own share of problems with language planning. Countries that have recently become independent from colonial rule have their own problems. For one most of them are multilingual, and have so many languages and their varieties that it becomes a problem to decide which should be the 'official language'. Another important feature is that as a result of their colonial past the elite, in the country speak the language of their erstwhile colonial masters; which is usually a European language such as English or French. This language is so extensively used that it not only serves the internal functioning of the Government but also continues to be regarded as the language of mobility. It is a language which transcends local loyalties and at the same time opens up

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[7] Wardaugh, R. op.cit., p. 336.

opportunities world wide. Under these circumstances it is unlikely that such a foreign language will disappear even after the country becomes independent. In fact there are greater chances of it being used especially in positions of leadership and influence and will be available only to a privileged few who will have access to it.[8]

India is a country which has had to face this problem . As a solution Hindi in Devanagiri script has been promoted as the 'official language' of the State. But at the same time the State recognizes eighteen other languages as well. However there have been serious obstacles to the promotion of Hindi. There is a difference between the spoken and literary variety of Hindi and there are a number of regional variations of Hindi even in the areas where it is dominant. Gandhi tried to emphasize building Hindi on popular speech so as to reduce the difference between the spoken and written varieties of Hindi. In an attempt to overcome difficulties the Government established various groups to develop scientific terms, dictionaries etc. And this task was handed to the Hindi elite who took this as an opportunity to rid Hindi of its Urdu influence and to Sanskritize it to a greater extent. Thus this attempt has lead to the widening of the gap between literary and colloquial varieties of Hindi.

There are other pressures also which have had a negative impact on the spread of Hindi. Since it is widely spoken in North India; the North Indians are seen as having an undue advantage over the Indians in the rest of the country. This feeling is especially strong among the South Indians. In this context English has some advantages. Its use has spread mainly through the upper social strata everywhere in India, but now as a

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[8] ibid p. 344.

result of being the chief medium for education, it has spread to a larger section of society. Therefore it can be seen as a neutral language, though its use has been opposed strongly at the official level where it is recognized as a 'associate' or 'secondary' language. English is used in the higher courts, as a language of parliamentary debate and as a the preferred language in the universities and as a language for publishing learned journals. Although Hindi is promoted as the unifying language for India, many Indians see this promotion to be at the expense of some other languages or a set of religious beliefs or opportunity to acquire a world language like English. Language planning in India is mainly confined to the elite, the masses do not seem to be so affected by it. Like any other planning in India, language planning too has a number of difficulties and obstacles.

After independence the problem that lay before the nationalists was to develop India into a modern nation-state. The nationalist had accepted the fact that if, India had to progress, she would have to modernize. And part of this modernization plan was to build a unified nation-state, with a universal identity, universal language and universal culture. The immediate problem was to replace English with an Indian language as the 'official language' of the country. They decided of Hindi for the 'official language' and as a means to unify the country. This lead to an instant reaction from other linguistic groups who perceived as a move to undermine various regional languages and impose the hegemony of Hindi over the country. It was then that the linguistic problem in the country began and today the dominant brand of nationalist modernity is in crisis as a result of this language issue.

4.2 THE LANGUAGE OF MODERNITY - ENGLISH

One of the main reasons for Enlightenment was the amount of literary work that took place in Europe. It was through their writing that the intellectuals urged the people, to question tradition, use their own intellect and reason to question religious dogmas. During and after the Enlightenment period a number of books were written in a number of European languages. It was at the same time that science made great advances and the process of industrialization and modernization started spreading its roots all over Europe. All this further encouraged the development of various languages and literary activity flourished in Europe.

India's exposure to any European language was only after the advent of the Europeans, especially the British to India. Once the British came to India, they brought with them their language - English. Since the British started off as traders both the Indians and the British had to learn at least a little of each others languages in order to carry on trade. This also lead to the flow of both goods and people to and from both the countries. Once the British colonized India they imposed English on the country. With colonization a number of Indian has easy access to go to Britain for higher education. There they were influenced by the modern and liberal ideas of the various intellectuals which they brought back to India.

The various Christian missionaries who came to India had also introduced English to the country in their own small way. In course of time British realized that they could not import men from England to fill in all posts of their administration, especially clerical posts as it would be uneconomical. They decided to introduce English in schools and colleges

in India so that they would be able to recruit Indians who were trained in English for lower levels of administrative jobs. In 1835 Macaulay's proposal for the introduction of English education in India was immediately accepted by Lord Bentinck. The policy cleared the road for higher education in English medium. He believed in the theory of downward filtration of education from the upper to the lower classes, with the responsibility of administration being confined to educating the elite alone. Along with this came the prestige that was attached with English education. To begin with it was the upper class who had a literary tradition behind them who had easy access to English education and therefore jobs with the Imperial rulers. By 1837 English along with vernacular languages had been introduced in the courts of law. And there came about a separation of operations - upper levels were reserved for English and the lower levels for the vernacular languages. The policy of the administrators consciously promoted the association of English with a status privilege.[9]

At the same time many social reformers and nationalist leaders associated English with a promise of modernization and liberation. These leaders who had, had the advantage of modern English education were influenced by the democratic and liberal ideas of the West. These leaders were eager to use English to modernize the Indians. Though some of them were undecided about the relative emphasizes that should be given to English and the vernacular languages many of them thought that English education would be an important step towards the modernization of Indian languages. But one must realize that for the first time in Indian history, during the British period that one single language provided a

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[9] Dasgupta, J. Language Conflict and National Development : Group Politics and National Language Policy in India, Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1970. pp. 40-43.

medium of communication across the entire subcontinent. Thus English came to supersede the Indian languages in the work, activities and thought process of the intelligentsia of all linguistic regions in the country and served as a link language among the educated people of the country. To a large extent it was the English language through which the ideas of freedom, independence and self rule spread through out the country. It was on this basis that the educated Indians united to fight for freedom. To begin with the freedom movement consisted of only the English educated elite. It was only after the advent of Gandhi that the movement became mass based. But by then the English language had become such a part and parcel of the Indian that no matter how hard he tried he could not do without it. Since India was a multilingual country English acted as the link which helped people to communicate with each other and participate together in a common struggle.[10] Once India attained freedom the leaders felt that we must have an 'official language' to replace English as the single means of communication between all the people of the country. After some initial problems Hindi was adopted as the 'official language' of the country and a gradual and phased transition from English to Hindi was envisaged; which was to be completed in the span of fifteen years. But the non-Hindi regions of the country fearing the hegemony of the Hindi heartland agitated which lead to the continuation of English as the 'associate official language'.

English was, and even today is, after fifty years of independence the language of opportunity. Being fluent in English is a matter of pride it gives the individual a higher status and allows him to avail of opportunities beyond the borders of the country. Where higher education is concerned the knowledge of English is a must and especially so in

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[10] ibid p. 45.

scientific and technical fields; where it is impossible to work without knowledge of English. Today English has spread to all the corners of the world. It has linked the world together, helped people of different cultures communicate and share their knowledge with one another. It has a kind of universalizing effect and made the world one small unit.

In India the important given to English is enormous. To this day learning English is seen as a means of achieving a higher status. Being educated in an English medium Public school ensures easy avenues to higher education, a good career and a bright future. Those who lack the knowledge of English are automatically given a lower status and have fewer options at their disposal. It has spread its influence so deep and so wide that English is learnt even at the cost of one's own mother tongue. When English was introduced it belonged to the public sphere, the vernacular languages were still used in the private sphere, but now English has invaded and taken over even this space especially in the modern world. English is no longer reserved for academic, official and cosmopolitan behavioural situations. It has become part of our primary group relationships as well. English is seen as the language of knowledge and intellect and scientific reasoning.

There is no doubt about the fact that English is here to stay. It is no use to continue viewing it as a foreign language and a symbol of colonial domination. From the time when English was introduced in India to this day the constant alteration between English and Indian languages by an Indian-English speaker has resulted in the creation of an 'Indian-English' with its own characteristic features.[11] Like a number of aspects of

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[11] ibid p. 44.

modernity have been borrowed from the West and been adapted to the Indian conditions. In the same manner English has also been borrowed but has been 'Indianised' to meet the particular needs which are typical of the Indian life style.

4.3 LANGUAGE OF INTEGRATION - HINDI

Once the national movement gradually started becoming a mass movement, the leaders realized that they needed a language that could be identified with the movement. Gandhi was the most important advocate of the idea of a common Indian language in order to unify the national movement. At first the Indian National Congress officially recognized Hindustani as the language for carrying out all official work. It was meant to be a compromise between both Hindi and Urdu. But later there was a struggle between Hindi, Urdu and Hindustani to gain acceptance as 'official language'. But ultimately Hindi emerged victorious and was recognized as the 'official language' of the country.[12]

The most ardent advocates for Hindi as the national language were the intellectuals from north India who represented the Hindus. They made an all out effort to replace Persianized Urdu, which was the administrative language with Hindi. This gave the impression that they were trying to equate Hindi with the Hindu population.[13] Apart from this they wanted to adopt a very Sanskritized version of Hindi and remove all traces of Muslim influence from the language. The Hindi movement was almost turned into a self-consciousness movement by the Hindus. Hindus made a concerted move to remove Hindustani and replace it with

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[12] ibid p. 45.
[13] ibid pp. 84-85.

Hindi. It was Tilak who suggested that Hindi in Devanagari script should be accepted as India's national language. As a number of members of the Constituent assembly were also leaders of the Hindi movement, this suggestion was readily accepted.

As the national movement became mass based many leaders from different part of the country thought, that regional languages must be used as a means of communication in order to get support from their own people and hence they must communicate in their own language. The art of printing increased the activity of the vernacular press. Hence the local leaders popularised their objectives through the local regional language. In order to adapt these languages to modern journalism they had to modernize them. And this lead to the growth of literature in the various Indian languages. This further lead to the idea of educating the people in the local languages as it would be able to reach a wider audience.[14] When Hindi was accepted as the 'official language' the non-Hindi areas immediately feared their domination and suppression by the Hindi speaking majority. These developments further lead to the strengthening of English as a medium of communication since it was seen as a neutral language which would not give any one region in the country an undue advantage over the others.

To begin with there was a great deal of confusion as to which language should be the 'national language'. As India has a number of regional languages which cover specific areas in the country. Selecting one language as the 'national language' would definitely have political implications and consequences for both the speakers of that language and

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[14] ibid pp. 81-84.

the speakers of other languages. The leaders of the country and the framers of the Constitution were eager to have one 'national language' so much so that their decision does not seem to have been the outcome of clear social and political deliberation. They seemed to have been carried away by their nationalistic aspiration and have not clearly contemplated on the effect that a 'national language' would have on a complex multilingual society; that India is. The leaders did not distinguish between 'common language', 'national language' and 'official language'. "Gandhi the most ardent proponent of a national language policy during the national movement advocated the acceptance of Hindustani as the "common language". For Nehru the same language appears as "all-India language". For C. Rajagopalachari it became "national language". Nehru however, perceived that all-India language as approximately and 'official language' as well as an interregional link language."[15]

An 'official language' must imply an accepted language for administration and as a means of communication between the Government and the governed. This language need not necessarily be used for external diplomatic relations. Whereas a 'common language' is one that is used as the code for communication through out the country and it is possible that the 'common language' and the 'national language' are not one and the same. In a multilingual society there can be a number of 'national languages' and only one of them will be recognized as the 'official language'. The language provisions in the Constitution are complicated, confusing and sometimes ambiguous. The Constitution states that the 'official language' of the state shall be Hindi in Devanagari script with international numerals. No where in the Constitution is the word 'national language' used. The Constitution states that for a period

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[15] ibid p. 37.

of fifteen years English "shall continue to be used"[16], used as 'official language' for all official purposes of the Union, along with Hindi. And after the expiry of fifteen years the Parliament would decide on the further course of action. The Official Language Act of 1963 provided that English along with Hindi "may continue to be used"[17], for all official purposes even after the fifteen years deadline. The Constitution also recognizes eighteen languages as having the "status of national languages"[18]. Whereas Hindi was to be regarded as the 'official language'. Confusion mounted when ministers and Hindi writers started referring to Hindi as the 'national language' or 'Rashtrabhasha' which can be interpreted to mean a synonym for 'official language' or that like state religion; a state language which has a unique status. The idea of Hindi having this special and unique status created discontentment among the advocates of other languages.

The reason for choosing Hindustani and later on Hindi as the 'official language' of the country are not very clear. One of the reasons suggested are that Hindi is the single Indian language which is spoken by the largest number of people. The Hindi heartland is essentially in North India and mostly along the Indo-Gangetic plains. Thus sentiment towards Hindi is also very much regionally based. But linguists have pointed out , that it is only by merging the various dialects of Hindi which are spoken all over North India, that Hindi has been projected as the largest spoken language. Apart from this there has been various attempts by Hindi intellectuals to give 'Hindi the official language', a distinctive character from the regional Hindi. They were trying to achieve two opposite goals

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[16] Basu, D. D. Introduction to the Constitution of India, (Edition 18), Prentice-Hall, New Delhi, 1997, pp.387-394.
[17] ibid pp. 387-394.
[18] ibid pp.387-394.

at the same time, on the one hand they were trying to control Hindi from its regional base i.e. North-India and on the other, they were trying to create a 'national Hindi' which would not be associated with any specific region. In this attempt they created a very standardized form of Hindi, which was more literary than colloquial.[19] They thought standardizing would create a 'national language' in the process they abstracted the language to such a level that it became difficult for its original speakers to identify with it.

They was a concerted effort to Sanskritise the language, in order to identify it with India. Simultaneously there was a move to purify the language from the influence of Urdu. They realized that the language was not developed as far as its vocabulary for scientific and technical terms were concerned. So a number of people were employed to coin new terms, make dictionaries and glossaries instead of just adapting them ordinarily absorbing them form English. This was with a view to make it the medium of instruction even for higher education. The language ended up so highly Sanskritised it was difficult for even those who knew the language.[20]

Paul Brass has suggested that the identification of Hindi with Hindu can be seen as a means of making it a link language through out the country. By identifying the language with the dominant religion they thought they could spread the language and gradually create a Hindu nation.[21] There is no doubt that most of the advocates of Hindi, were upper caste Hindus who were trying to consolidate their position of importance in the newly

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[19] Gupta, J. op.cit., p. 139.

[20] Natarajan, S. *Pertinent Facts*, Seminar, April 1965, pp. 13-15.

[21] Brass, P. Language, Religion and Politics in North India, Vikas Publishing House, Delhi, 1974. pp 15-16.

independent country and were making use of every possible means towards this end. Thus they even used language as a means towards this end. They not only identified Hindi with the dominant caste in the country, but also with, the dominant religion and used it as a means of reviving Hinduism. After partition many of upper caste Hindus were very embittered by the fact that, the Muslims had managed to carve out a State exclusively for themselves. So many of them decided that India must identify itself with Hinduism and this gave rise to dominant Hindu revivalist forces within the country.

Hindi began to be equated with Hindusim and the language was seen as an important means for India's reconstruction. Many leaders stressed the importance of Hindi for the development of the Hindu community. Lala Hansraj had once mentioned that there were three elements which were essential for the progress of the "Hindu jati"; "one, that its members feel one or having come from the same source; two commonality of religion and three a common language"[22] Their efforts to spread Hindi through out the country and at the same time identify it with the Hindu community can be seem from the nature and content of the Hindi text books which were prescribed for schools. Most of the lessons consisted of material representing Hinduism. The symbols, the myths, the presentation and interpretation of history, was all done in such a way that it projects Hindu identity. India was projected as a single 'nation' in these text books. There are repeated references to India's glorious past, when the country was rich and prosperous and how all this came to an end with the advent of the Mughals. There is a plea to return to the glorious past and this return involves the spread of Hindi as well. Thus text books

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[22] Kumar,K. *Hindu Revivalism and Education in North-Central India*, in Pannikkar, K. N. (ed.), Comunalism in India : History, Politics and Culture, Manohar, New Delhi, 1991, p.181.

became a major means of spreading Hindu revivalism and Hindi. This was not all, in their aim to differentiate between Hindi and Urdu they began associating these languages with Hinduism and Islam respectively. Their ultimate aim being to equate the term 'Indian' with 'Hindu'.[23]

The Constitution states that the State shall promote the spread of Hindi through out the country. The leaders somehow thought that the rest of the country would accept Hindi and learn it hence making it the link language between all regions of the country. The State has made use of every State machinery they could like radio, television, newspapers etc. in order to propagate Hindi. But they seemed to have overlooked the fact that Hindi has its regional basis as well. And it will be the Hindi heartland which will be dictating the way the language should be used. The people from the Hindi region will definitely have an edge over the rest of country as far as language is concerned. And if the official language of the Union is Hindi, they have more chances to dominate and control the functioning of the Union. This is what the rest of the country fears the most, that the Hindi heartland would usurp all the important and crucial decision making positions in the country only on the basis of their command over the 'official language', and the other voices would either be suppressed or neglected

Inspite of the fears being voiced and the various agitations against Hindi the State has managed to spread Hindi all over the country. Especially through radio and now more so with the help of television. There are so many television programmes in Hindi that one automatically picks up the language by just viewing. Another major source which has unwittingly

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[23] ibid pp. 181-185

spread Hindi is the Bombay Film Industry. The Hindi that is used in the movies is more colloquial than the 'standard Hindi' and easier to learn and understand. The popularity of Hindi movies is obvious, and this has helped the dissemination of the language though it was not started with this aim in mind. And since commercial cinema has really a very wide viewership of people from different sections of society it has been able to spread Hindi to all sections of society.

4.4 RECOVERY OF LANGUAGE : POLITICO-CULTURAL STRUGGLE

In a country like India there are bound to be a number of subnational loyalties. Especially in a democratic set up they are likely to be encouraged and grow rapidly. Only tough authoritarian measures seem to be capable of suppressing or discouraging them. One view claims that these subnational loyalties are detrimental to the integration and development of the country. Another view is that it is wrong to assume that subnational loyalties are necessarily inconsistent with national loyalty. In any society there are a number of cleavages, but it is not necessary that all these cleavages become politicized and mobilize themselves along these cleavages and even if they do so they may not lead to overt conflict. Besides even if there is such conflict it could lead to integration instead of disintegration.

Loyalties can either be civil or primordial. Civil loyalties are expressed through classes parties etc. And they are considered as a lesser threat than primordial loyalties. As Geertz puts it, civil loyalties rarely threatened to undermine the nation itself, though they may challenge existing forms of Government, whereas, the primordial loyalties threaten partition, irredentism or merger and hence pose a new definition of

national domain. The mere social segments of a society will not tell us about the political participation of these groups and its consequences for the integration of the country. The political impact of a primordial group to a large extent depends upon the politicization of hitherto unpoliticised group. After which importance has to be given to the way in which political interests are defined, the leadership of the group, the means of articulation of their interests and demands and the methods used for the fulfillment of these. Another important point to consider would be if the groups are willing to use violent means to achieve their ends. Whether the group interests are flexible and amenable to adjustment vis-à-vis other groups.[24]

People's love for language is as old as history of language itself. During colonial rule domination of the colonial language kept language rivalries under control even if it was only temporary. But after independence the question of replacement of colonial language by an indigenous language brought the language rivalry to the forefront once again. Especially because replacing an alien language with an indigenous language which would be 'national language' became a matter of prestige as it would remove the colonial language which was a sign of dominance. But the leaders had to balance the matter of prestige with the interest of the major language groups within a multilingual new State. The problem further increases when the new Government decides to expand communication and education in order to modernize. Hence the best way to increase literacy in the country would be to educate the people in their won language. It is true that changing from a colonial language to an indigenous language is not easy. For one there maybe many who still want the colonial language to continue, while others may want an

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[24] Gupta, J. op.cit., p. 6.

immediate change and in a multilingual State it will definitely generate intense language rivalry.[25]

Once the Constitution was adopted and Hindi was made the 'official language' of the country there was unrest among the other major linguistic groups. But at that time the main aim was to replace a colonial language with an indigenous one. The real trouble was caused by the constitutional provision that after fifteen years, only Hindi should be used a 'official language' and no English will be allowed to be used. This was seen by the other linguistic groups especially those from the South as an imposition by the dominant majority. The fear of North Indian hegemony loomed large over the minor linguistic groups. There was the fear that they would lose out in participating at the national level in every sphere of activity. It was obvious that those who belonged to the Hindi belt would definitely get a good head start over the others merely because they had command over the language. And if Hindi became the language of politics then there would be unequal representation of the various regions of the country at the Centre and the positions of authority and decision making would be mainly occupied by the people from the Hindi belt. The other linguistic groups feared that they would have no say in any of the policy decisions and all decision would be imposed on them by the Hindi majority. The natural fall out that anyone would expect from a Government dominated by representative from the Hindi region would be that all policies would favour that region and all the development projects would be concentrated in that area; which has been true to a certain extent since more money has been pumped into the Northern region than the Southern or especially the North-Eastern region. Even

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[25] ibid p 21

where development of the backward regions are concerned, more importance has been given to North India.

The other problem with having Hindi as the 'national language' was that it would be the language that would be identified with India internationally. Each language has attached to it, its own culture. Always a particular culture is identified with a language. So if Hindi was the 'national language' then the culture that is representative of the Hindi region would be taken to represent the 'national culture' of India and all the other cultures within the country would get marginalised. It is quite true that the picture that a foreigner would get of India is dominated by the culture of North India. And there has been an attempt to make the North Indian culture a pan-Indian culture by various political parties which are dominant in the Hindi region. All these attempts lead to a psychological fear of being marginalised and finally subsumed by the dominant culture. This fear lead to strengthening of primordial ties and primordial loyalties. One of the easiest cleavages along which political and cultural mobilization can take place instantly is along language lines. As soon as the minority linguistic groups felt their languages were not getting their due recognition and that Hindi was being imposed on them they began to agitate for better status for their language, freedom from domination of Hindi and recognition of a 'neutral' language like English as a means of communication; since English is the most widely known second language in the country and Hindi only comes second to it.

A CASE STUDY OF TAMIL

The fear of imposition of Hindi united the Tamil people like nothing else had done before. They saw it as a threat to their mother tongue.

Everyone is emotionally attached to their mother tongue and one of the easiest ways to mobilize people or even whip up a frenzy is on the basis of language. Tamilians have always been known for their fierce pride for their language, which they will defend with their lives if need arises.

In keeping with the Congress programme the ministry in Madras headed by C. Rajagopalachari introduced Hindi as a compulsory subject in high schools in 1937. This came to be the major turning point in the state's history. Immediately there was mass protest which pressurized the Government to such an extent that the Government was forced to declare Hindi an optional subject. The protests were mainly lead by E.V. Ramaswami Naicker and his 'Dravida Khazhagam' which included Annadurai and they took the protest to the streets and were imprisoned for this.[26] Rajagopalachari's intention of introducing Hindi in schools was to integrate the Tamilians with the national mainstream. Since it was decided that Hindi would be adopted as the 'national language' after independence; he felt that only with a proper knowledge of Hindi would the Tamilians play an important role at the Centre. He did not want the Tamilians to lag behind only because of their lack of knowledge of Hindi.[27] But along with this came another problem. Earlier when English was introduced as a subject it was the Brahmins; who already had a literary tradition behind them who made use of this opportunity, which resulted in a Government that was dominated by the Brahmins alone. This had lead to the formation of the 'Justice Party' by Ramaswami Naicker (which was later renamed 'Dravida Khazhagam') which fought for more representation of the backward and depressed classes in the Government. Now they feared that with the introduction of Hindi it

[26] Spratt, P. DMK in Power, Nachiketa Publications, Bombay, 1970, p. 29.
[27] Ramanujam, K.S. The Big Chance, Higginbothams, Madras, 1967, p. 38.

would not only mean domination by the Brahmins but the North Indians as well.[28] Thus the imposition of Hindi lead to a new political awakening in Tamil Nadu.

In reaction to the compulsory study of Hindi Ramaswami Naicker proposed the separation of Tamil Nadu form India. In 1940 a conference was held by his party at Triuvarur, where some delegates from Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka were also present, the objective was changed to 'Dravidanad' which was to include the four southern states - Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala - where the Dravidian languages were spoken. But this plan of a 'Dravidanad' was short-lived and once again the party began to concentrate on demanding for a separate Tamil Nadu.[29]

The opposition to Hindi profoundly affected the politics of Tamil Nadu, it stirred a great deal of political and cultural activity within Tamil Nadu. It stimulated enthusiasm for writing and speaking in Tamil, so a number of literary works were produced. In 1949, the organisation split and the dissidents led by Annadurai formed the 'Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam' (DMK), as a result of disagreement over Ramaswami Naicker's orthodox politics. In 1950, when the Congress Government again introduced Hindi as a compulsory subject in high schools , the DMK compelled the Government through their agitation , to make Hindi an optional subject within months of it being introduced as a compulsory one. The DMK was able to mobilize a large number of students to take part in anti-Hindi

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[28] Spratt, P. op.cit., p. 34.
[29] ibid p. 35.

campaigns and the students contributed enormously to the growth of the DMK.[30]

To begin with C. Rajagopalachari as a member of the Congress Government in Tamil Nadu, in 1937 had advocated the imposition of Hindi as a compulsory subject in Tamil Nadu in order to link the state with the national mainstream. But later on he became one of the most ardent supporters of the movement that wanted to maintain English in its status of a link language. Rajagopalachari formed the 'Swatantra Party', and he and his party played a very important role in the anti-Hindi agitation in Tamil Nadu. The famous slogan "English ever - Hindi never", has been attributed to him.[31] Rajagopalachari maintained that in order to maintain the unity of the country English had to continue in its present status. He thought bilingualism would only increase the problems and imposing Hindi would increase the tension between the linguistic group within the country. Imposition of Hindi would lead to the exclusion of a large section of the population who would resent it and therefore revolt. It would be undemocratic to give one language a higher status in comparison with the other languages. Rajagopalachari maintained that if the country had to be saved and prevented from dividing and subdividing English had to be used as the link language for all official communication through out the country.[32]

During the visit of the Official Language Commission headed by B.G. Kher in 1956, the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K.Kamaraj had told the Commission the English should be principal language till 1965 and

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[30] ibid pp. 38-39.
[31] Ramanujam, K. S. op.cit., p. 37.
[32] Rajagopalachari, C. *English For Unity*, Seminar, April 1965, pp. 18-26.

continue as subsidiary language for some years even after 1965, especially for communication between the Centre and the non-Hindi States and for inter-state communication. On October 13th 1957, the DMK gave a call for 'Protest Day' against the imposition of Hindi. A number of meetings were held all over the state. The Government was condemned for their inaction. During the meeting it was stated that the imposition of Hindi was a deliberate plan to subordinate the South permanently. They claimed that the Constitution was enacted hastily without taking into account the views of the South Indians. They urged the Government to use regional languages within the state and English for communication with the Centre and between the states. After which some leaders like Rajagopalachari and Ramawamy Iyer and others appealed to Prime Minister Nehru to step in and settle the confusion created by the imposition of Hindi as they thought that only the Prime Minister could solve the matter now. But when the Prime Minister visited Madras in 1958 the DMK organised a massive black flag demonstration against Nehru. The demonstrators were ruthlessly dealt with and most of the DMK leaders were taken into custody.[33]

The DMK once again started demanding for a separate 'Dravidastan' independent of the Union of India; which included all the areas regarded as Dravidian i.e. Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh; but separation for Tamil Nadu alone if necessary. In 1960 the DMK observed 'Separation Day' and a number of its leaders including Annnadurai were jailed as a consequence.[34] The DMK has involved a large number of students in their anti-Hindi struggle, so much so that they became the largest participants in the movement. The most violent

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[33] Ramanujam, K. S. op.cit., pp. 42-44.
[34] Spratt, P. op.cit., p. 39.

and massive out burst against Hindi was in 1965. It was in 1965 according to the Constitution that the change over from English to Hindi was supposed to be complete and final. From 1965 Hindi was supposed to be adopted as the only 'official language' of the country. As long as Nehru was alive he managed to keep the Hindi fanatics under control and was able to assure the non- Hindi speaking people that their interests would never suffer. But after his death the Hindi lobby began to pressurize the Government which explains the inaction on the part of the Government when some "...Central leaders who in their wisdom decided to celebrate the technical ushering in of Hindi as the official language of the Union and chose Republic Day for the purpose..."[35] This was the main cause that triggered the violent anti-Hindi protests in Tamil Nadu. The movement was low key and had not taken any drastic measures. Once the announcement was made that 26th January was going to be celebrated as the day for change over to Hindi from English all hell broke loose and linguistic chauvinism came to the forefront.

Inspite of this the DMK leaders did not want to break law on a large scale as they were unsure of the outcome. They had planned to organize a few protest meetings, but only after informing the police and with their permission. They were going to hoist black flags on private houses. The night, before the top DMK leaders were arrested as a precautionary measure. As their leaders were arrested the party workers were not able to do much. But this did not stop the State machinery from coming down harshly on any sign or symbol that was thought to represent anti-Hindi sentiments. Where ever black flags were seen the police entered those houses and harassed the residents. Police entered college premises even as the college authorities asked them not to and arrested students as a

[35] Chitta Ranjan C.N., *The Language Mess-Who is Guilty ?*, Mainstream, Feruary 1965, p. 7.

precautionary measure[36]. All this infuriated the people. They saw the Government as using repressive measures and force in order to enforce Hindi on the people. This lead to the intensification of the agitation. The students had taken out a rally and had requested to meet the chief minister. But the Chief Minister M. Baktavatsalam refused to meet the student representatives. This angered the students and they intensified their agitation.[37]

The students refused to allow Hindi to be used with in the state in any manner. To begin with they boycotted classes in order to ensure that the Centre is not able to arbitrarily impose Hindi into the education system. No Hindi movies were allowed to be screened within the state, Hindi programmes being broadcast by All India Radio were disrupted. The NCC wing of the state, refused to take commands in Hindi and insisted that the commands should be given in English. The NCC even refused to take part in the Republic Day Parade. The students burnt the Constitution as they saw it as the instrument which legitimized the imposition of Hindi. They organised mass demonstration and rallies where anti-Hindi slogans were shouted. They even got the general public involved in their movement. When things took a violent turn, the police had to either tear gas the students, resort to lathi charge or even open fire on them in order to control the mob. The students usually retaliated by throwing stones at the police. There were instances when the violence that the agitation had set ablaze took its extreme form with people committing self-immolation on the anti-Hindi issue. About three cases of the self-immolation was reported during the agitation.[38]

[36] ibid p 8
[37] Ramanujam, K. S. op.cit., p. 49.
[38] ibid pp 52,56

Tamil Nadu was the only state in country where anti-Hindi movement became a mass movement that it included people from all walks of life and all sections of society. The extensive protests made Centre take notice that there were voice against the imposition of Hindi, which they seemed to have temporarily forgotten after Nehru's death. This agitation made provision for the use of the regional languages within the state and the continuance of English as 'associate official language' till the non-Hindi states decided otherwise.

4.5 MODERNITY AND LINGUISTIC PAROCHIALISM

One of the important aims of modernity was its universalizing effects. Modernity wanted to remove all differences and make everything one single homogenous whole. As the ideas of modernity spread from Europe to the rest of the world, and as the modernization process got under way all over the world; all the differences between nations would be wiped out and the world would be reduced to a single undifferentiated unit. The advocates of modernity thought that modernity, would bring an end to all the problems created due to differences and people would give up their differences and become part of the new world based on reason and intellect.

What these advocates forgot was, that, there are certain things to which people are emotionally and psychologically attached and under no condition will they give these up. There are certain primordial ties to which people have intense attachments. These loyalties involve a lot of the personal sentiments of the people concerned. It is a part of them, as

they are born into it and it is what they are. These primordial ties are those that give them an identity and it is what they themselves identify with. Even if the process of modernization were to effect these primordial ties people will adapt these ties to the changed conditions as a result of modernization. There is no way people will be willing to give up these ties permanently. So each nation depending on the number of primordial ties or the degree of importance given to each primordial tie will accordingly adapt modernity to suit these ties and simultaneously make changes in the functioning of the ties in order to adapt to the changed situation. It is exactly because of this reason that modernity does not reproduces itself identically in all nations.

Language is one of the ties that binds a group of people together. Language gives a person his identity, his culture and his place in society. A person is very sentimental about his mother tongue that is what makes him part of a group and makes him distinct from the others. Since language is something you learn soon after birth and stays with you till you die people are loyal to their mother tongue. They will defend their language with their lives as the speakers have a sense of pride and a sense of belonging to the language. In India after independence, it was decided that a common universal language should be used through the country. The leader agreed on Hindi as it was the language spoken by the largest section of the population. They decided to make it the 'official language' giving it special status. Since most of the speakers of Hindi were concentrated in the north the people in the rest of the country feared their domination. They saw Hindi as a threat, a means of marginalising the smaller groups and thus negating their unique identity. It was seen as a means of ignoring the different languages that existed in the country. Hindi was seen as a measure to create a uniform language for

communication which they feared would be achieved at the cost of their mother tongue. The minority languages would not have any place of importance when compared to this universalizing language. More than anything it was the fear of been deprived of something that one was emotionally attached to. Fear of losing one's identity and being engulfed by the dominant group lead to assertion of the various minority language groups for their rightful position in the newly formed State.

Once a language asserted itself, a number of other languages followed suit not wanting to be left behind in the race. A new pride and identification developed for the mother tongue. People became almost fanatical about their language. Narrow loyalties developed which further subdivided the country on the basis of language. The fear of losing control over one's language and identity was so great that people were not willing to look at the country as a whole. The matter was further complicated by the insistence of the Hindi lobby on having only Hindi as the 'official language'. The language question had become a matter of pride and honour for both the sides. This whole episode gave rise to linguistic parochialism. People blindly propagated their language and were not open to any other ideas or suggestions. To begin with there were a few languages which were demanding the 'status of national language'. But as time went more and more languages joined this group. The number of amendment in Constitution in the Schedule regarding languages, is proof enough to show that the language problem is here to stay. Every few years a new group of people demand that their language must also have 'status of national language', pressure tactics are used. The Government has no choice but to ultimate succumb to their demands and make the necessary amendment in Eighth Schedule. This question of language, has further divided the country into tiny bits as, the question no

longer arises only at the national level but, has also started appearing within each State of the Union.

4.6 MODERNITY AND IDENTITY

It is evident that if cultural identity is threatened in any form there will an immediate reaction in the form of reasssertion of that identity. Hegemonizing tendency will be opposed vehemently and numerous efforts will be made for creating a space for plural identities to exist together. Assertion of pluralities or differences can have both positive and negative implication.

Asserting different identities is a means of challenging the unifying and hegemonic attempts. It means a regaining identity and staking the right to express individual differences. Allowing the co-existience of various cultural identities is an affirmation of cultural richness and an attempt to allow cultural identities to express themselves in their own unique way. There can be negative effects of allowing cultural differences to manifest themselves. It may lead to exclusivist identity and the insulation of a particular group from other cultural groups. In its extreme form, assertion of cultural identity can lead to parochialism, which may result in tension both latent and manifest between various cultural groups. The question that thus arises, is that if there is a possibility of accommodating pluralism with modernity. If it is possible to have an alternative model of modernity which is sensitive to difference and make enough space for cultural differences without hegemony.

5. TOWARDS AN ALTERNATIVE VISION OF MODERNITY AND IDENTITY

We have understood that the modern age began with the Enlightenment in Europe, which developed as a reaction towards the traditional world view which was dominated by religious belief and controlled by the clergy. With Enlightenment developed modernity - new rational, scientific ways of looking at the world. This lead to development and changes in the political, economic, social and cultural aspects of life. A number of associated institutions also developed like nation-state, capitalist economy based on private property, industrialization, urbanization, specialization and division of labour, change from religious culture to secular culture etc. These institutions first developed in Europe and then spread to the rest of the world. The process of the development and spread of the ideas of modernity is known as modernization and this was possible because of global inter- communication and inter-action.

With the beginning of the modern age, especially with Industrial revolution, Europe became a prosperous country. The rest of the countries also wanted to enjoy the gain of economic development. Thus began the spread of a world wide phenomena, which was hence called globalization. Since the modern institutions were borrowed from Europe by the other countries of the world; modernity was seen as having a universalizing tendency as the same institutions were reproduced all over the world. Modernity was seen as having a homogenizing effect which would lead to the creation of a single, uniform, undifferentiated standardized society on a global scale.

But modernity did not reproduce itself in the same manner all over the world. Each country did borrow the modern institution, but adapted them to suit their social conditions. Thus there is no universal standard manifestation of modernity, there are varied manifestations of the modernization process. This actually lead to further differentiation between countries and within countries. But there are certain features of modernity which can more or less be found in all countries irrespective of location and stage of economic development - importance to critical reason, science and technology, upholding the ideals of progress, freedom, toleration and secularism etc.

One of the most important ideas that developed as a result of modernity is that of individual identity. Great emphasis is laid on individualism and individual identity. But as a result of modernity an individual acquired plurality of identities. This was more so when modern institutions are adapted to traditional societies like India. Since importance was given to an individual as a rational thinking being in the modern age, there was a distinction made between the private and public sphere. Likewise the individual had to learn to manage separate identities in the public and private spheres; this did lead to tension while trying to manage the plurality of identities. The tension and conflict between plural identities increased when the institution of nation-state became an universal ideal. Being a product of modernity its aim was homogenizing and unifying all identities of the citizens within its territory to have a single 'national identity'. When the nation-state embarked on this project of theirs, the individual saw it as a threat to their unique identities which was a part of their cultural heritage and began to perceive loss of these identities as a loss of their culture. And thus began the strain and tension between the 'universal national identity' and the various 'local, contextual identities'.

All the countries of the world were affected and influenced by the changes brought about by modernity and India was no exception. India's first brush with the modernization process was only after being colonized by the British. The British brought in many modern ideas and even modern institutions, even if they were in their rudimentary forms. Many Indian were able to travel abroad for higher studies. They came back home with modern ideas like freedom, independence and this was formed the foundation for our freedom struggle. But there was a great deal of confusion among our leaders as to, how much of the modern ideas and civilization must be accepted and adapted to the Indian conditions. Many of them were worried about the consequences it would have on Indian tradition and feared a loss of the traditional roots of India. They were quite a divided lot, some leaders saw all Western ideas as evil and a threat to Indian civilization, some were in between trying to work out a compromise between Indian civilization and Western civilization; and there were still others, who has accepted the superiority of the West and wanted to model India as far as possible on the basic patterns laid out by the West.

Thus, we have a contrast between Nehru and Gandhi. Gandhi was against following the West in any matter and wanted India to develop her own indigenous means which were part of her traditional heritage. Gandhi was against the adoption of modern institutions and wanted to revive and reactivate India's own traditional institutions and make them function efficiently. Whereas Nehru was enamoured with the West. And wanted to develop India into a modern nation-state which was at par with any of the countries of the West. After India gained independence Nehru undertook his ambitious project of converting India into a modern nation-state. Thus he encouraged rapid economic development which included industrialization on a large scale. Nehru had Socialist leanings

and therefore introduced planning as means to develop the country. He encouraged the development of science and technology which could help in the progress of the country. Nehru wanted India to develop into an industrially advanced country.

Being a product of modernity and accepting the aims and values of modernity, Nehru wanted India to be a secular modern nation-state. Thus he accepted the goals of a modern nation-state which was to unify and homogenize all the citizens within the State to bear allegiance to the State first and last. The partition of the country had devastated Nehru and he was of the view that only when Indians have a strong 'national identity' will it be a strong State, without fear of further partitions. So he launched his 'nation-building' agenda to unify the country so that it had a common identity, common culture, common language etc., which would bind the people together and keep the country as one whole. But Nehru's plan had some bad side effects. The modernist nationalist's agenda to universalize and unify was doubted. There was a fear among the different groups within the country that, while trying to unify they were actually imposing a certain identity and thus, trying to undermine the importance of the multiple identities within the country. It was seen as a calculated move on the part of the dominant group within the country to impose their hegemony over the rest of the country. Thus there was a sudden out burst, in which the various identities began asserting themselves and questioning the designs of the modern nation-state.

Linguistic identity which has been dealt in this dissertation, is an assertion of language identity against the aim of the modernist nationalists to have Hindi, as the universal language for communication through out the country. Hindi was selected to be the 'official language' since it is the language spoken by the largest number of people in the

country. But the Hindi that was being promoted by the State was a standardized, abstraction almost an ideal typical construct of the language, and was very different from the colloquial variety.

Language makes possible the development, elaboration, the transmission (particularly in its written form) the accumulation of culture as a whole. It is with the help of language that we build up the world we live in and no two languages are similar in the way they represent social reality. As a result of these factors, any threat to language is perceived as a threat to culture itself. The case study of Tamil, shows the way in which imposition of Hindi was feared and as a result opposed. Acceptance of Hindi as the only 'official language' was equated with the acceptance of the hegemony of dominant upper caste Hindus of North India. And at the same time as giving, a higher status to Hindi and a lower one to regional languages.

The assertion of various identities has put the agenda and aim of a modern nation-state under scrutiny. The modern nation-state is essentially one that unifies and homogenizes all identities within it. But under the present conditions, means and ways must be found to accommodate the various conflicting identities, without allowing them to become a threat to the unity of the country.

The current question to cope with, is the fate of modernity and nation-building in India. One of the prime aim of modern nation-state was to formulate and implement policies that would help to build a homogenous unified modern nation-state. And this was the vision of the modernist nationalists including, Nehru. But from the way in which plurality of identities are asserting themselves the concept of nation-state as given to us by modernity, seems to be useless and redundant in today's world.

There are numerous groups based on caste identity, linguistic identity, ethnic identity etc., who are demanding that the State recognize them as independent identities instead of clubbing them together with some other larger group. In some cases they have taken their demands to the street, made them public and in some cases even indulged in acts of violence - hence the State has been in no position to turn a blind eye to their demands. But if they recognize all such demands then the modern nation-state will fail to meet the primary objectives for which it was created. Thus the modern nation-state will lose, its meaning and importance. This is a view that one can adopt, if one strictly follows the idea and vision of a modern nation-state, as an integral part of the project of modernity

On the other hand one can try and see if there is any means of compromising and reconciling modernity and plurality. If it is possible to have a more humanistic vision of modernity, instead of its cold agenda, to create undifferentiated, unified, universal identities and citizens who are rational, scientific, critical beings almost devoid of any kind of emotions and attachments. Seen like this the project of modernity seems detached distant and harsh with more negative implications than positive ones. We must try to find out if it is possible to accommodate plurality within the project of modernity.

As far as Indian modernist nationalism is concerned, we must make them more sensitive to cultural differences and make explicit the importance these cultural identities have for the individual concerned. Try to see possibilities with these differences and find means of reconciling these differences in such a way that they can co-exist with the 'national identity' and not necessarily come into conflict with it. Find means of meeting the

ambitions of these independent identities without this resulting in non-fulfillment of national ambitions.

India is a large and diverse country. And one cliché we hear very often is, "Unity in Diversity". What has happened after independence and after becoming a modern nation-state, is that, there has been a glorification of the idea of unity and a simultaneous suppression of the diversities within the country. The emphasis on unity has been so great, that we seemed have forgotten to celebrate the differences. It may be that the fear of fragmentation, has lead to the drive to homogenize and unify the country as one undifferentiated whole. We must learn to accept the fact that there are cultural differences and be more sensitive and tolerant towards them. This is easier said than done especially on an individual level. But the State can foster policy that can try to strike a balance between recognizing the diversity within the country and maintaining the unity of the country so that it can continue to function as a single whole. This again isn't an easy task, but is better than homogenizing policies which will create unnecessary tension and lead to conflict between the various groups within the country. The country has survived for centuries inspite of its diversity, there is no reason why it cannot continue to do so as a modern state.

The first half of the twentieth century was dominated by modernism - a movement that rejected the legacy of the past and sought to create a new world with the help of technological progress. It rejected tradition, it was a culture of innovation and change. But now in the latter half of the twentieth century, things seem to have come a full circle. Modernity is on the retreat, there is a new movement that seeks to recover tradition, a world which seems to prefer stability to change. Postmodernist believe

that modernism is an "imperial affair".[1] Postmodernism is "a fragmented movement in which a hundred flowers may bloom. Such people might also argue that while modernism was a product of a particular Western culture, postmodernism heralds the recognition of a plurality of cultures."[2] There is a loss of rational social coherence and identities are marked by fragmentation, multiplicity and indeterminacy. Modernism lead towards intellectual and political domination in the name of science and progress, whereas postmodernism can be seen as a form of liberation, in which fragmentation and plurality of cultures allow diverse perspectives. Postmodernism allows us to focus on diverse and contradictory trends which were glossed over by sociological theories of modernity and modernization. "It is opposed to all forms of metanarratives (including Marxism, Fruedianism and various totalizing metatheories of history or scientific progress stemming from the Enlightenment), whilst paying close attention to 'other world' and 'other voices' (women, gays, blacks, colonized peoples) with their own histories"[3]

Enlightenment allowed man to emancipate himself from the community and tradition of the Middle Ages, as a result of which his individual freedom was lost. Enlightenment lead to affirmation of the idea 'self without God'. The postmodern theological ideas reaffirm a belief in God but without abandoning reasoning powers.[4] Mass production, mass consumerism, big cities, sprawling housing estates and the nation-state all of which were unique and utterly characteristic of modernity are now

[1] Thompson, K. 'Social pluralism and Postmodernity' in Hall et.al. (ed.) Modernity and Its Futures, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1992, p.222.
[2] Gott, R. quoted in ibid p.222.
[3] ibid p.227.
[4] Harvey, D. quoted in ibid p.238.

declining. Features of postmodernism such as flexibility diversity, differentiation, mobility, communication decentralization are increasing.

Postmodernism revels in fragmentation, ephemerality and discontinuity. It encourages and prefers differences over uniformity. It developed mainly as a reaction against the universalizing and unifying tendencies in that order. In its attempt to have uniformity in every aspect of life, it overlooked, neglected and suppressed the differences that naturally existed everywhere. One theory, one idea which was usually Western, was accepted and was imposed all over the world, without allowing any variations. Postmodernism gave space and opportunity for differences to express themselves. Those who had been suppressed and rendered voiceless by modernity were allowed to express themselves.

Modernity always emphasized national factor, national culture etc., since the factors that represented that nation-state were considered superior to all the local and contextual factors. Under modernity the universal national culture was all important and representative of the culture of the nation-state, which undermined the various local cultures. Now under conditions of postmodernity multiplicity, plurality and difference are the keys words. Each factor and culture has its own importance in its own respective and relative context. There cannot be any single idea that is right and universal, each idea has to be contextualized and will be applicable only in that context and in no other. Universal culture is being replaced by popular local culture.

According to Jameson under the current condition there is an emergence of a whole range of small groups, which are non-class, but politically active. He says that people can easily identify with groups more easily than they can identify with large amorphous classes. Classes no longer

function as 'agents' or 'subjects' of history. The idea that universal groups based on class will form, and people will identify with them irrespective of their other identities, and thus help class to function as agents of history has now been abandoned. Today's reality is that there are a plurality of protest groups and social movements which can effortlessly attract allegiance and offer an identity.[5]

According to Lyotard the postmodern conditions one where there is plurality. Plurality is irreducible. One cannot unite these pluralities or give them an ultimate meaning, which would become an attempt to unify and universalize, and would thus, be violating plurality. Under the present condition world scale consensus on world view and values is most unlikely as pluralism is irreversible. The world is made of heterogeneous groups who have their own world views and values which are firmly grounded in their respective cultural tradition. Hence it is impossible to club these diverse groups together and impose on them uniformity of any kind.[6] Modernity emphasized on detachment, knowledge was not contextualised, it was free from it and universal. Knowledge is not something free and pure, it is influenced by the civilization, culture specific of a class, race, genders, of its producers. Therefore one cannot have grand general theories which are applicable in a similar fashion everywhere. Postmodernism is against totalizing general theory and the attempt to unify.

Postmodernism also has its own dilemmas and problems. Postmodernism thrives on plurality, it allows the right to express the difference and the uniqueness inherent in any group, in any aspect.

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[5] Referred to in, McLennan, G. 'The Enligtenment Project Revisited', in Hall et.al.(ed). op.cit.,p.334.
[6] Referred to in, ibid p.335.

"Accepting postmodernism means accepting cultural relativism as a sensible basis for social observation and this necessarily requires the acceptance of cognitive relativism (i.e. the view that there can be no such thing as universal principles of validity, truth or rationality)."[7] This could make things very difficult, if there aren't some basic principles and rules that are common between all human beings, then interaction and intercommunication becomes very difficult. If every individual judged every act and behaved in ways that are only acceptable to their respective culture, then any kind of cross-cultural activity would either be impossible or ridden with difficulties. As both Loytard and Bauman say, that since postmodernism accepts that behaviour, ideas, values etc. are firmly grounded in the respective cultural tradition; therefore communication across traditions becomes a major problem of our times. And there are no easy solutions to this problem, which is here to stay with us for a long, long time.

Like modernity earlier, postmodernity has also affected every aspect of our existence. Under conditions of postmodernity identity has become fragmented leading to plurality of identities. In today's world where difference are given more importance, the unified stable identity is becoming fragmented; thus no longer composed of a single, but of several, sometimes contradictory and unresolved identities. The very process of identification, through which we project ourselves into our cultural identities, has become more open ended, variable and problematic. Thus in postmodern times one is conceptualized as having no fixed, essential or permanent identity. Identity becomes transient, is formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways we are represented or addressed in the cultural systems which surround us. An

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[7] ibid p.336.

individual assumes different identities, which are not unified. Within us are contradictory identities pulling in different directions so that our identification is constantly shifted around. "The fully unified completely secure and coherent identity is a fantasy. Instead, as the system of meaning and cultural representation multiply, we are confronted by a bewildering, fleeting multiplicity of possible identities, any one of which we could identity with - at least temporarily"[8]

The Postmodern conditions have lead to plurality of identities or multiple identities. As a result this may give rise to situations in which the plurality of the identity might cause tension and strain on the individual when confronted with the question of identification. In a situation where the multiple identities enter into direct conflict, then the identity with which the individual will, identify with; will be the one that prevails over the other identities.

Theorists have argued that the general effect of globalising process has been to weaken and undermine national forms of cultural identity. They argue that there is evidence of loosening of strong identification with the national culture and strengthening of other cultural ties and allegiances 'above' and 'below' the level of the nation-state. National identities remain strong especially with respect to things like legal citizenship rights, but local regional and community identities have become more significant; though it has been observed that global identification sometimes begins to displace national identity.[9] The phenomena of local, regional and contextual identities becoming important can be seen all over the world. Various groups based on race, religion, ethnie, language etc., are asserting their identity and making demands on the State.

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[8] Hall,S. *'The Question of Cultural Identity'*, in Hall et.al. (ed). op.cit., p.277.
[9] McLennan,G. *'The Enligtenment Project Revisited'*, in Hall et.al. (ed). op.cit.,p.302.

Bauman in his book "Legislators and Interpreters", say that, postmodernity refers to a distinct quality of intellectual climate, to a distinctly new meta-cultural stance, to a distinct self-awareness of the changing era. One of the basic elements of this self-awareness is the realization, that modernity is a closed chapter in history, which can now be seen with retrospective knowledge of its practical accomplishments as much as its theoretical hopes. It rearranges our knowledge of modernity and redistributes the importance assigned to its various characteristics. It brings to the forefront such aspects that went unnoticed by modernity. Things that were taken-for-granted in the past, in the modern period, now are given importance and thus makes the postmodern period problematic.[10]

Pluralism is one of the most important features of the postmodern condition. Pluralism isn't something that developed recently but it was always present, but the project of modernity chose to ignore the plurality that was present. Under the conditions of postmodernity this plurality is being recognized and given the importance that it was earlier denied. Pluralism is a reality of our present times, and we cannot simply wish this experience away. The very definition of reality is dependent on the situation and is relative to the situation. Thus there are no universal definitions of reality.

During the modern era the intellectuals engaged themselves in the project of making universal standards for everything and trying to prove the superiority of, the Western ideas, rationality, morality, aesthetic, rules of civilized life etc. The postmodern era has abandoned this project. Instead

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[10] Bauman, Z. Legislators and Interpreters, Polity Press, U.K., 1987, p.119.

it tries to reconcile itself to a life under conditions of permanent and unlimited uncertainty, a life in which there are unlimited quantity of competing forms of life. Bauman has discussed the role of intellectuals under conditions of modernity and postmodernity in detail. Bauman says that to begin with intellectuals under modernism functioned as 'legislators'. They were the ones who decided and established what was universal, rational and what had to be followed on a world wide basis. Once these 'legislators' gave their sanction to certain ideas, views and values, the rest of the world began to subscribe to these ideas. The intellectuals had the capacity to 'legislate' only when the Western society dominated over the rest of the world and when there was a possibility and hope for a unified homogenized world.

But today their power to legitimize and legislate seems to be getting progressively eroded. Under postmodernism, plurality flourishes and thus the intellectuals cannot formulate and impose any of their universal ideas. Pluralism is here to stay, and this is a fact that everyone has to accept. Everything has its own context and is right in that context. There can be no universal idea of what is right and wrong. Everything has to be understood in its own relative perspective. Thus Bauman assigns the intellectuals a more humble role - that of 'interpreters', they have to interpret everything in accordance with the relative culture in which it is grounded. The intellectuals have no choice but to accept the infinitely plural world. And as 'interpreters' of different cultural traditions they must help promote understanding between the different cultures which will ultimately contribute to a better life for the peoples of the world. Bauman says that one has to accept that the current situation of plurality is irreversible and that as a result there can be not common world view. As each view will be wholly dependent on the respective group's cultural tradition. This sudden emergence of plurality and multiplicity is seen as

a reaction against the universal modernizing tendencies. And the idea which is progressively getting disillusioned, is the certainty that was once grounded in the obvious superiority of Western society.

"The typically postmodern view of the world is, in principle one of an unlimited number of models or order, each one generated by a relatively autonomous set of practices. Order does not precede practices and hence cannot serve an outside measure of their validity. Each of the many orders makes sense solely in terms of the practices which validate it. In each case, validation brings in criteria which are developed within a particular tradition, they are upheld by the habits and beliefs of a 'communication of meanings' and admit of no other tests of legitimacy. Criteria described above as 'typically modern' are no exceptions, to this general rule, they are ultimately validated by one of the many possible 'local traditions' and their historical fate depends on the fortunes of the tradition in which they reside. There are criteria for evaluating local practices which are situated outside tradition, outside 'localities'. Systems of knowledge may only be evaluated from 'inside' their respective traditions. If from the modern point of view, relativism of knowledge was a problem to be struggled against and eventually over come in theory and in practices from the postmodern point of view relativity of knowledge (that is, its 'embeddedness' in its own communally supported tradition) is a lasting feature of the world."[11]

"South Asia has always been a salad bowl of cultures. For long it has avoided -to the exasperation of modern nationalists and statists of the right and the left- the American style melting pot model and its individualistic assumptions and anti-communitarian bias. In a salad the

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[11] ibid p.4.

ingredients retain their distinctiveness, but each ingredient transcends its individuality through the presence of others. In a melting pot, primordial identities are supposed to melt. Those that do not, are expected to survive as coagulates and are called nationalities or minorities; they are expected to dissolve in the long run. Much of the recent violence in South Asia can be traced to the systematic efforts being made to impose the melting pot model upon time-worn Indian realities."[12]

The above quote clearly states the cause for the tension that has existed within the State since independence. The dominant Hindi speaking twice born Hindus, defined themselves as the norm-setters, value givers and the cultural mainstream. Thus the primordial groups on the periphery of the mainstream were threatened of either being merged with this mainstream or being excluded. Which lead them to assert their identity, and demand the State's recognition and accommodation. Primordial ties are asserted because of the process of marginalization, actual or imagined because the peripheral communities feel threatened about dominance of the mainstream in all aspects of life.

One thing that has to accepted is that there are primordial loyalties within the Indian State, which will be asserted, as a means of expressing popular aspiration, and the State will not be able to either suppress them forever, or be indifferent to them. Under such conditions it is futile to think of India as a 'single nation'. It is better to give up the universalizing and homogenizing aim and accept the situation of multiplicity. India is a State made up of many nations under one political system. This does not necessarily mean that these different nations will be a threat to the integrity and unity of the country. The idea of a modern nation-state is

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[12] Nandy et al., Creating a Nationality - Ramjanabhumi Movement and Fear of Self, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1995, p.vi .

only about two hundred years old. Whereas India has a civilization and a traditional heritage that is five thousand years old, which proves that India inspite of its diversity can function as a single political unit. The unity of the country has be realized through its differences.

Earlier the attempts was to link citizenship and nationality, so that each State had only one national identity. But now national identity is understood as the urge to maintain one's language, culture, customs etc. and this had lead to the development of various nations within one State. But this does not imply that each nationality wants a separate state, several nations can co-exist under the same political system. So there is a move to delink nationality and citizenship, which is also necessary if the State is to remain democratic. This will not be a threat to to the integrity of the State as, it is possible to construct a political culture independent of national and ethnic origins based on multi-culturalism. But delinking citizenship from national identity is only possible if the people will it.[13]

Language is the means through which the culture of the community is preserved and transmitted. Language has meaning only when it is used in the respective cultural system. Language is social, not an individual system. It pre-exists us. To speak a language is not only to express out inner most, thoughts it is also to express a vast range of meanings which are already embedded in our language and cultural system. Thus any threat to language is usually perceived as a threat to culture. Acceptance of Hindi as the exclusive 'national' language would mean the relegation to the background of a number of mother tongues; which is not acceptable to those who have thus been relegated to the background. For a speaker

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[13] Oommen, T.K. *Citizenship and National Identiy in India: Towards a feasible Linkage*, in T.K. Oommen (ed.) Citizenship and National Identity: From Colonialism to Globalism, Sage Publication, India,1997, p.144.

his language is more a matter of identity and group loyalty. The language policy in independent India has created a hierarchy of languages. At the top of this hierarchy is Hindi; followed by the 'regional' languages -those languages whose speech communities have politically mobilized themselves into groups with considerable influence; and then are the subaltern and other language which are not accorded recognition by the State. "The regional languages complain of Hindi imperialism but they indulge in their brand of linguistic imperialism against the languages of subaltern groups...The whole ethos is one of perpetuating the cultural hegemony of the dominant nationalities at different levels."[14]

We have to accept the multiplicity of languages as another expression of the richness of our culture. Varied linguistic expression is another expression of plurality. One must be more sensitive and willing to accept difference as an inevitable part of reality. The plurality of nations within India must be allowed to manifest themselves. The State must ensure that all citizens have equal access to all oppotunities whether economic, political or cultural. The State will have to sincerely pursue the policy of secularism, by allowing the multiple nationalities to grow and flourish within the country. Maybe that if this freedom is allowed to the various groups, they will easily identify as being part of the Indian political system. If all nationalities have equal access to economic and political opportunities, through legal democratic means, then, the secessionist tendencies will be minimized. It is through the diversity that exist within the country we will have to find unity and build it. The task is neither easy not can it be achieved overnight. It will take a great deal of effort on the part of the political leadership to see that these differences are not

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[14] ibid p.162.

unduly exploited and that the system is as egalitarian as possible. Undoubtedly there will be tensions between the various nationalities, the State must step in to diffuse it, if it has to keep India as a single political unit.

"Indian cannot build an authentic nation-state by building a cultural mainstream reducing the numerous collectives of the periphery to the status of marginals. We can only have a nation-state with multiple cultural 'centres'. In pursuing this task the different cultural collectivties should be encouraged to nurture and foster their specific identities...The very notion of cultural mainstream implies both the process of expansionism and exclusivism and therefore the only viable alternative for India is to build authentic cultural pluralism reinforcing our multiple cultural streams."[15]

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[15] Oommen, T.K. *Insiders and Outsiders in India: Primordial Collectivins and Cultural Pluralism in Nation-Building*, in Internation Sociology Vol.1, No.1, Unviersity College Cardiff Press, 1986.

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