

**STATE AND CULTURE :**  
**A Study Of Some Aspects Of The Government's**  
**Policy On Cultural Institutions In India**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University*  
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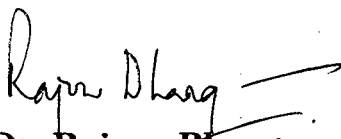


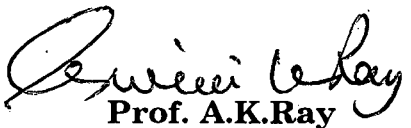
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Certified that the dissertation entitled **STATE AND CULTURE: A Study Of Some Aspects Of The Government's Policy On Cultural Institutions In India** submitted by **Anubha Kakkar** in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy**, has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other University. To the best of our knowledge this is a bonafide work.

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

  
**Dr. Rajeev Bhargava**  
*Supervisor*

  
**Prof. A.K. Ray**  
*Chairperson*

## A WORD OF GRATITUDE

Together with Dr Rajeev Bhargava, we found this topic both attractive and provocative. It raised a lot of interesting questions. Questions, the solutions to which have probably been waiting for and wanting a more thorough articulation.

It has been a completely uphill task since then. There still are many things I have not been able to come to terms with which started as hesitant early predilections initially. So the polemical character of much of the text is evident and may not, due to my own limitations, be exhaustively elaborated or classified. Apart from this, all errors and deficiencies remain solely mine.

However, contributions to this piece of writing have been many - I owe a deep sense of gratitude to Ms. Jolly Rohatgi, Ms. Jaya Jaitley, Ms. Kavita Nagpal, Dr. G. P. Deshpande, Mr. M. L. Khatana, Dr. Sudipta Kaviraj, and many others who were kind enough to lend me their time and discuss a few pertinent and concerned issues.

I was greatly fortified in times of doubt and dejection by my parents who consistently believed in

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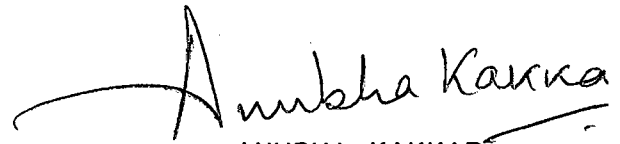
Dr. Rizwanul Islam has been an invaluable inspiration with his genuine concern, blessings and enpuzzlement with this study. Another indispensable pillar of guidance in my darkest moments, who always had his doors open for an utterly confused state of mind, and to whom I shall always be in debt for many more reasons, is Dr. Arun Kumar. And then, of course, there was Siddarth Kakkar for livening up the humorous side of the whole endeavour for whatever it was worth. I am also grateful to Mr. Sunil Mendiratta and Mr. Sanjay Gaur for patiently sorting out and deligently typing this messy manuscript.

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ANUBHA KAKKAR  
1st July, 1993

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## A FOREWORD

### CONCERNS OF THIS STUDY

The Government of India has had no explicit policy on culture till now. But it has been formulating implicit official statements and proposals from time to time on the basis of which a vast cultural infrastructure has been erected (for example, the three National Akademis of Art and Literature with their networking institutions in the states, the Zonal Cultural Centres, etc.)

However even though the Government does not have any specifically stated policy prescriptives within an explicitly stated National Culture Policy but since it does have certain implicit 'objectives' for the promotion of art practise and cultural activities in the country, to meet these 'objectives' the Government has made periodic efforts and undertaken certain (officially formulated and legislated) 'Actions'. My attempt in this study has been to look at those 'Actions' - observe and analyse their nature, their potentialities, successes, deficiencies and failures. As stated above, many of these Actions were manifest

through these largely Government-funded Art Institutions and reflected in many of the Objectives of the constitutions of these institutions (consequently for which Government funds were allocated and resources channelised). So this study has attempted to concentrate on the workings of some of the prominent Government-funded institutions established for the promotion of art practise in the country. Chapters Six and Seven, deal with the three National Akademis namely, The National Academy of Letters - The Sahitya Akademi, The National Academy of Dance, Drama and Music - The Sangeet Natak Akademi; and the National Academy of Plastic and Visual Arts - The Lalit Kala Akademi.

This study however has not undertaken a critical assessment of these 'Objectives' which would probably need special treatment, more research and time.

Furthermore, this work, in its due course has also had the opportunity to study and analyse some primary source material in the form of official documents, reports and papers enlisted in the Bibliography. It was observed, after a careful scrutiny of such documents that some of the most prominent of these

institutions were established within the framework of a very strong post-colonial legacy, reflected for example in the policy perspective and prescriptives which led to the creation of certain kind of institutions for the promotion of certain kind of art by the State (and not another). This aspect has been detailed in chapter three : 'A Legacy of Institutionalism and state policy in India and in chapter six 'Institutions of Art and Culture in India'.

As India grew, circumstances and needs of each generation varied accordingly. What did not change were the institutional objectives of many of these art promotion bodies in order to accommodate the needs and aspirations of present time. Due to lack of any coherent and dynamic perspective of matters cultural, Art practise in particular got further marginalised from mainstream national life, mainly due to its inability of contribute or render any solutions to the more pressing problems before a developing nation. And the State in all its sincerity to devote its services for the promotion of 'Art and Culture', in line with its continuing commitment for this cause as an 'integral part of nation-building', sought to spend increasingly on building more bureaucratic.



organisations for the "Promotion, Support and Dissemination" of various art forms. The Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, New Delhi; The Bharat Bhawan; Forty eight Zonal Cultural Centres; A whole networking of State level Akademis of Art and literature, an entire Administrative paraphenelia in almost each state to look after art activities; state sustainance to many organisations recognised by the three National Akademis, New Delhi are a few examples. Appendices - 2, 3, 5, 11, 17, 20, and 22 of this text further illustrate this argument. Besides, since the Government of India has not explicitly stated its policy perspective in Art and Culture, the only way one could attempt to study the Government's presence in this domain is through such institutions - the Objectives for which they were established, reasons for their successes or failures, any structural deficiencies in their procedural workings or management in the channelisation of state funds to them, proposed alternative sources of funding to uphold 'Autonomy' of such institutions as an integrated aspiration (and in view of progressively diminishing the already meagre state resources). Also to study the impact of such institutions on national life after almost four decades

of their existence and performance, the issue of ever increasing bureaucratic staff of institutions of art etc. However, due to constraints of time and the exhaustiveness of the topic, this study has focused primarily on some of the functional aspects of the three national Akademis of Art. To some extent a critique of the very objectives for which the state is present in the "Promotion of Art and Culture" was quite implicit, but this was neither intentional in this piece of writing nor possible in the present time-frame for this study.

Besides the attempted analysis of some of the aspects of the three National Akademis formed quite an appropriate initiation into such a study, as these National Akademis were one of the first to be established after 1947, reflecting the initial perspective and intentions of the Government (for the promotion of different art forms) apparent from a review of the objectives of the constitutions of these institutions. These were institutions of a national character not just by virtue of their having a whole network of affiliated Akademis at the State level but even in terms of Government priorities for allocation of funds to them.

Studies of this kind could hold more relevance in context of subsequent initiatives undertaken deliberation of a National Culture Policy. The Government of India has taken two marked actions in this direction. The first was the sponsoring of a "High Powered Review Committee" (in 1990) to study and make the three National Akademis of Art along with their networking with their state level affiliates. The report presented by the committee (known as the Haksar Committee Report) marked out some very interesting questions and issues for public debate, on the basis of which the second action was undertaken. Thus, the second action was based on some views and issues which were thrown up during an array of seminars, symposia, workshops, etc. organised by the Government and other concerned institutions especially in the past two years (1991-93) to muster urban public awareness, if nothing more, on the perceived need for a National Culture Policy. The Central Department of Culture, under the Ministry of Human Resource Development circulated a draft in the form of "An Approach Paper" thereby marking its intention for a future policy framework very clearly.

It becomes important to talk about the above two

actions of the government, for today we are on the threshold of formulating an explicitly stated National Policy on Culture and the ART, for the first time perhaps. Hence there is a need to build and entertain varied public opinion by concerned citizens as well as specialists who have been in the field and whose expertise by virtue of their experiences could be most valuable regarding structural hurdles of a government organised system in the art, (if not much more) to make sure that many of the past deficiencies can be rectified and we can start with a renewed perspective on matters cultural.

CHAPTER ONE

'Culture is what remains when all the rest  
has been forgotten'.

Oscar Wilde  
Complete Works 1987  
Galley Press

## CHAPTER ONE

### AN INTRODUCTION

The course of this work has been very educative, interest-consuming and revealing. It also sought to tread on a path which could lead to, with the help of much more research in the same field, attempted solutions to rectify a strife-torn India today. Solutions which would attempt to restore eroded self-confidence and self-sufficiency of the Indian citizens, apart from other things. The study of the kind of Culture we live in, is so integral to these objectives because it is Culture which sets limits to what we can do or can think of doing. Culture, then has to be dehistoricised and rendered a timeless verity.

The study or any attempt at a redefinition of Culture is relevant because Culture today is to be seen as the condition of human kind, our very mode of existence. We make, indeed create the various Cultures in which we live and thereby constantly carry with us the capacity to transform society. This Cultural capacity is a part of modern thought, notwithstanding its ambiguities and contested terrains, because it addresses the most fascinating feature of

human kind the capacity to create an incredible variety of human environments, and yet remain indisputably, even triumphantly, your own self.

Today living in an era of a more refined institutional life Culture could be understood as an interpretation of historical circumstance by a particular people in their time and place (and not just a legacy of habits and understandings accumulated from the past).

To study Culture is to focus on a specific instance of social life. It is not just a study of the past, but of the present and future as well. How to learn from our past, shape our present and predict our future.

It is also often to recognise the creative capacity of production and progress of human kind; the propensity to differ from and to collaborate with each other.

And in this country, it is precisely here that the Indian Government has played a larger-than-life role in shaping these human circumstances. Circumstances which provide the physical infrastructural environment which would render possible the growth of potentialities of

either achievement and progress or in fact just the contrary.

It is here we fall into problems. For any cultural discourse focusing on Indian realities cannot afford to evade the sheer depth of contradiction, if not confusion that underlines different "ways of seeing" Indian Culture determined by not only differences in location, language, history but also state disparity in economically developing different regions according to the states own needs and requirements. Culture then is a very explosive, diverse, (not unifying) but diversifying factor.

However, official Cultural discourse of the Government, while paying lip service to these differences assumes a Unitary position or an 'Integral' view of Indian Culture (explained in chapter two) that subsuming all contradiction within predetermined high preaching humanist sentiments like 'Unity in diversity' ' a composite culture' 'national brotherhood' etc.

This view has led to mainly two distortions.

Firstly, it has marginalised the cultural discourse from mainstream national life by safely



packing it in departments under the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, or, by the occasional exhibition of it while parading it through Urban centres under Government sponsored Utsavs, Festivals etc.

Secondly as a consequence of the above trend, when middle class urbanised Indians are expressed-to-exposed to different world Cultures today, they tend to lose track of their own Cultural identity. They wish to reject their Culture (maybe because they are no longer sure what this much neglected "living-system signifies or identifies any more) and lap-up or attempt to ape any in-coming cultural alphabet which can be associated with Anglicised western traditions. The Indian Government too, to some extent, has been a party to this. To begin with, the aspiration and attempt by the Indian Government of continuing with transplanted westernised institutions and their traditions in India after independence (instead of either trying to structurally reform these existing institutions to make them more conducive to Indian requirements or of attempting to build such structures which would be capable of replacing these institutions) was seen as an aspiration towards modernity towards re-enchantment. Modernity or re-enchantment then meant using The

European as a large norm system which was to superimpose work ethic, institutional working and even shape the thinking of a new class of "modernised Indians" by symbolising itself as an aspiration in their minds which needed to be achieved in order to become affluent. One of the reasons for this trend could be traced to an acute backlash of the feeling of inauthenticity and inferiority which was consciously and progressively infused as a part of a deliberate policy pursued by the colonial rulers with a marked purpose to erode all confidence of the Indians from their native attributes like their own languages, ways of belief, self-sustaining institutional mechanisms, dress codes, eating habits etc.

This in turn led to two repercussions which have marked the Government's attitude towards Art and Culture, which could be read from its various policy statements, official declarations, seminars, workshops etc. organised from time to time. On one hand, the Government very eloquently professed the inextricable 'authenticity', the uniqueness, the richness etc. of Indian Culture (the culture of civilisation which dates back as one of the earliest), a kind of Culture which is diverse and richer from that of the west as it is

able to provide the "reflective poise and spiritual energy so essential for the maturing of the good society".<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, such pretensions very comfortably led to a conceptualisation of culture as a category from the past with museumatic value to be treasured as a sense of inspiration, as our heritage. Indian Culture was then the culture of a past age and modern Indian life had to develop and create a sort of Culture which would be nearer to the kind prevailing in western nations. Base for modern India was to be consistent with a replication of concepts, institutions and processes like the establishment of the Academies of art, Universal Adult Franchise, Universal formal institutions etc. Modern Indian Culture had no place for Art forms like handicraft production, weaving, pottery, 'nautanki' performances, street or 'tamasha' forms of theatre etc. which were now seen as traditional and therefore categorised for charity under the 'welfarist functions' of the state, needing special promotion and support, and shifting from one Ministry to the other from time to time. (for example, handicrafts were shifted from the Ministry of Textile to the Ministry of Industry etc). So then what

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1. The Haksar Committee Report, July, 1990; (pg. 6, Paragraph 2.2).

symbolised Art of modern India was the kind of Art production that was indulged in at the state sponsored National Akademis and their and networking institutions throughout the country. The kind of Art promoted in these Akademis was more in tune with the idea of art imported from western anglicised traditions. For example, it replaced the Indian concept of 'commune' art which meant the involvement of the entire commune in the production of a certain piece of art, like, for example a mural. Akademis, instead, encouraged the development and promotion of personalised, independent and individualistic skills of the artists in their creations, a trend which developed with the great masters of the west, like Michael Angelo who turned the Sixteen Chapel into an invaluable mural, during European Renaissance.

Today one should reiterate the need to rebuild many of our cultural assets which were created overtime by the community by virtue of its being a community. To bring the concept of community back into cultural discourse of the country. Originating from the latin word 'Communis' ('com'-together, "munis" - under obligation). The word was earliest associated in the

English language with common or 'common people'.<sup>2</sup> .  
Later it, referred to the people of a district' and  
also a sense of common identity. It is due to these  
meanings that 'community' continues to be a much more  
familiar and intimate term than 'society' in cultural  
discourse. In metropolitan centres where the  
increasing anonymity and mechanisation of every day  
life has resulted in the disintegration of  
neighbourhoods, the idea of the community has been  
serverely challenged, if not negated. Even cultural  
circles have seen the emergence of this trend, maybe  
due to new commercial pressures, the invasion of the  
television, not to forget more immediate matters like  
transportation problems, increasing distances from  
places of work to leisure if there is any time left for  
leisure at all. All these factors have contributed to  
the difficulty of getting people together on a regular  
basis to participate in creative work, which was taken  
for granted a decade or so ago. In contrast  
communities continue to exist in mofussil towns,  
villages and tribal areas despite their inner  
dissensions and tensions emerging from urban  
interventions. Nevertheless, even in cities whenever

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2. See 'Community' in Raymond Williams, "Keywords",  
Fontana Paper backs, 1985, (pg.75).

people gather to watch an exhibition or listen to a concert, they form an "audience". What should be great concern to us in cities is to question how this audience can evolve into a community of sorts through greater interaction, discussion and a sense of sharing some common ideas, values and beliefs. We need to uphold different kinds of structures of community in India in accordance with different social context and changed circumstances of modern living. Only then would we be able to pragmatically strengthen the idea of the community rather than dismiss it as a obscurantist sentiment. This idea is even more relevant in metropolitan centres where the entire practise of presonalised Art Akademis is in vogue, and where it is (therefore) hardest to sustain.

It is also for two very significant reasons that this sense of community in 'Art and Culture' needs to be sustained. Firstly, it is only through the development of a sense of community production in India Individualistic Art practise today that we would be able to bring marginalised Indian Art Practise (like that of the tribals, the villagers, etc.) back into mainstream national life, thereby enriching both sides with this encounter. Secondly, it is through such a

process (and as a consequence of it) that one could attempt to rectify some of the distortions which have shaped official (Governmental) Cultural Conceptualisation on Indian Art and Culture. This attempt at correction is vital because the Government with a massive reservoir of resources at its disposal still is in a position to influence, if not shape or dictate much of what conspires and happens in the art world. For example, the Government empowers and decides who has authority to make decisions regarding the career of majority of deserving artists, which Art promotion institution are to be heralded as the ones responsible for the same etc. Consequently it was the Government which decided that the concept of Akademis of Art was to be an imported one. But now at least its functioning and orientation needs to be Indianised and adopted to this country's sensitivities and requirements. For the unit of Indian Artistic production may not be confined to individual genius alone but has tangibility in a comprehensive range of mutually complementary creative activities of the entire community which have also stimulated and facilitated artistic endeavour. Otherwise just the establishment of the Akademi-infrastructure (which focuses mainly on studio arts) would not in any way

guarantee the accessibility and reach of these institutions to the masses on one hand, and on the other hand make available to them the prevalent facilities, resources and funds which are sought to be channelised by the state to them through such Akademis or through other promotional schemes and programmes of the Government for the purpose of Art creation.

To take another example in the context of state support for traditional performing Art forms: even though living in an era of modern Art Akademis is inevitable (since they have been functioning for more than five decades now) yet maybe state support to institutions somewhat like the 'Gurukuls' of the past (where 'shishyas' are to 'live-in' a certain 'way of life' informed by their guru) would help the cause of promotion of these kind of Art forms more effectively. This would on one side safeguard the authenticity and autonomy of such institutions and on the other provide state sustainance for the survival of these institutions rather than for part time diploma-handing schools. An existing example of this today is the autonomous institution called Kalakshetra for the promotion and sustainances of classical Indian dance, Bharatnatyam. Other are Kerala Kalamandalam for the promotion of classical Kathakali form of dancing or the



Gandharva Mahavidalaya for classical vocal music. A list of such institutions is given in Appendix-2 of this text.

Broadly then the argument of this work would build up around the reasons, the nature and the consequences of the Indian Government's endeavour to institutionalise performing and studio arts. The method would be to study the process of establishment of a whole network of state sponsored cultural infrastructure in the form of the three National Akademis of Art, namely, the Lalit Kala Akademi, the Sangeet Natak and the Sahitya Akademi at the Central level and a little about the kind of institutions they are.

The latest government sponsored review on the performance and networking of these institutions was submitted in July, 1990 to the Ministry of Human Resource Development and consequently placed in Parliament, was called the Haksar Committee Report. Apart from an indepth study of this report and some issues thrown up by it, which were common to the three National Art Akademis, the attempt was to concentrate on the prevailing role, functions and deficiencies in the working of the Sahitya Akademi. There is also an

attempted analysis of the nature of various recommendations submitted by the Haksar Committee Report.

More specifically, chapter two would start with a general commentary on the state of the prevailing cultural scene. It would talk of some of the issues which need to be seen and may be seen with a renewed perspective.

Chapter Three would go into the functions for which the Indian state was born; the impact of this on the Indian people and the frame of mind in which they accepted the state; after independence, the impressions about the state and the functions of the state that stayed; how this effected Art practise in terms of establishment of Akademis, bureaucratic institutions and policy prescriptives; and the need for democracy and decentralisation in Art production.

Chapter Four has been divided into two parts; Part one is a general comment on the policy perspective and orientation of the Government on "Art and Culture" and talks of a perceived need for a National Culture Policy. Part two is an analysis of the "Approach Paper", a draft proposal circulated by the Department

of Culture, Ministry of Human Resource Development, to muster urban public awareness, if nothing more, on such a perceived need for a National Culture Policy. Consequently some of the views and issues which were thrown up were voiced in an array of seminars, workshops, symposia etc. organised by the Government and other concerned institutions especially in the past two years or so.

Chapter Five deals with the Haksar Committee Report in detail. This chapter has been divided into three parts. Part one is a critical evaluation of some aspects of the report; Part two talks of some common concerns of the three National Akademis and Part three is a comment on the way certain pertinent issues have been handled by the Haksar Committee Report - issues like Autonomy, Government and Market, the concept of culture in the report, etc.

Chapter Six, "Institutions of Art and Culture in India", talks about the Cultural infrastructure present at the time of independence, the establishment of the National Akademis, the Sangeet Natak Akademi and the Lalit Kala Akademi.

Chapter Seven, deals with the procedural workings, achievements and flaws of the Sahitya Akademis.

And chapter Eight is a summary of the readings of all the chapters. It is also an attempt to mark out some shades of a hidden perspective of the Government on matters cultural.

CHAPTER TWO  
A PERSPECTIVE

"There is a great deal to be said for the arts. For one thing they offer the only career in which commercial failure is not necessarily discreditable ... and in the event of success gives rewards quite out of proportion to industry."

- Evelyn Waugh on Creativity

## A PERSPECTIVE

Let me attempt to start, not at the beginning (as that is very difficult to find) but with a very pressing query which initiated me in the first place on this topic, that is, are we, both individually and collectively standing on the threshold of absolute cultural resourcelessness? A resourcelessness which has depleted all our skills built overtime from our collective institutions, codes, processes, activities and even modes of existence objectified in Art, Law and the State.

The state of 'Cultural Resourcelessness' may refer to a situation in which a country's reservoir consisting of (for example) - social conventions, customs, mores, all assets of commune living, traditions of mutually complementary cooperative effort (like village cooperatives or cottage industries, etc.) processes which build qualities which enrich the individual, structural arrangements which have evolved (and functioned) on native soil (like the Panchayati Raj System, etc.) - have all been eroded one by one from this great social reservoir built over time and treasured by every society.

There could be many reasons for this - when new

values and ways of living are superimposed and transplanted on unfamiliar grounds, which are not in tune with general mass-tastes, preferences and psyche, then one can arrive at such a situation of 'Resourcelessness or when the social values already existing (which have come down generations to form certain conventions which make a society behave in a certain way manifest in its forms of congregation or festivities or rituals like the practice of Sati, dowry-marriage, female infanticide, 'purdha' for women, etc.) are not updated with changed needs of present circumstances, when the flux created by the rapid pace of modern, solitary and competitive living or by the fleeting transient circumstances (so characteristic of modern life) leave the individual at an end to deal with a very fast changing world around him - then there may come a time when the individual indulges in a search for his identity while being in need of a "Still Centre"<sup>3</sup> which would give him the capacity to continually adapt to and renovate outer forms, to communicate with the past and keep pace with the future. The attempt to renovate these outer forms could be made both cognitively (through greater

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3. Kapila Malik Vatsyayan, "Some Aspects of Cultural Policies in India", 1972, UNESCO, Paris, (p.9)

knowledge and new concepts) and practically. Outer forms like - the social structure in which the individual lives; the social category in which the individual is classified according to his class status. For example, the class status of the individual is now determined not by his distance from the centre of concentration of all societal power and knowledge manifest in the clergy, but by the possession of skills in work, training in working complexities of modern institutions (with specialisation of each profession, delegation of power and accompanying responsibilities), experience and expertise in his/her profession, proficiency in English language which is seen as the international language of modernity, and many other such attributes; the social symbols to which he owed his cultural or religious identity, for example, ways of dressing, eating habits, type of food, places of worship, rituals, festivals, congregational ethics, etc.; the 'ways' of the institutions of family, work place, marriage, etc. which also characterise his being.

It is this 'Still Centre' that is the cultural reservoir of our society and which could have depleted all its resources which could give its parts (that is



individuals) the kind of capacity and strength which could herald him on the way to progress.

It is in this sense that India faces a crisis of cultural resourcelessness and our culture needs to once again reformulate our identity, both individually and as a nation.

It may be time that one looks at this 'still centre' for inspiration and strength in the context of a strife-torn nation with each community decidedly raising its head against the other in a kind of a frenzy which has probably not repeated itself in the past forty five years of independent Indian existence. For in the context of India, at least from the earliest time there appeared to be a self-conscious awareness of this attribute of culture in the individual and the need to cherish and nurture it assiduously at all times, both in moments of peace and in crisis. Almost anticipating the modern definition of culture (which encompasses practically all human activity) the Indian seer conceived of culture as the sum total of the equipment of the human individual which enabled him to be attuned to his immediate environment on one hand and to the historical past on the other. The idea of continuity as also the recognition of the need for a

constant readiness for adaptation and assimilation was inherent: the concept of a "Still Centre of being"<sup>4</sup> manifested through a multiplicity of intellectual disciplines, artistic expressions and modes of behaviour, conduct and actions was fundamental to such a view in India. It was the touchstone by which the very quality of individual's life was judged and yardstick by which its rhythm and pace were measured. It was a matter of high value by which the individual answered himself and the society around. The cultivation of 'self' then through cultural production meant not just the enrichment of the individual personally but of the entire community in which he lived - both for individual harmony, equanimity and tranquillity and for the ends of social and moral right. Only the disciplined cultivated person in full control of her/his body and mind could hope to strive for spiritual salvation (which was the highest attribute in the hierarchy of values in society) and be capable of facing the challenge of life of action (karma). The paths or vehicles of cultivation of self were many; the idea of choice and freedom was essential, for one chose according to one's calling and potential. The words used in the context of the arts are significant for

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4. **ibid.**

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they speak of the importance and value given to this sphere of human activity and the approach towards them. Words like "Yoga", a "Yagna" (a ritualistic sacrifice), "Sadhna" (a concentrated activity of selfless nature) requiring an objective negative capacity on the part of the doer, i.e. the artist or craftperson - are frequent in treatises dating back to the second century B.C. and legendary stories whose origin can be traced even earlier to vedic and pre-vedic myths and symbols <sup>5</sup>.

In all possibility these attributes and approaches have filtered down to the present generation to a varying degree and continue to have relevance. While Indian democracy is young, the conceptual thinking of people has had links with a vigorous body of tradition with a long and complex history. While maintaining identifiable autonomy, inter-dependence and inter-relations seem to have been the central repetitive noting of this pattern of living and organisation. In cultural matters, there was a self conscious recognition of this principle which made it such an important stage of evolution of the inner individual and an indispensable vehicle for creating an atmosphere of harmony and peace for the outer individual. This

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5. *ibid.* (p.10)

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view embodied in such concepts permeated the being of the artist and the audience alike, generating a need for continual communication, which in turn resulted in two distinct streams of Indian cultural pattern; the first made it a strictly personal activity for the individual, and the second an essentially participatory activity. These streams flowed separately but they often intermingled and even enriched each other.

And India today has lost track of this second form of cultural production, which has in return fostered such a state of cultural resourcelessness.

For this reason one needs to consider perhaps, a more rational way of looking, thinking and being in culture today. A way which is able to keep pace with today's changed circumstances as well as be able to draw confidence from what we have built in our past. Circumstances which see India today as standing and competing amongst the other industrialised nations of the world and yet characterise itself as predominantly agrarian (which it will remain for some time at least). Circumstances which, on one hand, have rendered in building great urban metropolitan cities and on the other hand insulated the majority of rural India from reaping benefits of an all round well

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balanced industrial economy . Circumstances that are so paradoxical for the west which show that it has been the great relevance and sacredness of the place of tradition and culture in the common Indian's consciousness, which has led to the sustainance and acquisition of resilience to the concept, forms and processes of democracy in this country. For only a few (and definitely contrary to the western trajectory of democratic history) could comprehend that it is the Indian traditional pluralities of living, congregation and thought which composed this great cultural reservoir. Basically, India has an inextricable identity in the "tradition" of democracy. It is for us now to develop the potentialities and principles of that form of democray which lies within each individual, which has been inculcated and bred through religion and custom overtime. It is time that Indians develop their inner cultural strength to grapple with the world around them and come out of this national crisis of cultural resourcelessness. It is here that the State can assit and help but with a renewed orientation.

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6. See P.C. Joshi, "Communication and Nation Building : Perspective and Policy", (1986), Publication Division, New Delhi.

This study is also an attempt to mark out the kind of Policy orientation (if any) that the State has had towards the development of aspects cultural. This situation of cultural resourcelessness may also be a consequence of the growing backlash of such deficient and self-destructive processes of haphazard development which were set in motion by the colonial plunderers and were not structurally rectified by our nationalist elite after independence. Processes like the limitation of development strategies formulated by the State and imposed from an imperial, authoritarian centre, towering above the Indian citizens, talking of their welfare but from an externality which did not break the habit of social apathy and lack of political will of the common person to enable him/her to rise above his/her concerns of self-gratification and help in the imitation of such programmes which in return were for his/her own benefit.

Further still, India's encounter with such a situation of Cultural Resourcelessness may also have been because of the fact that most of the threats to national democratic living come from the modern sector as created and defined by the State from the pursuit of State power by this sector for streamrolling

pluralities which lie either outside or on the periphery of national mainstream life (as envisaged by our Policy makers and politicians) through any and every means available at their disposal, and without any respect for the existence of this difference amongst people of this vast subcontinent<sup>7</sup>. To give an example, life of some existing tribes in India is very different from that of the urban areas. It has its own grammar and pace. The state in its bid to modernise and develop these "backward" areas (as the tribal areas came to be called) has done more harm than good probably. For the States intervention has only been half hearted and hapazard. The old style of life has been uprooted alongwith the tribal's self-sustaining ecology and environment and the newer systems, processes and institution of development and modernisation have not been established. As a result of which the tribals find themselves in the middle of a crisis of underdevelopment.

It is time that we considered where we have gone wrong or have we gone wrong at all, or is it merely critical retrospectiveness that we indulge in.

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7. See Rajni Kothari, "State Against Democracy", (1988), Ajanta Publications, Delhi, (p.155)

Usually one draws upon retrospectiveness as a tool in the creation (writing, rewriting and rereading) of history - In the recent past this may have been done in a manner in which there was a total obliteration of the possibilistic structure in history from our retrospective capacities and consciousness. In other words, historically at very crossroad one has had a discretion of choosing alternative paths to tread upon. And when in the process of making a choice of any one particular path (here by using path, to mean the choice of a "whole way" of individual life and nationalist development) one has had to leave out other alternative paths in History-writing, this possibility and the freedom to choose any one path must not be forgotten and go unmentioned.<sup>8</sup> Instead what happened in India after independence was that many nationalist leaders (and indeed many historians) who wrote about the most turbulent and significant phase of the country's fight against colonialism, did not mention these alternatives. To give an example, this is evident in Jawaharlal Nehru's "Discovery of India". These historians adhered to what came to be known as the "Composite-Culture" view, in which India was seen as a

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8. "Rewriting Modern Indian History", Times of India, January 15, 1975, (p.8)



melting-pot for all invaders who came to conquer and plunder and for different sects and religions that were brought along or born here as a consequence (etc). It was a land which had richness of tradition and culture because it welcomed all with open arms and this "bird of gold" (which it was called) saw the setting down of varied cultural influences of all visitors, invaders and natives alike. India, it was said, grew culturally because of this amalgamation<sup>9</sup>. This rosy picture served the need of a time when nationalist leadership was trying to unite and mobilise the great teeming mass of Indian humanity on any and every possible basis for unity and homogeneity. This helped them at both times - to fight out colonial power on the basis of the strength of numbers and to gather up a broken nation's wits after the India-Pakistan partition.

However, now it is time that this picture needs a new coat, a more realistic, attuned, pragmatic and rational one. Besides the gaps in this kind of conceptualisation of our "Unity in Diversity" have already started to tear the nation's future. A bulldozing of any state ideology (even though

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9. See S. Abid Hussain, "The National Culture of India", (1978), National Book Trust, New Delhi

distinguished under socialist pretensions or welfare concerns) on the common people has always led to centripetal disharmony. The recent communal riots (December 1992 onwards) all over India are a burning example.

In order to attempt a rectification of this situation, plan our development and predict our future, one could indulge in a retrospectiveness in a way that has probably not been recorded previously.

To start with, there is a need to admit that the kind of acceptance that existed in India towards incoming foreign invading influences was more in the form of back-to-back neighbourliness, a kind of acceptance which just about tolerated difference in the rituals of life of these outsiders but continued to see them as existing outside the "Authentic core" of its original inhabitants. The concept of this "authentic core" was maintained and developed in the highly rigid hierarchial structure of the Hindu society which came

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10. See Journal of Arts and Ideas, Volume 19, February 1991. "Dialogues on Cultural Practise in India". It includes contributions from : Kumar Sahaani, Arun Khopkar Kumkum Sangari, Ashish Rajadhyakasha, Sanjaya Baru, Sudipta Kaviraj, Vivan Sundaram, A G Krishna Menon, Anuradha Kapur, Susie Tharu, etc. on the rising tide of communalism in India

to prevail . Yes, over a period of time it became difficult to say who was an 'original inhabitant' and who an outsider, but the structure of Indian society which developed was so complex and hierarchial that it could always accommodate any newcomer, even though at a level lower than the clergy. The higher echelons were reserved for the "Pundits" of authority. Because of this hierarchy probably, a common consciousness or "Common sense"<sup>12</sup> was not able to develop which would pervade to all alike and have the capability of binding the polity in a cognitive unity rather than that emanating from circumstance, necessity, hierarchy or professional skill or expertise.

What we have written in a certain way needs to be revised everytime a new historical movement within our national Cultural situation arises. The new historical movement within our national Cultural situation today is the tearing apart of the nation by the rise of communal hatred, violence and murder, apart from the strife of one region against the other one language

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11. See Nirmal Bose, "Structure of Hindu Society", (1986), Vikas Publications, Delhi.

12. See Sudipta Kaviraj, "Dimensions of Social Change", The Hindustan Times Magazine, 25 February, 1979

against the other, all cutting the ground of a united Nation. Today once again, one should consider why there has been regression into forms of Cultural illiteracy; why the spirit of violence in the land of Gandhi and Cultural vulgarity in the land of Tagore.

It makes one wonder whether the chaos of the Indian situation is 'the' consequences of a peacemeal "Soft State" approach <sup>13</sup> towards development of a subcontinent which emerged in light after 1947. <sup>14</sup>

These questions show us the darker side of the Indian socio-Cultural situation, its weak and soft spots, which we must be bold enough to recognise and face. For I feel we have within us resources, both moral and material, to overcome them.

To start with there has been, from the very

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13. Term exemplified by Gunnar Myrdal in 'Asian Drama' to characterise a particular Nature or type model of the State in Asian societies which indulges in dissemination of populist propaganda and abstains of undertaking any basic structural reform to transform its top heavy bureaucratic state. The state then opts for soft decisions entailing minimum or no inconvenience to the ruling coalition.
  14. As heard by all, India was seen as an unenlightened mass which had to be civilised. And this endeavour to civilise, as a part of the white man's burden, continued by the superior race till 1947

beginning a lag in the conceptualisation of our total potential strength - an exhausted nation should have focussed most on its cognitive and cultural assets - their definition, their strengthening and their development - before embarking upon actual schemes. Cognitively, for instance, a neglect of the need of renovating the concept of tradition itself so that new meanings and practices can be invented and constructions built, the need for "inventing traditions" (despite historical qualifications<sup>15</sup> interpreting this to mean a constructive task).

Tradition may possess values which can render solutions to this form of resourcelessness - Values like those of cooperation, tolerance, etc. Tradition then is not seen in a conservative, revivalist sense. It denotes a way of life in which celebration of community festivals and of production, of cultural values and Artistic Practise have all been perfected and refined overtime to be epistemologically connected to the great reservoir of wisdom and knowledge which constitutes the cognitive base of each nation.

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15. Talk of the "Need of renovating the concept of tradition" has been developed on the idea taken from the concept of "Inventing traditions" in Geeta Kapur, "Contemporary Cultural Practice in India", No. 12, Summer 1990, 'Third Text'.

Culture has often been seen as synonymous with tradition. Indeed the spirit in which one talks about inventing tradition was nurtured, as we know, by the nationalist ethos such as to make it an ideological but still affirmative task. (However, it should be kept in mind that in the appropriation of tradition for a particular historical moment, for a particular purpose, there is often no marked inventiveness). For tradition to be recreated innovatively, to be renovated, it probably needs to be invented from some kind of communitarian basis in regional or national culture. The traditionalisation of the Modern itself is elicited from the historical process of modernisation and carries with it the logic of national aspiration if not always regional resource. (That kind of national aspiration which attempts or strives to build on regional resource in terms of the immense reservoir and strength of manpower resources and other national resources of our regions. Contemporary sociological and other critiques have tried to discover ways in which regional resources have fashioned themselves in their own imminent fulfilment). Tradition, today needs to be redefined as never before. For today many believe that relating to tradition is impossible; that Tradition is something from which they are permanently

distanced, disjuncted. Such people exaggerate their westernism and under-estimate their Indianness and entirely misconceive the ways in which a culture acts. A culture does not act overtly like a theoretical doctrinal system. You cannot be a marxist without knowing that you are a marxist; similarly, you cannot be a Vaishnava without being conscious you are one. You can be an Indian however without knowing you are; and however dedicated we are sometimes in imitation of western behaviour, any intelligent western observer would immediately mark out an Indian. Culture is an alphabet which we use, indeed we can use, without knowing it. Acquaintance and acquisition of a Culture should not be classified as knowledge, strictly speaking, because it is largely non-deliberate. An Indian man shows his Culture, just as the Indian women does, in all kinds of fundamental, non-deliberate things, mostly in things taken for granted, in things and attitudes too close to one's self to be objects of selfconscious thoughts or acts, our attention and negligence, our confidences and our hesitations, our sense of propriety, our sense of shame, our ways of carrying our body, our gestures which we do not watch but which reveal ourselves to others and tell them, even if we wish to conceal it, what we are. It is that

which defined us, it is that which gives us away.

Even when we wish to reject our culture and accept the recently popular vulgar occidentalism (popular with liberals, conservatives and marxists alike) we reject it in a way that is stamped by our culture. Even in our rejection it determines us, because it is that which we reject. It is the silent accent in all our cultural acts. Thus an Indian occidental is unmistakably Indian, and his occidentalism is still stamped by the Indianism he has deliberately rejected. But this is not a pessimistic argument as it seems at first sight. In all of us we carry an unexplicated, or unclarified deposit, however occidental, removed from our tradition we are, precisely because it is so different from knowledge. It does not have to be formally acquired; it is contracted silently through unavoidable, irreplaceable practices. A corollary of this of course is that within all of us we have a cultural alphabet which may not be able to utter articulately, but which is impossible to forget; it is impossible to escape from half-knowing all this. It is this which indelibly demarcates the Indian expatriate in the US as an Asian American; It is also this which despite the borders of contempt, patronising, misunderstanding and



exploitation, still silently connects the urban, English-dependent, occidental Indian to his more clumsy, vernacular fellow citizens, (for the occident they wish to realise in themselves, and finally to migrate to, does not exist in reality, it is a combination of facts, fiction, propaganda, imagination, crudity, envy, desire; it is a myth).

If this is true then what we really require is to edge back into the task which is so important today as an anamnestic exercise; we must bring into consciousness, remember, learn to spell and articulate this already latent alphabet in ourselves. We must simply know and recognise what we in a sense already are. For reasons such as these, one must concentrate on the arts which help to inculcate potentialities of the inner self which may or may not help to reformulate our identity what we are as individuals and as a nation. Here traditions may help one to grapple with these larger questions, but they would only help as long as they do not become a deterministic binding force which defines and dictates our identity, our being (saying that identity cannot be other than what our age-old traditions and customs tell us it is). Conceding the fact that Cultural identity may have more of original affinities (like those in terms of

ethnicity, tribes, etc.) yet because we live in a globally compact world run on exchange values, the Local invariably attracts International attention. For example, the local is more spectacular and exotic in the performing arts - tribal or folk dances have a certain mystique and colour which modern dance in India have not been able to develop. Since 1985, this has been reflected in an immense policy orientation towards tribal and folk Arts, the establishment of Zonal Cultural Centres and the rest of the State apparatus' paraphenelia on Arts and Culture. In todays age the National has always tended to indulge in a valourization of difference as an end in itself, so that we are constantly working with a paradoxical relation of the local and the International and hence the galmourisation, stress on Indian Council of Cultural Relation's export of hand picked and home made glimpses of Indian Culture in Festivals of India abroad staged from time to time <sup>16</sup> so what in fact may hav been neglected or overlooked. What one may be witnessing is the process of involution, introversion, implosion,

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16. The last Festival of India was innaugrated by the Indian Prime Minister Mr.P.V. Narasimha Rao in Germany, September 1991 with an initial budget of Rs.11 crores, which was later cut down to Rs.4.7 crores due to financial constraints, The Times of India, October 12, 1991.

or inward collapse of the "National" (envisaged, developed, propagated by the nationalist elite at the time of independence) coupled with the erosion of its importance and power in politics and state structures. The elite as it was constituted at the time of independence on the basis of its access to key positions in the State and institutions of society and its cosmopolitan pan-Indian Culture is probably no longer able to impose its will and prevail over the processes of regionalism. In some ways this process has been both inevitable and actively healthy - part of opening up of the structures of power to new social groups.<sup>17</sup> But it has unfortunately, most of the part been negative. It has sought to undermine Indian national identity and encourage disruptive forms of decentralisation and devolution of power which are parochial, casteist, chauvinist and narrowminded perceptions and attitudes.<sup>18</sup>

Hence, since 1985, in Cultural discourse at least, this trend has been evident in which the significance of the "National" is being overlooked and marginalised.

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17. See, C. P. Bhabhri, "Theoretical Perspectives on Political Change", Indian Journal of Political Science, Vol.37, October-December, 1976

18. See, Praful Bidwai, "Is the national middle class cracking up?", The Economic Times, December 9, 1991

For before this, the National Art Akademis were founded on a wave of thinking and at a time when our national leaders just after independence, sought to project as institutions with a national character and role, attempting to be accessible to each State of the country. But with the establishment of additional structures and institutions of Art, like the Zonal cultural centres etc., which may have been with the idea of complementing the tasks of these Akademis, two consequences were apparent. Firstly, they did not complement, but at times duplicated many Akademi functions leading to (more or less) a marginalisation of most of their state branches. Besides priority allocations in terms of additional funds too were spread for these new institutions at the cost of again the State Akademis. And the second consequence was a more indirect one. It took place within a trend which saw the rise of parochialism, regionalism at the cost of the 'National'. To relate this trend by giving an example of the kind of practise which came into focus at the Zonal Cultural Centres. Zonal Cultural Centres were centres which were built for zones comprising of two-three regions, but in fact what tended to happen was that amongst these regions only those Art forms were taken more cognisance of, which

were already predominant in those zones. For example, a very glaring example exists in the State of Bihar where the "Madhubani" form of folk painting has got a little state support and has even been accepted in the State Akademi, but styles like the "Godna" have not even been heard of by many of such art promotion bodies despite the fact that they have been protected by a majority of the village population there. Besides most of the styles of paintings which are somewhat assisted by the state are from Northern Bihar like the Madhubani. The Chota Nagpur Plateau region of Bihar is so rich in tribal art forms of the Munda, Santhal, Aoraon, Birhor, Kurmi etc., which are totally marginalised by the state decoration paintings of the Kurmi, or the 'Karma' dance form of the Aoraon (which is a celebration of the man-nature relationship) or the "Sarbul" or the "Desom Sendra" (a celebration of human relationships) by the Kharaias tribe of the Chota Nagpur region - are a few examples.

So not only was there a hierarchical prioritisation of funds and importance amongst different art forms within the centre and the states, but the politics of

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19. See, "Eye" Number IV, Volume-I, September-October, 1992, A Spic Macay Publication, "Tribals of Chhota Nagpur"

differentiation was also prevalent in the states or zones and further permeated the decentralised levels of the regions (tribal) districts etc.

However parochialism and regionalism too were enveloped within a greater evil - that of communalism. For identity has begun to be spelt in terms of separation, suspicion, hatred and now recurring murder. This has become an index of seismic cultural shock, one that has opened fissures and fault lines, exposed weaknesses, revealed connections with such fundamentalist forces which have the power to erode any progressive or secular belief, institution or norms thereby nullifying whatever little was built in the name of modernity. The situation today is of intentional outrage and potentially invaluable embarrassment. Just like our leaders have played on communal loyalties in the name of democracy, in the cultural field, they relied short-term technicalities of an all purpose bureaucracy while surrendering in effect to the culture-industry-on which indeed they modelled its State-run media system. (Hence, it is even more so for this reason that our discussion of 'renovating' the concept of tradition becomes more focused to counter this regressive logic, which is now rearing up

exploiting the posture of surrender to mount its own image of militancy. In these circumstances all cultural actions would have to start from basics, commencing as it were, from the dug-in positions of an oppositional force. It will then have to bring into use, both the obscurities of imagined truth and an explicit political message, by inventing, first forms and then traditions of critical discourse. In this context, one could then start by talking about invention of Traditions as a possible function of all Art practice and cultural discourse; a critique against institutions of the State and market for their capitulation from the minimum agenda of liberal Culture.

Today with the rise of socio-religious bigotry at home, dialogues on culture are painfully vexed. Within terms of a new globalism it would end up a Raymond Williams would may, in vagrancy. But on the other hand there is another way out where all hope is not lost. Culture, precisely because it is a dimension of freedom, is always involved in a teleological projection, and that telos is never fully or exhaustively articulated by society (and least of all by its policy makers). Then may be with this realisation, it is time to indulge in such a needful

task and may be with development of a totally neglected dimension-namely, building of cultural resources and assets in citizens in terms of skills, attitude, sensitivity to the environment and fellow social being could be the avenue through which other societal solutions can be sought.

#### **A METHODOLOGICAL POINT**

Human actions and relations are structured by our social environment and the way we behave. This in turn depends upon the way our values, attitudes, beliefs, conceptualisations and activities are structured by the organisation of society in which we live. In India, for instance, state policy to regulate and define all spheres of organised lives of citizens, has played a larger-than-life role. For the organisation (hence administration) of society, determined action is taken in pursuit of conscious purposes, systematic ordering of affairs to calculated use and coordination with common objectives and cooperative efforts.

The attempt would thus be to study these aspects of such a structured environment, the political system, which legitimises the authoritative allocation of values through Policy legislation and execution.



It became important for the State to indicate, guide and then gauge the pattern of performance in the system whereby the unruly component was disciplined in regulatory mechanisms.

The attempted perspective of this study broadly would probably be best explained by a diagram:-

As a General Level:-

INPUT		20 OUTPUT
<p>Society Constituted and Structured</p> <hr/> <p>Expectation and Demands (Types of Expecta- tions and intensity of demands)</p> <p>Resources (Time, Material, Personnel, Manpower Skills, Technology) 3. Regulations 4. Symbols</p> <p>Support (Type - Participant or Subject  (Level and Intensity)</p>	<p>The Policy The Political System The Conversion Progress The Policy Making Process</p> <hr/> <p>Structures (Formal and Informal)</p> <p>Institutions - Norms * Powers 1. Extractions 2. Distributions 3. Distribution network of</p> <p>Political Culture (Beliefs and Symbols)</p> <p>Role Incumbants (Tenure and Character)</p>	<p>Into the Environment</p> <hr/> <p>Policy Statements, System Goals, Costs, i.e.</p> <p>Contracts and Enforcements, i.e. 1. taxes 2. laws</p> <p>a) Communication and information b) Peace and coersion c) Goods and Services d) Voting and Kconsensus etc.</p> <p>Environmental Outcomes</p> <p>Domestic and Inter- national Welfare and Security.</p>
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20. David Easton, "The Political System", 1953.

Specifically, however, I would try to concentrate on the establishment and working of the three National Akademis of Art, namely, the Sahitya Kala Parishad, the Sangeet Natak Akademi and the Lalit Kala Akademi.

<u>INPUTS</u>	<u>THE AKADEMIS OF ART</u>		<u>OUTPUT</u>
The Concept the aspiration its legitimacy and Concensus		Establishment of Institutions of Culture (networking and their Bureaucratic Paraphenelia)	Workdone, Deficiencies Review Reports on their organisation, effectiveness etc.
	Political Level	Governmental Level	
Distribution of Resources	Interest articulation of the artists and others	Rule making capacity developed	Extroctive
Regulative Mechanism of	Centralisation Authority	Hierarchy in structure of institutions	Authorotative
Political Participation	Interest Aggregation (Conversion of demands into major policy alternatives)	Rule Application	Regulative
Communication	Political communication (structural streamlining, democratic (?) centralisation)	Rule Abjudation	Distributive
Supports (Material obedience Participant Deference)			Symbolic outputs are important indicators of political legitimacy of a system Eq. National Honour Awards etc.

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Political Socialisation and Recruitment

In such an analysis, one is able to talk about capacities of a political system, their functional differentiation, their prevailing political culture and development levels, enabling one to appraise policies as they effect political change or vice-versa. These are capacities like extractive, regulative, distributive, symbolic, responsive or international. To see which of these is most developed in context of development of Art and Culture.

If we work on the assumption that society is composed of structures then the inappropriateness to have encouraged uncritical self description of the formal organisation that the state offers, as the only description which is the epitome of modernity and rationality is quite evident.

On the other hand, one is also aware that the state does not build institutions in an empty space; it has to rework the logic of existing structures of society which have their own, sometimes surprisingly resilient justificatory structures; (what are these? their nature of composition and responsibility, their resilient mechanisms and outlived utilities?). How involved is our State in our cultural society? Is this externality inscribed on every move, every object,

every proposal, every legislative act, each line of causality? Has it come to be marked on the epoch of policy legislation on 'Art and Culture' on the whole? The next Chapter attempts to answer some of these questions. How much space has the state given for dissent or participation and to what effect. For example, have opinions or proposals of concerned parties allocated any influencing capacity to policy formulation and implementation? Recently there was a lot of resentment on the procedure followed for the allocation of Sahitya Akademi Awards by host of literary, articulate and concerned citizens and artists. Even the Haksar Committee Report touched upon altering the system of selection for such awards and honours. However, the Approach Paper brought about by the Department of Culture, Government of India was totally oblivious of such opinion. My attempt would be to point out such instances of oblivion on the part of our Government and the reasons for it.

### CHAPTER THREE

"What varied opinions we constantly hear of our rich oriental possessions; What jumble of notions distorted and queer from an Indian man's English impressions; ..... and let each one enjoy his opinions; whilst I show in what style Anglo-Indian exist,

In her majesty's Eastern dominions"

- George Francklin,  
Atkinson (1784-1852)

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE LEGACY OF INSTITUTIONALISM AND STATE POLICY IN INDIA

Before starting a study on any policy perspective specially in the domain of Arts and Culture, one needs to set and space out the processes and dynamics of modern Indian Policies in a long term historical understanding, dealing therefore with some of the methodological and philosophical issues without which the difficulties faced by empirical explanations (when given a historical form) would be impossible to tackle. Also it is important to see the functions for which the Indian State was born which were not only different from those of other countries but impact of these functions on the Indian people and the frame of mind with which they accepted the State was also uniquely Indian.

Hence, the very first task at hand is to see exactly where the State is placed (has been historically) and exactly what it can and cannot do. For after independence there were certain functions of the colonial State which were retained, like increase in taxes still due to factors like military needs, internal security, black-marketing, etc. It becomes

even more impregnate to talk about this because Independent India had a strong tendency to leave its planned civil society in the hands of bureaucrats. For this one needs to dwell a little deeper into the process of creation of this civil organism, the Indian State, by the Society. For one, in the past, the caste system was significant in society not only in its great internal complexity, but the principles on which it was constructed. Its internal principle of organisation of inequality was an asymmetric one, that is, social hierarchy was disaggregated into several different criteria of ranking individuals and groups, for example, economic assets, political power, ritual status, etc. Hence the Jati system which actually functioned on the ground was quite different from the ideal self-presentation of the 'varna' system. May be this accounted for the relative lack of frequency of lower order defiance in Indian history (as it cognitively made it more difficult to identify the structure of dominance because of some dispersal of power among the subordinate groups.

The sovereignty of the state was two layered. There were more or less self-regulating communities (which does not necessarily mean democratic, however



they were hierarchial). The State would sit in the middle of a peculiar segmentary social arrangement. Often there existed a distant, formally encompassing empire and at the same time actual everyday suffering was caused by neighbourhood tyrants.

It enjoyed great ceremonial eminence, but in fact, it had fairly delimited powers of interfering with the social segment's internal organisation. Its classical economic relation with these communities over which it formally presided, was in terms of tax and rent and while its rent demands would fluctuate according to its military needs and its ability to despoil, it could not in its own interest or in the pretended interest of the whole society restructure the productive or occupational organisation of these social groups. In the first sense, the eminence or spectacular majesty of the State as an imperial centre was combined with the second sense, which has its certain marginality in terms of both time and space. Intrusion of this high state was spectacular - an ineradicable link with pomp and majesty, symbolic rituals, wonderful to behold and unlikely to happen everyday. This double image, interestingly stayed after independence also. And another thing, that stayed ironically was the externality of state power with which it was able to

bring in a series of basic changes. It was a State external in two senses. Not merely as coming from outside the interwoven processes and practices of society but also in its being fundamentally alien in its social conceptualisation. For example, colonial power had unfamiliar and distinct ways of living and congregation, ethics, values, social stratification and a new economise mode for accessibility to resources of the country. The colonial State which ruled and legislated had a political apparatus with a totally different moral, political and most significantly, cognitive order. Unlike the mughal State before it, which had accepted its spectacular eminence at the cost of its traditional marginality, the colonial State could not occupy the state of eminence at the cost of its marginality. It had to be socially involved in society, in order to be able to introduce its Policies of coercion (for such policies do not enter into and re-order a passive society) and yet maintain its externality because of the advantageous overpowering capacity of this position. In all its drives and initiatives, it introduced, in bits and pieces, the logic of modernity in Indian society. This was done by introduction of many nuances ranging from a new system of education to a new tariff and trade policy, to

filling up of the entire coercive infrastructure's petty posts with a new breed of brown babu's etc.

Sometimes these initiatives were resisted by pre-existing structural forms; or by collective counteractions. Other times they were passively accepted under conditions of extreme colonial aggression and subjugation. To make a long story short, the acceptance of modernity or any Policy legislatures for the same, came to be associated in a historically ineradicable connection with subjection. As mentioned before in Chapter One, transformation proposals and agendas attacked the Indian psyche as an external force, and this externality was inscribed on every move, every object, every proposal, every legislative act, each line of casualty, it came to be marked on the epoch itself. The entire gamit of conceptual transformations formed a structure e.g. the institutional changes and policy prescriptives for economic reforms or for a set of fundamental legal identifications or for the introduction of the vocabulary of liberal rights or the anglicised forms of art production promoted by the Akademis. These concepts, evidently, were pre-conditionally linked and formed in their totality a new way of conceiving the

political world. The difference being that in India they were not a result of either experimentation in controlling or reducing irresponsible power, but just the contrary. They were not given the benefit of even being considered a part of conceptual experimentation of their own political experience with tyranny, instead they were seen as the result of the irresistible power of the colonial rules. The relation of such Policy objectives and perspectives were woven into the complex historical context of power and subjection which made them into symbols of opposite things. Colonial structure, thus represented not only by a set of new institutions but also a set of discourses, clearly, the new institutions were operable and intelligible only if they worked through these new discourses of society, knowledge and power. However the problem came in here. For there were present deep differences in the structure of consciousness of the Indian society. Traditional Indian discourse formed a structure, just as enlightenment discourses did and there was no incremental transition from one to the other. The attempt then, inevitably was to try to reconstitute the common sense of traditional Indian society, since colonial authority could not be legitimised in terms of constituted common sense of the imperial legislators.

This is the reason why two very significant things followed. The first was the question of education, the instrumentality through which common sense of a society was created became the central concern to British colonial authority. The second was the attempt of breaking up all those interwoven insulated practices of society which had kept it self regulating from outside influences. Such practices which had ordered a deep rooted structure of consciousness, which had cemented together the common sense and values of traditional Indian society, binding it in a network of self utilising modes of production, life and congregation. One such practice which created such self-regulating community - common sense and consciousness - was that of the production of Arts and Crafts. And it is not surprising, then, that this was the first practice that died with the progress of colonial rule.

What the British did here, was something that stayed on as a legacy in the Policy formulation orientation in independent India also. They followed what can be called a Gramscian line, that is, if a leading section of the Indian society could be made to reconstitute their common sense, or in other words, their comprehension and their values, understand and be

in tune with their modes of belief and process of functioning through the channels of encouragement, emulation, pressure control - then the rest of society, in due course of time, would also picture the socio-political world similarly. Now it largely depended on the cultural reproduction of the national community to name and picture the country. This self-evidential view (of the social world) of the elites was to alter the view of the lower orders through cultural initiatives by the ruler. However, what these intelligent colonial policy makers failed to grasp was that the instrument of culture which they were to use, would itself not be very effective. This was because the cultural space of Indian society, just like the organisation of traditional Indian society itself, was hierarchical and divided between high and subaltern cultures, masked together in a web of mutual complementarity in belief, practice and production, bound on all sides by subtle barriers and codes of confidentiality. Also, another linked attribute to this was, that these so perceived lower order ideas, discourses, modes of Art practice, Cultural production, symbols of social living, rituals, etc. - were not badly done or badly copied versions of high culture. It was not the "lack" or "absence" of higher discourse

but a very different one whose rules, codes, emphasis, ironies - had a place of their own. And just as the intricacies, the feeling, the pain and joy of the upper culture or Art practice was not gathered by the lower, the intricacies, skills, inflexions of the lower were also unavailable to higher culture. This in turn had an astounding effect on the culture of the lower orders. It insulated out the cultural instruction coming from the top.

Here again, two things need to be mentioned, which have trickled through to post colonial Indian Policy orientation or rather one should be more precise to call it two blind spots which have been left behind as a part of the legacy of British colonial Policy making in Independent India. Firstly, the Government of India, while legislating on any aspect of modern Indian political life including that of 'Arts and Culture' did so while carrying forth the same evidential view of the colonial rules - i.e. in spite of being a part of this structure, they too attempt to look for and then identify the site of a common sense which could be displaced and replaced by a new westernised elitist English speaking one. They also did not comprehend, in their Policy formulation (at least) the multilayered variations and sensitivities of Indian Art production,

for example, instead the attempt all along was to expect the new Indian elite to carry the new alphabet of social reasoning into the lower, less enlightened orders of society. To illustrate their point, one could see that the entire idea behind the establishment of the three National Akademies in the capital of India, was more in this direction. As mentioned before, from the names of these institutions to the kind of studio Arts which are promoted here, are all imported.

Secondly, even the nationalist elite during their great enterprise to mobilise the masses, raise their consciousness and compose them together as a nation to fight out imperialism, were not able to build shared homogenised space of common sense which would be the meeting point of different layers of discourse, ideas languages and consciousness in varied lifestyles where both high and low culture would meet and register their unity with each other. They too failed to create a single circle of publicity for political ideas. And for them too the divisions remained mundanely elites and masses. This has resulted in the most significant cultural fact in modern Indian political life. What is significant is that this has been ardently and



continuously been reflected since 1947 in all Policy perspectives in which the elites are entrusted with the torch for society. But most of Indian society did not agree with the nationality of colonial Policies. As their logic unfolded the phenomenon seemed to be more complex and sinister, incompatible with its declared ideology. Instead of helping they hindered all growth.

Now given an adult suffrage democracy this leads to practical paradoxes. And if the political epistemics of the entire process are spelt out, then the elite-mass relation after freedom came to be written as the state-society relation. Then the elites view of truth and justice, benefit, development and modernity of the political world came to be the State's view. There were, of course, serious limitations to this because a State as vast as modern India, came to be deeply stratified. Lower elements of the British as well as the masses in general could hardly share the same political world view and rationality of the elites. Moreover due to the lack of a process which build any commonly shared world view or consciousness, the masses, (although in times of great political movements, followed their elites), did not, however, surrender the confidentiality of their political world to them. It may be difficult to plot their cognitive

terrain because unlike the ideas of the elite and the State which were constantly broadcast, propagated, repeated, undervalued, their's were less structured. And it is precisely these ideas that need to be gathered and worked upon today in these elite policies. For Art and Culture, just like the flow of ideas or like the pattern of lifestyles and cannot be put into watertight policy legislation. And if and when they are, these policies then should be based on sensitivity to mass perspective and cognition. And this is even more so important since all policies enjoy subtle, silent but massively significant cultural approval of the modern elite. Members of this class are dispersed thinly but crucially throughout the Government and modern sectors. What is remarkable is that even if policies of the elite aim at grass root institutions and audiences, they are so preconceived in rigid hierarchial structures of centralisation of authority, accountability and resource allocations that the largest share of the cream invariably falls in the bowls of the leading sections of society if not the policy makers themselves. Take for example, the setting up of the State Art Akademies as affiliates of the National Art Akademies. Even though they are to be given full autonomy in their functioning to assimilate,

promote and propogate local Art practise they are unable to execute fully even one of these objectives. This is because central Akademis refuse to cut their apron strings and the Central Government refuses to cut the Akademies purse strings from its hands. The result is the maintenance of an entire bureaucratic and infrastructural paraphenelia at the cost of the exchequers money and under the pretext of State work done for the sake of promotion of Art. But what kind of work done and for whose benefit? And what kind of Art? This is something one should look into especially today when State finances are limited and there are other as needy avenues.

Moreóver since major Government policies have their final point of implementation very low down in the bureaucracy, they are often reinterpreted beyond recognition precisely at the point that matters most, the point of implementation. However, as a result of multiferous injection of policyming in every sphere of civil life, this policyming State has lost much of its coersion. But even though on one hand the coersion has weakened, on the other hand, this has given rise to another, probably more thoroughly and efficiently damaging trend. This reinterpretation of government

policies takes a direction which sees the utilisation of internal space for lower level initiative which leads to an unanswerable argument for actual encouragement of nepotism and corruption. Centralisation of political authority in all spheres of institutional arrangement has tended to slide backwards to a more historically familiar style of irresponsible power, under various excuses from arenas of public criticism, responsibility as well as from arguments of social justice and equality.

There is another reason why a fresh look is needed for old problems of state institutionalisation of Art practice or formulation of Policies for the same. The need for such a renewed attempt has grown even more so recently because old problems had cropped up new dimensions and the institutional legitimacy of a top-heavy State seems to be wearing thin today. The backlash of nationalist mobilisation of majority consensus had made the early part of political construction in India (after independence) relatively easy. Otherwise setting up of political institutions too would have been exceedingly difficult. They represented a sufficient consensus of the organised groups. This showed a sense of miraculous contingency of some of the central segments of the fairly

impressive institutional structure that congress under Nehru built. But today we can afford to be constructively retrospective and consider if such institution has helped the dissemination of "Cultural Unity" of our country better. Cultural unity is a universal objective proclaimed in each constitution of the three National Akademis. In Nehru's zest to counter the opposition inside his party after Patel's death, he strove to look for an allegiance elsewhere and this led him to make a great extension in the magnanimity, size and functions of the permanent executive in terms of an alternative base or apparatus in the bureaucracy. Needless to say that this applied to the field of Art promotion too. A vast cultural infrastructure in terms of bureaucratically manned institutions and offices were built. Today then the implications of this complex of institutions and their staff need to be discussed. On one side the political behaviour of state managers have seem to discredit the institutions of democracy, on the other, progressive public dissent has seemed to turn against the State from itself. The difficulties have arisen not from the outside but internally. The institutional forms that the early nationalist leadership created for the benefit and well being of their common people seem to

come under pressure precisely when more of such common folk seem to (at least threaten to) enter into the spectacle of State's decision making positions. In the field of Art, such a trend should have ideally been very progressive and healthy for the polity at large. If the process of encouragement and dissemination of aesthetical production and Art forms, and the encouragement, sponsorship and development of potential talent were taking place, then there could be nothing more to be asked for. However one often wonders why this did not happen. For with the accessibility of the masses to the form of State organisation of Art practice, should there not have been an amalgamation of different levels of rationalities of the people. Should the attempt not been on the part of the State to open this two way process, both in its potential to encourage and patronise as well as in the already existing cultures-promotion structures and policies? These institutions, the Art Akademis, standing at the apex of a highly bureaucratised centralised pyramid should have been more responsive to the so called, subaltern cultural semiotics and modes of art and political expression. And simultaneously one would have expected them to concentrate in perfecting all the activities already going on in them, not to say start

of the past is the basis on which contemporary cultural experiments can be launched, keeping alive the "creative expression" of today, to leave a legacy of the present generation's achievement to form a base on which the future would innovate and progress further. In such a discourse then when one talks of "preservation" of past heritage, it means not only decorating our heritage with a nominal, and museumatic value but also for seeing our present endeavours of modernisation, development, etc. as being based on such values which are totally divorced from those of the past. Then these new values are transplanted, imported and have not been evolved on native soil as a consequence of pulls, pressures and intricacies of Indian life. These values are alien, have a certain transparency and externality which in turn creates a need to authoritatively impose them either by symbolising them as new-norm systems of the modern generation or through the mechanisms of the coercive state apparatus. So any Government policy perspective feels the need to "orient" "Cultural sensitivities" and propose a policy in which the state can play a "catalytic role in the development and progress of culture" calling it "arms length intervention" but

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40. *ibid.*

new ones to reach to a larger audience. Instead what happened was just the contrary. Government Policy perspective on promotion of Art and Culture—practice continued to be confined in a highly centralised authoritative bureaucratic mentality with their attempts to "trickle down" their definition of Art and Culture as the articulate aspiring modernist one. Today there is even more of a need to weigh the compatability of institutional logic of democratic forms and the logic of democratisation in terms of greater political articulateness of ordinary people. All such studies (like this one) which aim to review the working of any state institution in the past 46 years without making reasonable defences in their favour, (that for instance this is too short a span for institutions to take roots or adapt themselves in a different historical milieu) become relevant in their contribution. Today the paradox of institutionalism is even more evident than before. As democratisation of the exclusive elite preserves of modern Indian politics would seem to threaten their spectacularity when thrown in with the alphabet of the lower discourse. In other words, if Indian politics and policy making would become more responsive to the Will of ordinary people, then on the other side, simultaneously, precisely this



Will would make it less democratic in its refusal to confirm to the principles on which nationalist elites established their institutional paraphenelia. This is culminating into a deep crisis of intelligibility between the two discourses, now that the lower discourse has enfranchised itself and making itself heard precisely through the opportunities created by the upper one. The adequation then has to be arranged, not between a rational programme of policy, prepared by the elite carried out by an instrumentally viewed State into a resisting, irrational society, but the other way around.

As mentioned in Chapter One, State Art Akademis have to be reasonably responsive to popular, folk and tribal forms of Art production and they should attempt to build on a convergence of their own forms of intelligibility and potential capacities to be reasonably autonomous and independent in their operations.

Today we can see that cultural bureaucrats have been quite insensitive to many of the needs and aspirations of talented deserving artists. May be in the past much of the terrain of classical civil society initiatives of capitalism were undertaken by the State.

And may be the state was doing functions which were left to the civil society institutions. And also maybe State could only work through the techniques of an unreconstructed colonialist bureaucratic style, wholly monological, criminally wasteful, utterly irresponsible and unresponsive to public sensitivity. Solicitous, uncivil, expansionist, screened from accountability. The result was that instead of an all round reduction, regional inequalities continued to intensify while the State tended to concentrate opportunities and resources in the centres of political power. But today such processes might have outworn their limited value too. The irresistible bureaucratisation of social life in the absence of civil society has created serious problems. And today may be it's time that the cultural consequences of this process need to be analysed carefully, precisely because of the relative successes of the long term development strategies in India which have tended to reopen deep divisions of discourse in Indian society. The truth of the existence of such discourses remain, even though all of them share a certain commonality at different levels; they have different things to say about our political-cultural world, its structure, purpose, ideals. But they all have a common way of arguing about it and when looked

at from the outside it shows the creation of an underlying unity. And exactly due to this, many see hope, of fitting them into a nationalist discourse of cultural unity of the country where ends do not burn out against each other but constructively together. Even though independent Indian state has followed a programme of modernity which has not sought to be grounded in the political vocabulary of the nation, it is time that all nationalist Policy discourse on promotion of aesthetics and Art practice in the country attempts to no longer neglect the question of cultural reproduction of society as a whole, thus placing itself in a larger perspective. Even though many of the ideas including the entire concept of establishment of Art Akademi offices in the country were initially imported and transplanted, we seem to possess this capacity to transform the above mentioned situation to our advantage, precisely because of standing at cross roads, to reconstitute a popular commonsense about the politico-cultural world, talking of the new conceptual vocabulary and meaning of the Arts, institutions, impersonal power, with the subaltern political understandings or the vernacular everyday discourses of rural and small town Indian society. Only then this accentuating ironical divergence between populist

Government Policies and popular consciousness would fall.

## CHAPTER FOUR

AN EFFORT TOWARDS A NATIONAL CULTURE POLICY, (1992).

"The form of Government that is most suitable to the artist is no Government at all. Authority over him and his art is ridiculous".

- Oscar Wilde, When his play SALOME was banned

## CHAPTER FOUR

### AN EFFORT TOWARDS A NATIONAL CULTURE POLICY, (1992).

For the first time perhaps the Government of India has formally marked its intention of drafting an explicit "National Policy on Culture". In 1992, the Central Department of Culture, under the Ministry of Human Resource Development circulated a draft on this intention in the form of "An Approach Paper" which was divided into three parts. Part one dealt with the general policy orientation of the Government and the perceived "urgency" of the readjusted "role of the State in Culture"; Part two talked of "Specific Objectives" for the creation of a Policy; and Part three was entitled "Plan of Action". It hailed the idea of establishment of another bureaucratic institution called the "Bhartiya Sanskriti Parishad" to oversee all art and culture activities in the country.

This chapter has been an attempt to highlight mainly two areas of concern under this topic which have been categorised separately into two sections for convenience. The first section of this chapter is a general comment on a policy perspective of the Government on matters cultural and the second section analyses each part of the Approach paper separately.

## **PART ONE**

### **THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY PERSPECTIVE AND ORIENTATION ON ART AND CULTURE**

The Indian Government till date has been quite indifferent to the existence and importance of a culture policy. When cultural policy issues have been equally important for India (as they are for other countries), then it makes one wonder how not just the practitioners of policy analysis but even formulators (the party with a majority in Parliament) and implementors (the permanent executive) have afforded this indifference. Indifference however has not meant that the Government has had no formal public policy pronouncements. It has, on the contrary voiced its explicit intentions with specific programmes and schemes designed for particular target audiences. It has even built a multiferous network of organisations, assisted and sponsored others. But it has not had a definite tangible National Policy on Art and Culture (this however does not adhere to a view that formulating a policy on a specific area is an inevitable solution for the promotion or progress of the same, nor a guarantee that specific programmes designed within policy guidelines are manifest with assured success in implementation, not overlooking the possibility of major deficiencies in the policy itself).

As Joan Erdman says that Cultural policy also can be as instrumental as economic or foreign policy as it encompasses efforts by states to articulate and define national identity and a public philosophy. Broadly this concerns such questions as what it means to be an Indian, what they should value, and how they can achieve the things they value. Policy then defines, more or less, what constitutes identity, value and progress even though this may be preformulated and dictated. It raises considerations about the meaning and value of history, what ought to be the common or shared present and how to reach what we aspire for in the future. Public philosophy raises questions about the political and social order, for example, what are India's publicly-shared concerns, beliefs and aspiration and how they are to be expressed in institutional arrangements; to build a distinctive world view from diverse elements of a shared but disputed past, a common but contradictory present, and an uncertain and partially determined future. It's domain then is procedure and legitimacy and it addresses the problem of regulated conflict among

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21. See Joan Erdman, 'who should speak for the performing Arts', 'Cultural Policy in India' (Ed), Llyod I Rudolf (P.76), Chankya Publications, 1984, Delhi.



domesticators. The reason why cultural policy may be as essential as any other policy is that it is likely to raise questions concerning production or resource allocation or interests which interest and overlap. It deals with priorities of distribution (of expertise, funds and concerns), regulation (of excessively overt monopolies of a few institutions or personalities and of the government capacity of intervention in autonomous or semi-autonomous art centres) and of allocation (of resources, honour and opportunities). As Lloyd I. Rudolf says,<sup>22</sup> "the type of policy that can be distinguished as "cultural" can include the areas of history (historiography and its expression in text book), religion, language, minorities, education, science and technology and the arts." "These various areas are often difficult to separate in practice and, indeed tend to be reinforcing and cumulative".<sup>23</sup>

Like Cultural Policy for other areas, Cultural Policy for the Arts raises both constitutive and instrumental policy issues. "Constitutive policy issues arise from art's capacity to create and inculcate languages for meaning and beauty that shape a nation's world view and

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22. See Lloyd I. Rudolf (Ed.), "Cultural Policy in India", 1984, Chanakya Publications, New Delhi  
ibid (p.15).

23. ibid, (p.5).

identity." <sup>24</sup> Joan Erdman in an article "who should speak for the performing Arts?" <sup>25</sup> focuses attention on questions of professional standards and representation, the Government's reluctance to respect the autonomy of cultural institutions created to promote interests in the Arts is in part a reflection of its paternalism, the Government's habit of authority <sup>26</sup> and the penchant for discretion that accompanies it. The attempt has been to link the outlook and actions of today's government officials to traditional forms of court patronage <sup>27</sup> and to highlight the tension between the performing arts which are understood as a Government service that meets a low-priority public need as well as a form of life that shapes perception and reality. It further elaborates differences over standards and the allocation of resources that separate government officials and artists in general. Rudolf

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24. *ibid*, (p.18).

25. Joan Erdman, "who should speak for the performing Arts? The case of Delhi Dancers, in Rudolf (Ed.), "Cultural Policy in India".

26. See A.P. Thornton, "The Habit of Authority: Paternalism in British History", 1966, Allen and Unwin, London.

27. Joan Erdman, "The Maharaja's Musicians: The organisation of Cultural performance at Jaipur in the 19th Century, in Sylvia Vatuk (Ed.), "American studies in the Anthropology of India", 1978, Mandohar, Delhi.

contrasts the explicit cultural policy for science with implicit cultural policy for the Arts in support of the above argument. The autonomy of cultural policy for science is protected by the esoteric nature of scientific knowledge and practice and the widely-held view that science and its applications are indispensable for national development and security. The autonomy of cultural policy for the Arts is more problematic. For policy makers not only is Art more exotic but even more exoteric. It is more accessible to wider publics than the sciences and they can more easily claim sufficient expertise to pass informed judgements with respect to the Arts, rather than the sciences.

An Implicit cultural policy for the arts which operates without a clear policy mandate is administered by the Department of Culture in the Ministry of Human Resource Development. At present the satellite cultural agencies which this department and the External Affairs Ministry support, lack coherent policy guidance. Neither the Cabinet nor the Parliament have found the means or created the occasions to formulate or endorse cultural policy generally. Policy, then, has emerged ad-hoc and peacemeal through administrative actions that reflect, (for the most part), the views

and preferences of administrative officials or those dependent on them. For example, the three National Akademis or Art were administrative creations. The three National Review Committees (Bhabha in 1964, Khosla in 1974 and Haksar in 1980) have prepared reviews and assessments accompanied by some programme recommendations but have made little impact on official doctrine and practice. Unlike other areas (like science where organised communities of specialist practitioners have had a significant voice in policy) knowledgeable practitioners have had a very nominal say in Culture Policy for the Arts. The nominally autonomous Akademis have remained under official tutelage and control. Individuals representing communities of practising artists are less influential in policy bodies, less evident in organisational roles than are, let's say, active and retired government servants. The system of government nomination to the Akademis and official staffing of Akademi secretariats de facto have vitiated rhetorical commitments for artistic autonomy. <sup>28</sup> Accomplishments in the creative

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28. See O. Gupta, "Sangeet Natak Akademi; Bureaucracy's Tight Grip," India Today, March 16 and 31, 1991. Also see, The Overseas Hindustan Times, February 18, 1992, "Aiming High, Falling Low?" (pp.12) and "who cares for Creative Writers?" (p.8). Also see "Akademis Going on," Mainstream Vol.20, No.31, April 3, 1982, (pp.3-34).

arts are best appreciated by a country's own connoisseurs, critics and performers. Because the creative Arts are in their initial expression are distinctively Indian. A cultural policy which is more attuned to indigenous definitions and concepts than to world standards appropriate to science is more likely to foster national identity.<sup>29</sup> Until Indian artistic community of practitioners develop forms and channels of countervailing pressure and power that can effectively represent their common interests, the Government may continue to pursue a cultural policy for the Arts in its accustomed paternalistic, patrimonial, patronising (and hence discretionary) manner. Without a degree of representation and autonomy accorded to artists they will continue to be asked to deliver a service that meets putative public need rather than to enhance or transform cultural perception and meaning.

Indian artistic and intellectual activity is

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29. Indigenous concepts and definitions are delineated in writings by both Indian and non-Indian scholars. Recent-articles and books on this topic include G.C. Pande, "The Meaning and Process of Culture, 1972, Shiva Garwal and Company, Agra; Milton Singes, "On the Semiotics of Indian identity", in American Journal of Semiotics I, 1, 1981 Fall, (pp.85-126); A.K. Ramanujan's "Is there an Indian way of thinking?" Unpublished papers.

multiple in style and form. There is a need for an implicit Culture Policy which attempts to propagate an intimate knowledge of India's great and little traditions with an aim to utilise available resources in ways that nurture and strengthen India's shared, if not common, future, and afford opportunities for these multiple paths, preserving what is old and valued but perhaps dying, as well as what is new, less understood and essential for national identity and confidence. Performing, visual and literary arts can create this confidence and may even shape national unity and identity. For example, the national integration policy of post independence India promoted the concept of the classical arts as a unifying factor culturally. Fears of unruly fissiparous regionalism were met by giving particular regional forms of classical arts, national recognition. The reviving, preserving and re-shaping of indigenous arts. (including visual, -

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30. See, for example, the discussions during the 1960's and 1970's in "Cultural Forum", and queries raised by the Press (which had become a vehicle for criticism as well as affirmation of government decision in cultural policy) in, for instance, "Innovation vs. Tradition", (Hindustan Times, April 4, 1977), "People told to patronise Artists" (Hindustan Times, October 17, 1976), "The National School of Dance demanded". (National Herald, April 24, 1977), Also see, "Indian and Foreign Review" 18-9-1981 entitled, "Evolving Trends on the Cultural Front", by Krishna Chantanya. etc.

literary and performing arts) which characterised the pre-independence period and led to two distinctive efforts by the government after 1947). The first was a textual legitimisation of performing arts<sup>31</sup> and the second was an attempt at enlargement of regional styles to all-India importance. These two became the dual motives of an explicit Cultural Policy. While western (European) cultural progress promised on change-i.e. the acceptance of new directions in the fine and classical arts-India's state supported cultural development featured dissemination of extant cultural forms to an urban and sophisticated audience where the previously segregated religious and secular performances, conjoined. Even the folk performing arts which were paraded annually to mark the Republic Day celebration the capital were to promote the goal of, secular national integration. As Mulk Raj Anand says,<sup>32</sup> Central Government's cultural patronage has proved to be a conservative force, endorsing continuity in traditions and affirming past accomplishments,

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31. See, for instance, Kapila Malik Vatsayan, "Classical Indian Dance in Literature and the Arts", 1986, Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi. Also chapter six of this text with this aspect in detail.

32. Mulk Raj Anand, "culture, Decoration of Felt Experience", in Cultural Forum 13, (1 Oct., 1976).

rather than encouraging experimentation. In this respect Government patronage differs from that imputed by the princes who were personally involved as connoisseurs and appreciative audiences of their artists works and performances. Such patron-princes recognised innovation as accomplishments that adorned their states.<sup>33</sup> After independence and integration of princely states, artists were expected to produce "art for arts sake". Giving awards to artists and separating honoured fellows from governing Council members were ways of maintaining a style by the Government which was similar to former princely patronage. By enlarge experimentation and innovation (to for example, traditional Indian arts), threatened its preservation and thus was less supported by the new state. National institutions, autonomous but funded entirely by the Central Government (like the National Art Akademis), concentrated their efforts, concerns and resources on major metropolitan centres and on established art centres (Evaluation of grants given to institutions on a state-by-state basis, from information provided in the Sangeet Natak Akademi

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33. The Raja Kelkar Museum in Poona offers as excellent collection of objects which were produced to please innovation seeking princes.



annual reports, shows that four states were the primary beneficiaries of grants by the Government in sample years 1966-67, 1971-72 and 1980-81 namely, New Delhi, West Bengal, Madras and Maharashtra. Least supported states were Goa, Kashmir, Haryana and until 1981, Punjab Rajasthan, Karnataka and Manipur. Although there has been some change in state boundaries in this period, the charting of grants reveals a dramatic shift in the number and allocation of grants after 1971-72. In 1980-81, the number and amount of grants more than doubled in West Bengal, New Delhi, Madras and Maharashtra, still leading the list of states which benefitted). The folk Arts too were preserved as ethnographically interesting variation and interpreted in ways that promoted secular national integration, or else were reviewed and expanded as potentially commercial ventures. And the Government through its "autonomous" institutions became involved in programmes, awards, scholarships, research, grants, festivals, competitions, seminars, training programmes and publications. Thus "autonomy" (as the basis of a state's science policy, for example, and "autonomy") in national Akademis for the arts reflect different relationships with the state. Art is accessible to the ordinary bureaucrat. Expertise in art is made

evident in performance, broadly defined as an act of creation and interpretation. Evaluation of performance is open to non-artists-connoisseurs, critics, attentive lay public-people who may or may not be sophisticated about particular artistic performance standards and traditions. Thus artists are less readily acknowledged at the national level (as leaders or even decision makers in their own field). Their creation and performances are subject to influence and criticism of their audiences and patrons. They are more dependent on others to establish their legitimacy through support and honours there is no external measure of their success-such as victory in war, industrial growth etc. The assumption that artists are in competition among themselves for limited favours and audiences and that their goals are individual rather than collective, proves self-fulfilling when non-artists in powerful positions take advantage of the internal jealousies and lack of coordination. (Except for writers, majority of artists have neither interest groups nor unions to plead their causes)<sup>34</sup> Hence there is no urgent need today for any Government Policy perspective on Art and Culture to take into account all such above mentioned -

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34. Rudolf (Ed), Cultural Policy in India, (p.97)

problems and trends in the field. Only then can we look forward to a National Culture Policy which may be more forthcoming than any attempted policy perspective previously.

## PART II

### A PERCEIVED NEED FOR A NATIONAL POLICY ON ART AND CULTURE:

#### THE APPROACH PAPER (1992):

The Department of Culture, Ministry of Human Resource Development in late 1992 circulated "An Approach Paper" which was an attempt to voice some views and issues which were thrown up during an array of seminars, workshops, symposia, etc. organised by the Government and other concerned institutions especially in the past two years to muster urban public awareness, if nothing more, on a perceived need for a National Culture Policy. However, the final shape in which this paper was drafted turned out to be somewhat different than what was deliberated upon (even in written form) in many of the above mentioned meets. This part is an attempt to elaborate upon some of the contents of this Approach Paper.

In its opening statement the Approach Paper relates "Culture" to life in general and as part of "Development" stating that in the last thirty-five years, Rupees six hundred thousand crores have been spent on Development out of which the amounts spent on culture have been around 0.11 percent of its annual expenditure approximately. Keeping in view that this newly discovered "dimension" of Culture as a part of the State's "Development" endeavour (in terms of five year plans, yearly schemes and programmes etc.) is a recent policy orientation,<sup>35</sup> a renewed policy perspective of the Government of India, this accusation by the Government itself seems quite amazing. Besides culture is seen as only a "dimension"<sup>36</sup> which has not been commensurate with the broad social needs, intrinsic values to improve the quality of life. Thus marking a view which says that culture is a dimension, not a whole way of life permeating, constituting each of its

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35. This orientation was first officially formulated by UNESCO in 1970's in its international meet on "Development and Culture" in Paris, picked up by the Haksar Committee Report (1990) and now that the dire necessity of relating culture to development has been internationally asserted, the Approach Paper of the Government of India (1992) also talks of it.

36. National Policy on Culture, An Approach Paper, Department of Culture, Govt. of India, (p.1, paragraph 1.1)

aspects. This "dimension" then has to be departmentalised, developed and disseminated through out civil polity through Government policies. The Approach Paper Says that the "Country" has reached a stage in its economic and technical development when the cultural dimension needs to be brought into sharper focus and strengthening; <sup>37</sup> in other words stating that it is only after a certain stage of economic Development, culture becomes important (alongwith the unwilling admission that 'culture" has been neglected till now, although not in so many words). While on one hand, this paper admits the mistake in its previous policy orientation on divorcing Culture from development, on the other hand by stating as above, it shows that conceptually it still differentiates between the two when it sees that economic development is a precondition for cultural development. And one has to rethink whether the country has really reached a stage of economic and technical development which was a precondition for cultural development (!), or on the contrary has the Government reconsidered the development of the activities of this neglected department of Culture' (since we do not have a Ministry

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37. *ibid*; (p.1, Paragraph 1.2).

of culture till date). As a consequence of the recent backlash of communal upsurge and carnage in which our very identity as a nation has been challenged; the statellite electronic media's invasion from "other cultures" patternising development as modernisation after a particular dominant design of the western nations, as mechanical imitation of their particular way of "affluent" life etc.

The report accepted by UNESCO's inter-Government Committee of the World Decade for Cultural Development (1990) was also critical of this trend when it said that "... there is a need for multi-cultural and pluralistic conceptions in which different ways of living, different belief systems (and) values are accommodated....."<sup>38</sup>

And although this Approach Paper of the Government does acknowledge the role and importance of this much neglected dimension of cultural activity in our national life in general along with a need to readjust and redefine its significance, it also clearly reasserts the need to mark out" the area of public intervention

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38. Refer to the Final Report of the Inter-Governmental Committee of the World decade for cultural development. Second regular session. Annexure - IV, (p.3)

in culture" (in effect meaning state intervention) i.e.  
"the role of state in Culture assessed and  
39  
readjusted".

The approach paper lays out the National Culture Policy perspective of the Government of India as follows : -

The paper states that this policy "recognises the need to develop strategies to sensitise people, particularly the young to creative expression in a framework of values which are generally accepted as those which enrich the quality of life".

"It is also to devise strategies to promote the development of the various forms of creative expression : to preserve what of abiding value in the manifestation of creative expression which may be changing or giving way to others : and to recognise the diversity in these forms which taken together constitute what can be called the culture of India".

At the outset, it is a little difficult to understand how the Government, through such a policy can undertake the task of "sensitising" people to what

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39. The approach paper, (p.3, Paragraph 1.4)

it calls "Creative expression". On the most it can only attempt to create the necessary facilities, opportunities and infrastructure for the promotion of Cultural and Art activities which may inturn lead to the above mentioned state of the individual. Also if "values" are set within a framework they tend to become more rigid, obstinate and narrow visioned in their constitution having more of an adverse influence than qualifying to "enrich the quality of life" and becoming the conceptual foundations of any National Culture Policy. Besides "Creative expression" may be a quality which is constituted by its very capacity and resilience to constantly renovate, and develop its epistemological apparatus and productive modes in accordance to changed circumstances and needs of the time. Maybe this is what then makes this expression "Creative", alligned with progress of the present generation and celebration of life in each sphere of civil society. Each generation then is able to contribute specifically towards this great reservoir of cultural resources that a society treasures for its future generations. But if "Creative expression" (by which the paper here means the fine arts, dance, music, theatre, etc) is fit into a framework of values" which themselves are legitimised by, for example, such



Government documents, as those generally accepted" then this expression is accorded a special bureaucratic status in the Government's hierarchy of priorities on the basis of which it devises "strategies to promote the development of various forms of creative expression", then maybe it is time to examine whether this expression really is able to remain "creative" at all, even in the sense the term "creative" is implied by this Approach Paper. For (as this paper itself admits that) whenever there is a loss of confidence in capacity of this "creative expression" to build and move forward which it can only do on the basis of the "value" created at each successive stage that one hears the need to "preserve" the abiding values of the past. Creative expression is dynamic, one cannot "preserve" it. It cannot be fossilised or else the expression of creativity which lies in its capacity of resilience and evolution will die and it will no longer be creative. Evolution of creative expression is only possible if it moves on the basis of the intrinsic value of its previous stage. It uses the previous stage as a stepping stone to evolve and move forward. Its like alphabetical progression. New contemporary language can only be created by the alphabets which have been designed and perfected in the past. This abiding value

intervention nevertheless. It would also attempt to "revisit the widespread coarsening of sensibility, loss of sense of values, erosion of pluralistic vision and reduction of vast masses into passive recipients rather than active participants in processes of culture".<sup>41</sup>

One wonders how a policy can resist a process of "widespread coarsening of sensibility" (for whatever the Approach Paper means by it), granting that the way this statement is thrown without operationalisation, it could mean just about anything or nothing. Akademi coercion can be of many kinds and from many quarters. One of the most recognised source of coercion is state policy itself.

The paper further spells out national identity of India as truly and inevitably pluralistic". "The policy would insist that Indian culture cannot be identified with any single tradition and consists of an ever enriching multiplicity of many traditions". Culture, then was seen as a "Central instrument of discovering integrating and asserting the national identity of India....".

Part II of the Approach Paper entitled

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41. *ibid.*

"Objectives" talked about an attempt to "deliberate a blue print for areas which need urgent attention and public support."<sup>42</sup> It professes the need for action by individuals, numerous voluntary agencies and community participation on the whole, thereby not only sharing the responsibilities of this policy with those agencies and individuals but also declaring that this proposed policy would be "dealing not with the total spread and complexity of culture but only with some of its aspects and segments". However what exactly constituted some of these aspects was not specified. It also talked about replacing the "old notion of patronage" by that "of public support", effective coordination between the activities of various agencies in the states and the centre and "decentralisation being a key factor in cultural promotion".

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Hence, this paper felt it was necessary that a National Culture Policy should ensure community participation at all levels, including agencies such as Panchayats, local bodies, etc. And the other suggestions like better coordination of infrastructural facilities to provide multi-points for promotion, funds

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42. The approach paper, (p.5, Paragraph 2.1)

avoiding duplication of work and responsibilities etc. were more or less a repeat of what the Haksar Committee Report (1990) had pointed out.

Part-III, "Plan of Action" at the outset clarified that "although the state has a very definite responsibility to foster and nurture the seminal value which manifest themselves in creative expression and endeavour in different ways, direct State intervention needs to be avoided." This meant, according to the Approach paper, that the state would provide fund and facilities but not through any direct grant giving activities. Such an avoidance, the paper assumed would eliminate "various forms of intervention such as bureaucratic and political".

In the context of providing more accountability for the use of public funds, by devising what it calls a "fool-proof mechanism", the paper proposes to set up a statutory body to be called "Bhartiya Sanskriti Parishad". It would be created by law and funds could be made available to it also by law, it would place a report of its activities before Parliament annually and its accounts will be audited by the CAG. This proposed Council would consist of top level experts from various

fields of culture and would evolve a system of evaluation of works of the various grant receiving institutions whether voluntary or set up by the Central Government for which they would be receiving grants from the Council. The Parishad's relationship with the three National Akademies and other institutions would be provided for in the proposed law.

Even though the Government is making an effort, such tasks of policymaking in our country faces a multiplicity of complex problems confronting the country needing constant effective support of the community.<sup>43</sup>

Sometime in April last year (April 30, 1992) the Prime Minister Mr. P V Narasimha Rao addressed a meeting of some officials of the Information and Broadcasting Ministry. It was a meeting of a network of field functionaries whose job was to explain to the people the policies and programmes of the government in simple language, attempt to establish a support with them and communicate in an idiom that people understood most. This is perceived as "necessary by the Government as changes are constantly initiated both at

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43. The Hindustan Times, April 6, 1993, Raj Nandy, "Policing, an inevitable task" (Editorial)

policy and implementation levels. In our "Dharamashtras" commentators were better known as law givers themselves and did such a fine job that took the law to every home and explained how a particular 'sutra' applied to a particular situation. These "Prabandhkaras", the commentators, were the real mainsay of the legal system, of the value system.

So, however the idea of such field functionaries may be, no doubt commendable, but whether they have been able to do any note worthy work is yet to be seen. For to explain a Policy, a lot of creativity and innovation may be needed to break the apathy of the public. Otherwise these officials may just mean more drain on Government funds in terms of salaries and other benefits. Explaining a policy means much more than reproducing it. It probably means interpretation in relation to familiar symbols; idoms, language, figures which are understood and identified by the "drishtantas" of the common people. This imaginative endeavour can be undertaken with a "Burrakatha" or a "Nautanki" or "Tamasha", poetry, songs or in the native language of each state.

Policing especially for 'Art a Culture' in a highly heterogeneous society like India, is a much more

complex (so therefore peacemeal) affair than in a society like Japan which is at least identified by one religion and one language. India's heterogeneity - (in race, religion, language etc) than that of lest say, the United States, which again has the advantage of at least one dominant language and a constantly operating social device called the 'Melting Pot' which grills and brews all unlike into the Culture of an ideologically reguvinated marked mechanism is not simply a matter of certain structural arrangements, it faces almost intractable problem.

Al Lloyd I. Rudolf says, "In India a faction, party, group can raise but not settle an issue in cultural policy. At the same time because the states public resources authority play a large and definite role in India, than in any other industrial democracy, "Sarkar" is as much the problem as it is the  
44  
solution.

When the state indulges in the Business of culture, in the process it takes upon itself the task of disseminating and interpreting the One Best Way To Do Culture. The definition of what constitutes Culture.

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44. Lloyd I. Rodolf (Ed). Cultural Policy in India, Publication, Delhi, P. (vii)

It creates state organisations and hierarchies, major Policy statements and programmes and an entire paraphernalia to support this task. It creates entirely new hierarchies in the cultural structure of society. A new class of Artisans, artists, poets musicians, academicians, painters etc. Issues of art promotion get politicised with a scramble to occupy positions of official power and prestige created in the hierarchy of state structures built for the promotion of different Art forms. For example, these large scale canvassing for the top posts of Chairpersons and Presidents of the three National Akademis of Art and Literature situated at New Delhi.

Consequently, art produced is of a certain type in its form, content, illustration and symbolism. It is state funded Akademic art designed to fit in neatly sliced compartments (of Dance, Drama, literature and music) under the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Culture, Government of India).

This brings us to the question of what kind of Culture does the state define and disseminate. In the event of the state defining culture, (High culture, low culture, popular Culture or any other) one is



conceptually left at crossroads with utter confusion.

The state tries to define and disseminate a certain kind of image of "culture of the people and by the people" which it calls "popular".<sup>45</sup> Therefore, the state constantly feels obliged to disseminate "culture for the people" by giving direction to culture of the people i.e. popular culture. To just take one example, this was self evidently reflected in the state's organization of a series of Lok Utsavs and Apna Utsavs a few years back under prime Minister Mr. Rajiv Gandhi.

Even though the Haksar Committee report categorically denies, on the behalf of the state on having made any distinction between culture of the people and culture of the elites,<sup>46</sup> various instances in the form of sporadic legislations or policy initiatives in the field of Art and Culture including the singular ideas behind establishing National Art Akademis in the capital as centralised hierarchical bodies of Art, conceptualisation, dissemination and measurement -

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45. Russell a Berman, Popular Culture and Populist Culture, Telos No. 87, Spring 1991, New York

46. Refer to the Haksar Committee Report, Chapter Two page ten, paragraph 2.11, 2.12

indicate that although the state cared to define this popular culture, it was seen opposition to Akademi Culture whose representation and texts were authorities by minorities, associated with elites).<sup>47</sup>

For example, there was a marked shift in policy priorities marked by a greater recognition of regions and rural areas at the expense of urban publics. Policies launched after 1977 by the Janta Government were somewhat continued by Mrs. Gandhi in 1980. the emphasis remained on regional performing arts and performances by folk professional artists. (One evident consequence of this new policy direction was that many artists like classical Urban dancers etc. sought to seek avenues of independent and private patronage rather than depend wholly on the state).

Furthermore the modern Indian state, while carrying forward the tradition of state patronage and recognising that India's traditions are widely

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47. Akademi Culture is a term used for convince to refer to a particular type of art practice that came up with the establishment of the three National Akademis of Art, namely, Sahitya Kala Parishad, Lalit Kala Akademi and the Sangeet Natak Akademi, with their subsidiaries and affiliates in the states. What type of Art Practice shall be discussed in the following chapter.

diverse, operates according to bureaucratic procedures. The influences of artists on policy of a patronage dependent upon their access to political power and authoritative decision-makers. The 1980-81 "Annual Report" of the Sangeet Natak Akademi note policy changes since 1977 at the Akademi "with a view to be in line with the changes taking place all over the country"(p.3). However, shift (more than any structural or cognitive change) meant the launch of an array of Government-sponsored programmes designed at, for example, recreating traditional performances (which were neglected due to their regional roots and hence dying); rewriting ancient stories (like Indian fables etc.) so that they could present contemporary events and issues; annual Ram Lila shows, dance dramas with themes of work and progress; inculcation of family-planning information in (for example) Maharashtra's folk theatre; in corporation of expressions of nationalist aspirations using traditional symbolism in Urban poetry's "ghazals" - are all examples of this

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48. See Kapila Vatsayan, "Traditional Indian Theatre" Multiple streams", 1980, National Book Trust, New Delhi, introduction and especially p.6 where we discusses the "in-built mechanism of acceptance of 'change' or, variety, of modification within a well defined system of unity, and the eternal'."

combination.

Reflecting this orientation, a high watermark in policy legislation on Art and Culture came from the year 1985. This was the year that our newly elected Prime Minister Mr. Rajiv Gandhi ushered in a distinctive focus on, what I have talked about earlier, the much neglected local representation at the National level Art and Culture show. A relay of Utsavs of native India, tribal and folk art and theatre, classical dance and music gaiety shows, art exotia, establishments of government bodies called Zonal Cultural Centres to cover most of visible India, followed. Many states of India, for example in the North Eastern Regions, or some of the Union Territories, do not have any State Akademis for Art, some have local centres which in most cases are poorly funded and ill equipped. for many the Government

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49. 'Free Dance' and 'Modern Dance Drama' as initiated by Uday Shankar, is discussed in Mohan Khokar. "Traditions in Indian Classical dance", 1979, clarion book, New Delhi (pp 152-9). Tevia, Abrams has documented the introduction of family planning propaganda into "tamasha" performances - "Tamasha people's Theatre of Maharashtra state, India", Ph.D Dissertation, and Modern ghazals are discussed in C.M. Naim. "Traditional Symbolism in Modern Urdu Ghazal", 1969, University of Chicago Press, Division of Humanities, Chicago (pp 105-11) Michigan State University, 1974)

departments dealing with activities, and promotional facilities (if any) for 'Art and Culture' come under Ministries like Travel and Tourism or even Fisheries (!!!) For example, in Kerala - Cultural affairs are looked after by the Minister for Fisheries and Cooperation; Museums along with zoo's by the Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs. In Maharashtra - Cultural affairs are looked after by a composite department of Social Welfare, Sport and Tourism. In the Union Territory of Chandigarh they are handled by the Public Relations Department.<sup>50</sup> So this was a welcome move in such areas. But many of the functions of these government departments got duplicated with these zonal cultural centres. So instead of trying to integrate the efforts for the promotion of different kinds of art forms, what in fact happened was that folk or village art and culture was seen as a representation of popular culture, the culture of the masses of different regions of India and the establishment of state - run institutions (to take care, guide and promote a market for folk and tribal art) was seen as a (corollary to social integration or) displacing the object of an

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50. Source : Agenda for conference of Ministers and Secretaries of Culture (State and Union Territories, New Delhi, July 1989), See Appendix.

integrated Akademi Culture with material or Popular culture - both moves taken as obviously democratic. However all this was within a perspective which saw getting rid of elite texts as getting rid of the elites themselves, but not quite.

Today we see, carrying on with the same argument, that there has been a substantial expansion in the meaning of popular to accommodate a very different kind of invasion in the socialisation process of the citizen, namely, the invasion ushered in by the satellite electronic media. Today the government, after having allowed this, has started to redefine popular as a discreet set of cultural objects like melodramas, harlequin romances, commercial television and cinema etc. By doing so it has not only discredited the democratic authenticity of other (skilled) cultural objects and practices, to some extent (as now it tends to shift its focus of patronisation) but this is also leading to a comprehensive neglect of even the art forms or practices of Akademi culture. In other words, what we are witnessing today is a shift in the government's "culture of the people", that is, Popular culture in order to justify its support/allowance of such an invasion - which consequently has challenged

the sacredness of all previous cultural objects in many ways. The endeavour here would be to try and build an argument for the case of the Art and craft as also being of the people that is Popular and not something exclusive and so inaccessible.

Here two distinctions need to be made :

Firstly, we need not discredit the appropriateness of the term Popular Culture but there is a need to question the claim that this material is in fact 'popular' with all its weighty political resonances. One tune of such questioning picks up objections made long ago by Horkheimer and Adorno with their resistance on preferring the term Culture industry to 'Mass culture' or 'popular culture' - a preference implying that this material is commercially produced by a powerful segment of industry whose marketing interests very much depend on the pretense that its products are not its own but of people. The more they appear as popular, the better their sales. The academic proponents of popular culture turn into little more than the sale agents of the industry.

Secondly, it becomes necessary to question the alleged popularity of this material. This can be best illustrated by an example, let's say, of classical

Indian Dance; an established taste associated for it is seen as being representative of members of the older generation and hence is denounced in two ways.

- (1) The first way sees it as elitist, that is, of higher skills and minimum assessibility - so should be denounced by an alternative set of objects posed and declared to be popular and democratic. Even if this means calling commercial cinema as more tuned to the common person's life and understandings to give an example.
- (2) The second way is to replace the old with a new set of values, definitions and tastes. Here the informing spirit on a whole way of life does not necessarily have to depict forms of aesthetics which now seem to be in orthodox, hached, outdated and exhausted moulds. For example, matters of pure entertainment and pleasure could now easily replace the inculcation of those kind of cultural resources or assets within an individual, which were built with strict discipline, self control and hard work; Ask a middle-class English educated youngster whether she/he would like to spend an evening watching a classical dance recital or going to a discotheque and you will



have your answer. A new taste system has come up to dislodge the career of other taste systems.

So we see another very interesting trend. We see that today it is not immediately obvious that the social and political elites are the primary recipients of skilled art practice. This may have been the case a decade or so ago, but not any more. This is a decisive shift which ought to mark any perception on government policy on culture today.

While I do admit to a connection between high income and aesthetic taste, this is simultaneously more flexible and complex than can be encompassed by simplistic doubling of the vertical metaphor of High and Low (social status) from society into art, despite the seductiveness of this doubling.

This could have been done in the social history of culture in the 18th century bourgeois societies where there was a need for class-coding of culture and where polarisation or differentiation between aristocratic and bourgeois institutions was more marked.

But presently class lines in culture are more complex. In addition, the desire to settle back and forth between Culture and politics is probably a legacy

of communism which during some phases attempted to articulate cultural politics based on the assumption that certain aesthetic forms correspond well to particular political positions. Hence, there was search for politically correct art.

Interestingly, if one looks close enough, this may be precisely what happened in India. the establishment of a state-run paraphenelia for art practise which was modelled on a deliberate and particular conciousness - that art conciousness which corresponded to (if not emminated from) all the ramifications of a certain concept of art practise seen as that of an aspiring 'modern' nation which the nationalist elite chose after 1947. More simply, the concept of establishing Akademis for Art practice was itself imported. It corresponded to the setting up of the bourgeois Indian State. the linkage between the contingency of taste and imperitiveness of politics had yet another consequence in the context of the Art Akademis. this link was not an aspect of democratic politics in the realm of culture, but rather the pursuit of a particular kind of politics. The politics of careerism within the Akademi where the stakes were more mundanely - tanure and promotion, and not exotic, like demolishing hierarchy, emancipating minorities, peace

and freedom, bread and roses etc. These Akademis came to hold agendas for professional status, a new class career strategy, not very much concerned with anything beyond either art practice in studios or democratisation of their concept of art to include craft or other mediums of art representations like Tamashas or street theatre etc. to give an example. thus, it is no wonder that Jaya Jaitely says that the Tamasha Wallah exists under the gaze of the state yet unseen by it.<sup>51</sup> And wonder of wonders that the Handicraft and cottage industries are shuttled from the Ministry of Textile to that of Industry but never seen as artistic enough to be appropriated under a separate Art Akademi. (This is by no frame granting the view that building state run institutions for art are an exemplar case for the encouragement of the same).

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51. Jaya Jaitly, "The Philosophy of Handwork", The Eye, Jan-Feb, 1993, SPIC Macay Publications

CHAPTER FIVE  
THE HAKSAR COMMITTEE REPORT  
(JULY 1990)

"Reform must come from within, not from without.  
You cannot legislate your virtue"

Cordial Gibbons  
"Address", 1909

The affairs of the National Akademis have been reviewed previously on two occasions. So the Haksar Committee report is not the first of its kind. The first occasion was in 1964 by a committee chaired by Dr Homi. J. Bhabha and the second by Justice G D Khosla (between 1970-72). However, this report was chosen for this study for mainly two reasons. Firstly, it is a telling and contemporary commentary of official discourse on its perspective of the present Art scene in the country, even though it may be based on the amalgamation of views of a majority of 'distinguished people', as the report itself claims. Secondly, it has been quite thorough in its review in two senses. One, it has dealt with some common problems of the National Akademis and it has a separate chapter on each Akademis attempting to focus on details of their role and functioning. Two, it has attempted to given an "all pervasive" perspective of the forms of cultural activities that it is able to see, and the kind of promotion they deserve. This is most marked in its introductory and concluding chapters. So a reading of this report could then mark out some very interesting questions and issues for debate. And this is probably exactly what followed. For after the report was placed in Parliament, a member of public debates were

initiated, even though they were limited to the major metropolitan cities of India. The print media discussed issues which were either highlighted by the report or based on some recommendations made by it. For example, the recent controversies about the occupation of some important decision-making posts with the Sahitya Akademi as well as the Lalit Kala Akademi, the report too has been quick to voice the growing resentment of a large section of urban artists concerned with these institutions as well as the apparent inability of these Akademis (as stated by the report) to perform according to expectations both in terms of their accessibility or reach to the people outside the metropolises and in terms of the amount of government funds allocated annually for the past forty years or so to these Akademis. The government has attempted to make this report a "talked about" document inspite of its talk being confined to small circles. Consequently in the past two years (1990-92) it has organised National Seminars, symposia, etc. where it has attempted to herald debates and gather (written) views of the public at large as well as some invitees. Even though due to constraints of time this present work has not been able to detail the minutes of such meetings and general public opinions (consensus or

disagreements) on many of the pressing problems of the Akademis, yet it was on the basis of such activity that the next official Government document, a preliminary blue print on the proposed National Culture Policy, the "Approach Paper" was formulated by the Department of Culture in the Ministry of Human Resource Development.  
52

So the issues thrown up by this report and the consequent debates become even more relevant today, than ever before, for the attempt of any such line of study should be able to highlight the deficiencies and mistakes made in the past in order not to repeat them in a new Policy orientation which is now being suggested by the Government for the future.

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52. This has been talked about in the previous Chapters

**PART ONE : A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF SOME ASPECTS  
OF THE REPORT**

**A LITTLE ABOUT THE REPORT**

The Haksar Committee Report is a report of the "High Powered Committee appointed to review the performance of the three National Akademies of Art and National School of Drama.

It was sponsored by and submitted to the Department of Culture, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India in July, 1990. It was consequently placed in Parliament and has seized to be a confidential document since then.

Since the Ministry of Human Resource Development has created a Department of Culture, which retains a vast "Cultural infrastructure" modelled pyramidically with the three National Akademies of Art at the apex, the Government of India perceives the necessity periodically to constitute such expert high powered committees to go into, what it calls, - "The Performance of the three National Akademies, viz. the Lalit Kala Akademi, the Sangeet Natak Akademi and the Sahitya Akademi.



In pursuance of the recommendations made by the National Council for Culture, headed by Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, a pannel of experts was set up on March, 24, 1988.

The composition of the Committee was as follows:

Members : E. Alkazi  
Indira Parthasarthy  
K.V.Ramanathan  
H Y Sharda Prasad  
Prem Lata Sharma  
Gulam Mohammed Sheikh

Member Secretary : M.V. Rama Krishnan

Chairman : P.N. Haksar

According to the Terms and Reference : The Committee was to review:

"Working of the Sangeet Natak, Lalit Kala & Sahitya Akademis, alongwith their affiliates and subsidiaries and the National School of Drama, with reference to the objectives for which they were set up, and keeping the mind the recommendations of the Committee set up in the past on this behalf". "To recommend structural or/and any other changes that may be necessary in the Memorandum and Articles of Association and Rules and Regulations of these bodies,

consistent with their Autonomy and Public accountability".

To make recommendations on the role and functioning of the three Akademis and the National School of Drama as apex National Institutions in their respective spheres and suggest steps, for their networking with similar state/central bodies and other cultural institutions of eminence in the country.

- Scrutinization of records of institutions etc;
- Contact with a nation-wide cross-section of people concerned in their individual as well as institutional capacities;
- Interaction with as many distinguished people in the concerned fields as possible;
- A system of free discussion with individuals separately and in small groups - to - "reach out to the minds of people far more searchingly than the structured questionnaires and written responses";
- It is interesting to note here that (according to a Book edited by Mr. D.S. Rao)<sup>53</sup>, the Khosla Committee Report (1972) used a Methodology which

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53. D.S. Rao (Ed) "Three decades - A short history of Sahitya Academi 1954-84".

the Haksar now thinks as inadequate. This methodology used formal structured questionnaires for ten selected people;

- Mr. P.N. Haksar, Chairman of the Report, says that he wrote to some Vice Chancellors and some eminent persons for the first time constituted of not just government officials but owners of distinguished industrial houses (!).
- Their sample size was over a thousand people, representing what they call "every aspect of artistic and literary life in the country"<sup>54</sup>
- Also, their methodology of group discussions" to take care of some of the "articulate students in the National School of Drama, New Delhi"<sup>55</sup> was good.
- Their own reading on their assessment has been -  
".....We have been able to secure an integral view of the cultural scene in our country....." However, no criteria for qualification to the 'distinguished category of persons was mentioned. The emphasis throughout was on 'Senior Government Officers, official heads of renowned bodies, Government Council Members' etc.

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54. ibid, p 4, (1.7)

55. ibid, p 4, (1.8)

Although the interviews were conducted in different regions and in keeping with all the subsequent talk of decentralization, delegation of responsibility, demarkation of sphere of autonomy etc. - yet they did not involve people at local cultural centres, thereby enhancing these centres significance and importance, a concern which has been voiced throughout the report. Is it then surprising that they use the same approach that they are so critical of.

In an interview with Kavita Nagpal (a free lance art critic for newspaper dailies) she recalled an instance when the then Sangeet Natak Secretary Mr. K. Kothari did not allow any other official to use his discretion in selecting deserving trainees for promotional schemes, festivals, organised from time to time by the Akademi. So he personally toured different states to seek out "artists" for National and international festivals.

With this kind of orientation of the system which gives leverage to allow the existence of such an approach by decision making departmental heads of the Art organisations, does not the talk of decentralisation and delegation of responsibility ring as hypocritical(?)

Besides within this kind of an orientation of the Art Executives-incharge of the responsibility of selection and consequently promotion of deserving talent through the various Government sponsored programmes, schemes, utsavs, designed, allocated and funded for this purpose-if the Government actually adheres and submits to the demands of more and more increase in functional and decision making autonomy asked for by such persons of authority for their concerned organisation, then outcomes probably could be more inconducive and unfavourable to the above mentioned objectives and tasks in hand, than otherwise. For then, the authority and (official) autonomy of such Art directors would go completely unchecked, giving them almost a free hand in the manner in which they prefer to conduct their day to day business of Art activity promotion and management. Some may follow what they preach but most of them would not, as it is a general tendency not to resist, the extra perquisites of concentration of power coated with their positions in the centralized hierarchical structure of Art institution, organisation and networking. Hence, if this Haksar Committee Report, unlike all previous such reports, was really serious about demarkation of spheres of autonomy delegation of tasks and

accompanying responsibility within the concerned Art organisations itself, then it would first talk about breaking the authenticity of the traditional bureaucratic centralised administrative structure of this Art institutional network which spreads throughout the country (having) affiliates in states, union territories, townships, right down to the Zila or District level). However apart from some populist jargon in its second introductory chapter, where the report has spoken about decentralisation as just one of the issues among a sea of other equally imperative ones, like how promotion of culture is as important as a policy prescriptive and technology etc., there is no scheme suggested or model recommended for decentralised alternatives for breaking the centralised control and monopoly of such apex organisations. Yes, there is talk of these National Akademis responding to the centripetal and centrifugal pulls and forces of regional Art imbalances and trends but it has not been able to work out actual schemes whereby these Akademis would become repositories of assistance to either marginalised Art practices or promotion of Art practices which have been discarded by the market demand supply continues. In fact, one often wonders whether this should have been one of the first work

plan attempted by such a committee, keeping in mind its terms of reference. For was this not the very pretext for which state funded organisation of Art management prevailed in the first place.

#### **Confidentiality and Accessibility:**

Formally the report is no longer a confidential document. It was presented in Parliament in 1990 and since then it is to have made itself available to "public at large".

However, in reality it is a highly inaccessible document. It was given out to a few selected artists & 'eminent' persons through the majority of the 'artist' community and press critics lament on its unavailability.

However its state of inaccessibility is not as bad as previous such Reports, which, as many have said, have gone into hibernation. Further, due to such a problem many misconceptions about the content of the Report were flaunted. There has also been a general lack of an adequate debate on it, though recently there have been many attempts by the Ministry of Human Resource Development in organizing seminars and symposiums in which "distinguished" academicians, artists and concerned involved citizens at large have been invited to speak and attend.

### **A Content Analysis :**

The title of this report seems to be more prohibitory than encouraging. A report of a "High Powered Committee" would make a lay person, a student or even a field artist instantly uncomfortable with a direct but subconscious relation to the exclusive policy making processes and bureaucratic echelons of power, both symbolically inaccessible to the reach of these people and to their presumed sensibility levels. At a cursory glance it seems to be a very comprehensive document which has been quite thorough in detail seeking analysis of the functioning of three National Akademis of Art and the National School of Drama, New Delhi. However, a more careful reading of its introductory chapters seem mixed up as it contradicts its own statements as it proceeds. But it is precisely here that it is interesting to note the silences of its text and then an uneasiness to read between the lines completely vanishes. For it is now that one realises that this report is like Part One of an incomplete text which needs another part to concretise its suggestions and enunciate a pragmatic work plan to make its recommendations a reality. The reader finds, however, that the report in its entirety, inspite of being such heavy reading has no where spelt (even in simple words)



the actual structural deficiencies in the entire system of operation. Gathering from repeated talk in the text to refer to its appendices (which persons 'Government officials', people in 'positions of concerned authority' and even some articulate students the panel met during the course of its touring to the various parts of the country), it seems that the report is more a collection of personal views (through unstructured questionnaires, based more on informal interviews, delivered during the course of two years as the report proclaims) on one hand and on the other an amalgamation of preplanned structured issues which were predecided among the committee members to circulate through out the regions they visited and people they met.

However, accepting this as so, it would be a sacrilege to demand conceptual precision. And yet when it comes to simple logical consistency, an expectation may still stand its ground. The report does not always meet these requirements. At the same time to deny the report a serious consideration or to conclude a'prior that it lacks a coherent argument, would not be correct either if not a symptom of 'high attitude' predilections. After all arguments carrying serious social and political import are not always renowned for self conscious philosophical awareness.

It would therefore be foolhardy to look for something in the report which it never really believes it has. On the contrary, it must be judged for what it is and what it stands for. It presents 'VIP's profound observations on culture, Arts, Ethics and Democratisation. This is not to say that it is not sincere, but it possesses the sincerity of a high powered review, the honest judgements of history embodied in the experiences of a pannel of cultural judges who have stood above the common mass and seen it all happen. Alas, sincerity and honesty do not always make true statements! As it is to be expected then, this painfully arrogant report contains no analysis but presents a point of view. It projects to use a much maligned term, an ideology an approach; simpler still it contains ideas and ideas, which must be treated with utmost respect, if for nothing else solely for their enduring quality. If there is one point on which the reviewer finds him or herself in agreement with the report it is on the issue of ideas. And this, rather more because of the scant attention paid to them by others such previous reports rather than what these authors have to say about them. We are still fond of picturing our artists more like revolutionaries going out to conquer objects with a paint brush and a chisel.

The report is anything but patiently engaged in thought experiments in order to systematically understand just what it is that needs to be or can be overcome. The reviewer often becomes distasteful of ideas, often confusing them with idle talk which surely is not conducive. In a hurry to change the world, we too readily forget that this world is not made up of objective physical process independent of unseparable from these ideas, but that the latter are part of its internal constitution. If that is indeed the case, ideas become important in a non-trivial sense. Indeed, those which are deeply embodied in our practice assume a sharper significance than the ones furnished in our Art and Culture industries. And just may both coincide. Looking at them, this report attains a fresh vitality, for it gives insight not only into some of those "ways of being" that have become part of our social milieu but into those that are a true index of the political practice of some of the most important sections of our ruling elite. This is an important reason why reports like these deserve to be read, studied and, alas, reviewed.

Rarely does one find such a painstaking document about the general state of Indian Culture which focuses not just on our major cultural institutions but on the large ramifications of development, politics and education in which these institutions are placed. Official in tone, the "bureaucratize" of this report is unmistakably couched in the Nehruvian rhetoric and affirmations of its Chairman. For example, in the obvious pitch being made for the State intervention of the Arts, there is a kind of historical amnesia about the prodigious production of Art that survived and resisted colonial rule through varying traditions of dissent, strategy and sheer creative brilliance. The first stirrings of "modernity" in fiction (and not first Tagore's) are also not acknowledged. Also ignored are the adaptations of 'realism' in popular theatrical idioms, notably the 'Parsee theatre' movement, which is yet another sheer scale and effervescence. As for the radical intervention of Indian cinema and its negotiations with industrial capital and the market is not even mentioned in the report. One line of justification for this exclusion could be that these issues lie outside the purview of the report. But on the other hand a more critical reading could be that they were left out to enhance the view

that modernity in India developed through the mediation of the State, through the enlightened aegis of the Nehru administration. At a very discreet level, the report does acknowledge the importance of 'creation' in culture, (for example through the Akademis) but its critique also couched in enphemissions that it is almost negligible. Thus we learn that the "impact of the Akademis has not been widely felt" (P 147). But how many people really know about them, let alone concerned, except for artists in search of grants and awards. Then also we learn that the "accent placed on research is not strong enough (ibid) and "their publications do not reach out to the average educated home (ibid) but do they really reach the artists to begin with? "The interaction with sister institutions is far from adequate" (ibid). But one has to look into whether it exists for official purposes and the organisation of general meetings, not for publication of interaction of ideas, thoughts etc.

The very first pages of the report have taken great pains to specify that it is within the perview of its terms of reference that the "networking with the Zonal Cultural Centres be reviewed. The emphasis on attempting to review the "networking" of the entire cultural infrastructure is a new trend manifest in the

report. It is interesting to note that this task was not present in the Terms of Reference of either the Khosla Committee Report (1970-72) or the Bhabha Committee report (1964). So that Haksar Committee report has been more thorough.

However it should have clarified that they were simply reviewing a previous system of organisational functioning, accountability, channelling of resources etc. and not suggesting a new system of operation/networking. Even in its chapter on recommendations, the Haksar Committee report merely marks out the deficiencies in the prevailing system of channelisation of resources, allocations and administrative directives. It lacks in giving any concrete suggestions. The Report has been thoughtful enough to save the reader the problem of grappling between the lines to detect its conceptual frame work, for chapter two is called- "Indian Society : An approach to Culture, Arts and Values". The previous chapter ends with the lines "..... to relate Culture and Arts to the life of the people....." and, therefore, since there arises a need for an approach to frame perspectives & formulate definitions of Arts and Values (not forgetting that of Culture itself). They say "our

definition of Culture quite consciously reaches out to individuals and communities as a whole....." <sup>56</sup>

.....the relationship between culture creativity and social processes....." <sup>57</sup>

However, the report while explicating the havoc wrought by imperialism upon artistic activity, does not even bother to mention the significant decline of an entire self sufficient mode of production that is of the Handloom, Handicraft and cottage sectors. Instead the report simply says that a comprehensive critique of the havoc wrought is still to be attempted. And "we do not propose to embark upon such a task in this report" <sup>58</sup>. And yet they don't mind "embarking" upon spending time and space <sup>59</sup> talking about what we have read all along in our history books under the history of colonial India.

The report claims that it's views are different from what they call "Commentary upon development ....."<sup>60</sup>. According to them this commentary says

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- 56. *ibid*, p.7 (2.3)
  - 57. *ibid*, p.6 (2.4)
  - 58. *ibid*, p.15 (2.22)
  - 59. *ibid*, pp 15-17
  - 60. *ibid*, p. 10, (2.10)

that "it is only underdeveloped societies which refuse to differentiate between objects of utility and objects of aesthetic excellence....." whereas the report feels that "..... Our notation of creative activity would promote the desirability of cultural production which is aesthetic and functional at the same time .....

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One often wonders, when they want "to elaborate a little more upon the relation between cultural production and artifacts of utility and when they talk of the functionality and aesthetics of a product, could they have unconsciously left out any talk of the artisan and his creation. So it may have been deliberate. The need for such a deliberation could have arisen because it is common knowledge that for the Government of India, Department of Culture, Ministry of Human Resource Development, the craftsman is not the artist. Craft needs a different categorization altogether. So for the Report it is safer not to specify the sources of production of "artifacts" (even though there is a constant reference to them). However, the inevitable questions do come up. For

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61. *ibid*, p. 10, (2.10)



example, what kind of creative production is this? Is it the production of painting and poetry? If yes, then how can such production be functional (in the sense they imply here). If not, then does this kind of production include skills of pottery, printing, weaving etc? If yes, then these skills are manifest with artisans. Then how is it that the Report has overlooked a review of this sector? Is it because the Akademis do not entertain this sector? Then why do the Akademis not do so? Nevertheless, if this is the case, it is a little difficult to believe that this High Powered Report of a 'Panel of Experts' has carelessly incited allegations of this sort upon itself by bringing up talk of this sort and then leaving it where it is. Yes, this seems to be the case.

There also seems to be some amount of contradiction in what the Report has to say next. It says - 'No discourse about culture and creative arts can be complete without the mention of the vexed question of high and low culture.....we suggest that any theory of culture which commences with a differentiated view of activity..is.. a flawed view of such activity. <sup>62</sup> Then in the next statement they seem

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62. *ibid*, p. 10 (2.11)

to be falling into the same view which they consider as flawed that "our concept of culture as creative activity addressed to the whole community rather than to a few privileged citizens does not however, involve any surrender to vulgar and so called "democratic" and populist forms of artistic endeavour"<sup>63</sup>

### A Historical Perspective

'The formation of Indian Society rests crucially upon the migration of folk communities from Central and West Asia and beyond, in successive ways..... and these novel forms were successively integrated into the existing life styles of the people of India....."<sup>64</sup>

The adherence is to a "composite culture" view. It was a notion widely developed in rewriting of nationalist history and by Nehru in his "Discovery of India" etc.

The report states that there was a remarkable" openness and resilience in Society....

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63. *ibid*, p. 11 (2.12)

64. p. 13 (2.17)

Resilience Yes, but Openness, one's not very sure, about. Whether it was openness or simply the influx of different cultural influences is debatable. However, the report is correct to mark out the culture of amalgamation which developed, which is both remarkable and should be honoured. The Bhakti and Sufi tradition furthered the resilience of the Society. However, this influx also had another side to it, which the report does not mention. That side led to the birth of some orthodox, customs or conventions like the Purdha, Sati, bygamy, female infanticide etc. Further one agrees with the view that what this influx actually created was a "Public culture" in interaction of sense of 'Neighbourliness' which was not front-to-front composite (as is the dominant construction) but a back-to-back (functional) tolerance and mutual respect of social differentiations etc.<sup>65</sup>

In its approach the Haksar Committee report envisaged a continued role of the State as a patron of Art and Culture, so that Art is not all profit making. Although it warned against.. "vulgar intrusion of the State....."<sup>66</sup> They say that the market which is

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65. Dr. S. Kaviraj - Lectures on Politics and Culture, Nov. 91

66. p.22 (2.35)

normally set up to the tune of mass production, chooses to ignore creative endeavour drown it in the muddy waters of mass culture', projected by the media i.e. while "recognizing the importance of market in the production of goods and services, we must also accept that the State has vital role in the field of culture"<sup>67</sup> .

They also mark state patronage for another reason. They say "those who seek to shape and articulate popular aspirations and the changing sensibility of people through new art forms should receive support from the state"<sup>68</sup>

However, what the report does not mention is that apart from other things, the state should also take up the "promotion and development of such" artist - "craft persons which have been discarded by the market. For example, the sanganeri Printers of Rajasthan who had made hay while Indian exporters shone on their district in 1980's, are in a bad shape today with almost no domestic market demand to fall back upon. So is the case with "Kasuti" embroidery makers of Dharwad or the Gorakhpur Prajapathi's etc.

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67. p.22 (2.37)

68. p. 22 (2.35)

The basic thrust behind the report's approach is a conception based on two constructions.

"We recognise the validity and creative role of the market in the area of production, material goods and services"..... so there is a "dire necessity of relating the development process to the crucial need for culture and education."<sup>69</sup>

"This is our biggest challenge. This integral nexus have yet to be conceptualised<sup>70</sup> and how in the past this dimension has been clearly overlooked.

Market Forces		Development Process	
Production		Education	
Material goods	Services	Culture	Development

One presumption is irresistible. This construction is underlined with the admittance of a general assumption that the Indian market today has reach a stage of development from which it can acquire its own autonomy. So there is a new thrust which is pleaded for by this report in Policy orientation and articulation.

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69. p. 22 (2.35)  
70. p. 24 (2.38)

This thrust needs to be emphasised now and make an  
important component of the planning process.<sup>71</sup>

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71. p. 25 (1st para)

**PART TWO :**

**THE SAHITYA AKADEMI, THE SANGEET NATAK AKADEMI AND  
THE LALIT KALA AKADEMI:**

"On adamant our wrongs we must engrave, but write our benefits upon the wave".

- William King, 'The art of love'

**SOME COMMON CONCERNS :**

Based on the views of the interviews in various region on the State of Culture and the Art as well as on the role and impact of the three Akademis, some common issues were identified. In fact, it seemed that almost the entire Haksar Committee Report was drafted on the basis of the views from such interviews.

Some of the issues identified by the Report, have been talked about in this chapter under the following headings:-

1. Impact and interaction of the three National Akademis
2. Grants
3. General Council
4. Chairperson
5. Cultural infrastructure
6. Zonal cultural centres
7. Culture and Education

8. Staff and institutions
9. Finance
10. Licensing of performances
11. Government and Parliament Scrutiny

**ON IMPACT AND INTERACTION OF THE THREE NATIONAL  
AKADEMIS ON NATIONAL LIFE IN GENERAL :**

To start with, the report responded with a typical comment on how the three Akademis have done good work, but could have done better as their presence was not adequately felt in various regions, particularly in broader areas of the country, it observed that there was "a widespread feeling that "Akademis were essentially Delhi oriented" and do not fully respond to national needs. In the light of such observations. With an orientation of concentration of funds, resources, energies and policy initiatives all at the central level National Akademis, thus was more or less inevitable. Even in the composition of the panel of members of this report, this trend was evident as out of the six listed members, three were from Delhi. They were Mr. P.N. Haksar, the former Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission; Mr. E. Alkazi, former Director, National School of Drama, New Delhi and Prof. Indira Partha Sarthy, Prof. of Tamil, Delhi University.



They talk of primary objective of the Akademis as fostering a process of conservation and dissemination of our cultural heritage"<sup>72</sup>

There could be mainly two objections to this reading. First that by talking of conservation, they are essentially meaning to relegate any practical application to cultural practices and heritage to monumental, musiumatic value. In other words, may be to talk of preservation of the existing cultural ----- from destructive violent influences of society would be more apt instead of using the term conservation. One would have expected Nehru in detail, along with Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, Dr. Radhakrishnan, and talk of modernisation at length. One would have expected some of the accompanying talk of keeping contemporary art practise updated and in tune with changing circumstances - by say, integration of new modes of technology, new techniques of communication, idea formulations, new approaches to policy and concepts, new attitudes etc. for example, recently there were a set of model techniques developed on a range of personal computers at the National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi, where some known artists like

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72. *ibid* p. 28 (3.2)

M.F. Husain etc. experimented with sketches on the screen and produced computer print etchings. As contemporary art practice is also a part of our heritage.

The report sees the Akademis as stimulating and catalytic organisations only in a whole network of other institutions, so the National Akademis alone could not be held wholly responsible for the situation.<sup>73</sup> The comparable institutions in the states and union territories, as well as separate bodies which the state has for performing and visual arts as well as for literature, are equally responsible for non-performance.

However, one of the most forthcoming recommendations of the entire report has been made here. It suggests a close interaction and coordination<sup>74</sup> (networking) between other separate bodies" and work out efficient system of grants thereby actively involving them in their activities.<sup>75</sup> The details of this system have to be worked upon by each Akademis separately.

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73. *ibid* p.28 (3.3)  
74. *ibid* p.29 (3.4)  
75. *ibid* p.153 (9.9)

The report also recommended that cultural institutions at state and regional levels should be freed from political and departmental interference. 76  
it mentions that chairpersons of many state Academis are political personalities and hence suggests detailed procedures for their unbiased selection in the concerned chapters dealing with each Akademi in detail. But what about the staffing of such evergrowing structures, which in itself is a problem which the report decries at first, but does not see it is a problem here.

Another forthcoming suggestion of this report was to reintegrate the Khosla Committee view (1972) to help institutions at state level to become autonomous. However, what they have not specified is that what sort of autonomy would such proposed structures have if they are built on the same lines as the Academis at the National Level.

The report also very rightly decries the overlap of jurisdictions, functions and responsibility between many state Akademis and the state departments of culture, leading to undue wastage of national reserves

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76. *ibid* p.29 (3.5)

as well as the diminishingly meager sum assigned for 'Art and Culture'.

However if one refers to Appendix - 5 a cursory glance at the "State Administrative set up for looking after activities under Art and Culture", one would observe that majority of the states and union territories do not even have separate departments of culture. Culture and art promotion activities are usually added as additional responsibilities of other Human Resource Development departments, like Tourism or public relations or department of education or a combined department for Archives. Archeology, Libraries and Museums. So however, this suggestions rather self righteous, it is also ambiguous. On the basis of such vague recommendation how can remedial measures be taken to improve the lot of the Akademi? And with reference to Appendix-1 one would notice that while the AKademis have well marked spheres of duties, functions and responsibilities, these state departments, on the other hand, would neither have the capacity or the sphere of jurisdiction to indulge in this kind of promotional work in detail so even if there may an overlap of functions, this overlap would be rather insignificant and could be easily converted

to a process of mutual cooperation rather than mutual exclusion in performance of proposed tasks, with the greater share left in the court of the purposefully constituted Akademi and then affiliates, and these government departments assisting them in all ways possible.

Also, while on one side the report regrets that the Khosla Committee's objective (1970-72) of establishing independent state Akademis on the lines of the Nation Akademis have not been fulfilled, on the other side, in the same paragraph itself, it recommends the funding of state Akademi by National Akademis "to an extent necessary and possible". The State Akademi are to pattern themselves for the fulfillment of National Akademi objectives by granting the central Akademis the access of "utilisation of their services".

**Grants:** The report starts by saying, ..... Culture too requires financial sustenance.....". It describes previous grants given by the National Akademis to other institution (after quoting figures) as "meager and marginal" and talks of uncertain expectations". "Constraints of resources". However, after recommending larger resource allocation and greater measure of autonomy it recommends that the Akademi is

assistance to individual at present is marginal and must be stepped up.

The purposes for which such grants were sanctioned included the purchase of equipment, training programmes, production of plays and organisation of participation in art exhibitions or a National Akademi from seeking out, on its own initiative, a handful of people who are striving in their own limited ways to preserve and disseminate the country's traditional arts or to promote modern trends, is-; a total feeling of inaccessibility present with both organisations and individuals in state. That to secure any support from any National Akademi even reputed institutions have to go through cumbersome procedures with very uncertain expectations. There are numerous hurdles like there is a total lack of initiative or sense of timing or responsibility by clerks dealing with files, papers, forbidden clauses, unstable men like policy perspectives in grants, total lack of accountability resulting in unnecessary delays, red tapism etc. etc.

There are three kinds of grants that are presently in operation.

The first, is in the forms of assistance extended by the National Akademis to cover deserving individuals

as well as other culture and art promotion institutions. The report reintegrates that at present, the Sangeet Natak Akademi has not programme for giving grants to individuals. But the need for this has been recognised by the Akademi which now has a proposal for offering assistance to traditional gurus, performing artists, free lance scholars, field workers etc. To give an example, if one is to refer to Appendix-1 of this disselation, one would observe that apart from awarding prizes and recognition to deserving individuals in the Sangeet Natak Akademi Constitution, there are other clauses like-

- to encourage instructions in actors training, study of stage craft and production of plays;
- to encourage and assist production of new plays;
- to revive and preserve folk music, dance, drama in different regions;
- to take suitable steps for maintenance of adequate standards of education in music, dance, drama etc.

All these clauses of the Sangeet Natak Constitution, apart from others, would be complemented by encouraging Guru's in the field to continue with then work, by providing than adequate sustinance by the Akademi.

Needless to mention that the same criteria holds for the other two National Akademis also. For example, the Sahitya Akademi has a scheme of travel grants to authors for visiting linguistic regions other than their own. But the sums are rather inadequate, with a maximum limit of Rs. 3,000/-. The total commitments in the past three years were almost negligible, being Rs.13,000/- to Rs.27,000/- each year, divided between seven to nine authors.\*

Similarly, the Lalit Kala Akademi has recently started a programme of research-grants for selected young artists who utilise the studio facilities in its regional centres; but these grants too are not substantial (being Rs. 1,000/- per month for twelve months) and the annual expenditure on this account is only the order of about Rs. 1.5 to Rs. 2 lakhs.

Ironically, about two decades ago, the then Sangeet Natak Akademi Vice-Chairperson Ms. Kapila Malik Vatsayan noted <sup>77</sup> that the Government's policy, through the Akademis, was to encourage organisations promoting art and not individual artists. Today it is virtually the other way round interestingly it was the feeling of some people that I interviewed during the course of

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77. Source: Sahitya Akademi Library, Dada 1989-90



this work, that this recommendation of the report was a change of thrust in policy orientation for the National Akademis were initially envisaged to avoid exactly such an eventuality. The second type of grant is in the forms of scholarships offered by the Department of Culture, Government of India, to young workers in different cultural fields, fellowships to outstanding artists in the performing, literary and plastic arts, and also financial assistance to deserving persons who are in indigent circumstances. These grants were of the order of Rs. 30 lakhs in 1989-90.

The third type of grant which is quite substantial is sanctioned by the Government for institutions, buildings, celebration of centenaries etc. The Government also dispurses grants to meet expenses on salaries, theatre productions, seminars, symposia, research surveyes etc. In 1989-90 the outlay on the latter category was Rs. 70 lakhs approximately covering about 200 cases.

Here, a very forthcoming suggestion of the Haksar Report says that the Government must concern itself with only major grants for creating and maintaining the cultural infrastructure, or for very special ventures or occasions like special endowments, centenaries etc.

All research or promotional grants, whether offered to institutions or individuals must be given by the Akademis. Provisions should also be made for this in the financial allocations to them. Moreover, even in exercising its powers the Government must consult the concerned Akademi. The procedure will not only enhance the Akademis stature but also ensure greater academic inputs in deciding grants.

However, the issues that were left untouched by the report were - the amount of grant to be given to a particular institution or individual and what criteria was to decide this amount, that is how wanting is a particular institution and what were the prescriptives that helped to evaluate this. Secondly, once this was decided upon, how to channelise this grant, the streamlining of the money. Which were the stages at which it was needed, in what qualities, for what purposes and in whose hands. These are crucial and pragmatic issues which would be a basis of any work plan for issuing grants. And these were left out by the report.

**General Council:** "To produce a dynamic impact on creativity the Akademi needed the involvement of many distinguished persons in particular areas of concern at

policy making as well as operational levels\*<sup>9</sup> so the constitution of the Akademis calls for setting up of 'General Councils'. The National Akademis are at the centre of a vast panorama of artistic and literary activity, to which the Akademi is expected to provide stimulation and shape", through these distinguished persons constituting the General Council of the Akademi, of course. This set of "distinguished persons" are responsible for approving and overseeing all the projects and programmes of the Akademis. They are to be picked from all parts of the country and include nominees of the states and Union Territories. Some are also elected by the General Council to be members of the Executive Boards of the Akademi.

An objection made by the report was that according to the constitution of the Sangeet Natak Akademi and the Sahitya Akademi, their General Council were to ordinarily meet only once a year: and Lalit Kala Akademi is constitution prescribed a norm of twice a year. In the past five years the meetings of the General Councils have lasted only a single day. On a couple of occasion the sessions of the Sangeet Natak Akademi's General Council lasted two days. Also, these meetings have to go through quite a large agenda - reviewing all the programmes, sanctioning budget resources and

discussing other matters, so one can well imagine how will the General Council are able to perform each of these tasks considering they meet for only a day in a whole year. One also wonders how any serious and meaningful discussion can take place among its members in such a short span of time. The General Council of the Akademi, therefore, need to meet more frequently to spend enough time on its deliberation or else there is skepticism or their being reduced to rubber stamp organisations merely reflecting the federal nature of our "distinguished judges" in matters of art and culture coming from various regions of India (or may be not quite even so).

Hence, the Haksar Committee Report contends that not only should the meetings of the council be convened more regularly but also that they should graduate to the position of "thinking bodies, searching bodies" further concerned Akademis.

Now, one does not contend that longer duration of the General Council sessions and the effectiveness of this outcomes are mutually exclusive but there was definitely no suggestion or concrete plan outline given by this report on streamlining the composition of each Akademi keeping in mind its special needs.

It left by saying that it would be beneficial if the "participation of this important assembly of distinguished persons is not restricted to a business meeting" and "each Akademi should organise an important academic activity to coincide with the council meeting". However, there was no talk of chanelisation of additional funds for these added activities and sessions.

The Report further suggests that the composition of the General Council should consist of besides National, State and Regional representatives, of Fellows of each Akademi, since they were persons of high achievement and hence deserved administrative or official representation in the General Council. And to foster closer interaction between the Akademis and the two mass medias, the functional heads of Akademi and Doordarshan should also have a representation in the council. Although how this would help was not mentioned, besides exchange of view points in the meetings, though one would suggest that the Akademis could use their services occasionally to disseminate awareness of marginal used art forms, apart from other things. However, the report has made no such effort to work out such details, instead simply left its suggestions as a series unworked out hypothesis.

Another rather irregular practice was that the representatives from each state or Union Territory to the General Council were usually nominated by the State Government department officials dealing with art and culture or by the Union Territory administrations. The Haksar Committee Report has been very forthcoming in its suggestion that representatives of each state or Union Territory to National level Akademis should be nominees of the corresponding Akademi (or an equivalent institution) in the state. If one refers to Appendix-2 of this text, then a list of such institutions at the state level are given. These institutions have been in the field for many years now and are recognised by the Central National Akademis or the Human Resource Development Ministry. Only in the event of there being no such state Akademi or equivalent institution (which in itself is a comment on the state of Government's organisation of art promotion activities). Administration make the nomination, so one of the essential tasks of each National Akademi's General Council would also then be to identify equivalent institutions and ensure their basic sustenance in terms of provision of infrastructural facilities etc. in case there are no state Akademis present in that area.

However, many a times, in certain areas, instead of State Akademis there are other similarly funded art promotion institutions established by the Government and moulded in the same structure of thinking and functioning as the state Akademis only they cover a larger area than just one state and their activities, jurisdiction and prerogatives have been limited or rather focussed elsewhere, namely, for the promotion, "conser-vation and dissemination" of folk, linked popular or village art practice. These bodies are called Zonal cultural centres. One would wonder why in areas where there no existing state Akademi, does the Government not encourage fund and sustain these bodies in a more substantial way by enhancing their capacities of per-formance and increasing their limited functions to cover the work of the state Akademis too. In this way these institutions would also get a boost and since the basic infrastructural and other facilities are all already present there would probably be less of wastage than these would in funding a mushrooming art promotion society (which had been the case number of times as well). Besides their reach in terms of their organisational set up in far more than one state it cover a whole Zone which may include a whole region sometimes so there could be more inter disciplinary compressions

of different art practices of the same region, thereby somewhat coming closer to what the constitution of all the Akademis holds as its premier objective, namely, to achieve a sense of 'cultural unity' in this vast sea of diversity. And the art and craft of one style, one era and one area can benefit from complementarity created by close contact with another style of another area and even author era (for example, tribal art forms amalgamated with contemporary would probably lead to a better understanding of both and in the process, may be this is on its way of creation of something more novel which could bear the signature of our times today and characterise this present for future reference).



## CHAIRPERSONS

The Chairpersons of the Sangeet Natak Akademi, the Lalit Kala Akademi and the Sahitya Akademi should be persons of highest eminence in performing arts and literature respectively.<sup>78</sup> However the report was pragmatic enough to concede that this was not sufficient and only qualification. This essentially talented, eminent and renowned personality had to have qualities "of a sound administrator as well as those of leadership that an organisation requires"<sup>79</sup> to "initiate ideas, involve people in their implementation, and win the confidence, cooperation of other cultural institution "as well as" to ensure the smooth running of the organisation.

The recommended attempt here was to lessen the prerogative, role, duties, functions and responsibilities of the secretary and the bureacrats and increase those of the Chairperson. "Authority must reside where it belongs, namely in the hands of the chairpersons."<sup>80</sup>

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78. p34 (3.25)

79. ibid

80. p 34 (3.26)

The report draws upon the patriotism and sense of honour of these chairperson that even through the the duties of this post are part time, they set their other devote themselves whole-time to the Akademi's business. thus following high examplars set by previous talk Chairpersons like Kamaladevi, Chatopadhayaya. for this the report pleads for "charges in the organisational arrangements which would enable the chairpersons of the Akademis to give their best"<sup>81</sup>

Incedently, even through the report very categorically states that "the appointment of chairpersons should be on whole time basis :<sup>82</sup> yet it does not recommended any accompanying changes by which this could be made plossible. Change like an increase in the salaries or perquestion of the chairpersons with full-day involvement and employment etc. Or is it that the report means to have a nominee who would accept the post with the responsibilities, preoccupations of a full time job but the stipent and credit of a part time one?

On the other hand the report's plea for changes in the organisational arrangement seems to be quite timely

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81. p35 (3.29)

82. p35 (3.30)

and thus it would be welcome for the present systems of appointments of chairpersons are not uniform in the three Akademi's of art. The chairperson of the Sangeet Natak Akademi is appointed by the President of India; in the Lakit Kala Akademi, the General Council submits a panel of three names to the President of India who then appoints the chairpersons; and the President of the Sahitya Akademi is elected by votes of the General Council based on the recommendation of the Executive Board. These differences are on result of having varying context in which the institutions evolved. And now after more than four decades of functioning, when the corners of sharp ideocencracies have been rounded off and the processes of imitation of varied procedural arrangements have worn thin, it is time, that for getting rid of the pompous rituals of bureaucratic selection and appointment, we should initiate a syncromisation amongst the three Akademis for, if nothing else, than a combined and cooperative effort to perform the tasks at hand.

In the interesting to note that inspite of so much talk by the report about structural changes in the internal organisational functioning of the Akademis, especially for the post of the Chairpersons, it fall back into its typical preconceived view of preferring

back into its typical preconceived view of preferring the system of "appointment" by the Government rather than election. The report state, "while the elective process has the advantage of establishing a democratic practice, the method of nomination by the Government has the advantage of facilitating dispassionate evaluation".<sup>83</sup> Apart from the of the statement, prolonged experience of the practise of Government appointments has shown first the contrary. In fact this is a system which has been in function in two out of the three Akademis, namely, the Sangeet Natak Akademi and the Lalit Kala Akademi. This statement/recommendation of the report, therefore was made only in honour of the Sahitya Akademi whose President was elected by its General Council based on the recommendation of its Executive Board.

Nevertheless the recommendation of standardising the method of selection of the three Akademis is note worthy for in certain cases there is also a lack of synchronization between the terms of the Chairperson and that of the General Council, which does not conduce to report, apart from other things. The Haksar Report's<sup>84</sup> ideal method" for the procedure of Appointment of

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83. p35 (3.31)

84. p35 (3.32)

## AKADEMI CHAIRPERSONS

Akademi Chairperson was generously elaborated as follows :- The "ideal method" recommended for all the three Akademis and their affiliates was that the President of India was to appoint a person chosen from a small panel drawn up by a search committee consisting of "eminent persons" who could look for the right candidates in a systematic manner.

More precisely, the search committee was to consist of three members, one of whom had to be nominated by the General Council of the concerned Akademi, while the President of India was to nominate the other two, one of whom had to be a part chairperson/Peresiedent of same Akademi. The President of India had a choice from a panel of three names (arranged in alphabetical order) drawn up by the search committee. The qualification for this panel was to be on the grounds of their 'distinguishers' a spare time to devote adequated "time and energy"<sup>85</sup> for the affairs of the concerned Akademi (!) In any case ample space is left for indiscretion even at a the Report's non-defination of "Dishinguished persons" selected by the Search Committee. In fact the

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85 Source : Sahitya Akademi Library, \*24 p36 (3.33)

criteria for selection of the second member of the  
Search Committee who is to be nominated by the  
President of India has been left on completely. 86

THE RECOMMENDED "IDEAL" PROCEDURE FOR THE "APPOINTMENT"  
OF CHAIRPERSONS OF THE THREE AKADEMIS

CHAIRPERSONS APPOINTED

Formerly

THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA

Makes the appointment from  
the choice among the three  
candidates of the panel

Choice

A Panel: Of three names.  
No necessary qualifications for this  
selection were specified

To select

THE SEARCH COMMITTEE  
consisted of three "eminent persons"

Composition	No. of Members	Their Qualification
1. Candidate one :		Nominated by the President of India; Qualifications were not specified.
2. Candidate two :		Nominated by the President of India should be a past Chairperson/President of the same Akademi
3. Candidate three:		Nominated by the General Council of the Akademi

General Council : Consisted of  
"Distinguished Persons"

- |  |   |             |
|--|---|-------------|
| 1. National representatives              | ) | Fellows of  |
| 2. State and Regional representatives    | ) | the Akademi |
| 3. All India Radio and Doordarshan heads | ) |             |

At a closer look if one tries to read between the lines, it will become quite apparent from this chart, that the 'ideal procedure' recommended by the Haksar Committee Report for the appointment of the chairpersons of the three National Akademis of Art seems to be selection rather than election, by a closed panel of 'distinguished judges' whose qualification for entertaining such positions of distinctions seem to have been held back even through they are of crucial importance and the pulse of this entire procedure, could be a major defeciency and drawback. At each stage, this has seemed to be case. For example, whether it is the stage of selection of the three members who are to constitute the search committee or whether it is the final panel of names drawn up by this committee for appointment by the President.

Then the underlying criteria, the basis on which the appointment by the President of India is made, is left untalked of.

However, besides this, the report has also pleaded for increassed state funds for making the perquisites and pay packet of the official posts of the chairperson and the Persident of the Akademi more attractive and remunerative. The remuneration and perqpquisites packet



was to include official transport, a house in the capital with a telephones. Hence, elevating these packets to compare with that given to a Minsiter of State(!)

Though many Delhi artists like Jolly Rohatgi have expressed fears as to whether a realty "distinguished artist" would be selected for such a wellcushioned post. Would not favouritism, nepotism, psychophancy, functionalism ride higher for such a post which now combines perquisites, power and prestige? Would not the declaration of autonomy to the Akademi and then vesting a sole position with 'all the power' lead to undmocratic kpractise? This is besides the sagging comptsion of finding a suitable match with a combination of the artist and the administrator.

It also made a note worthy suggestion of granting an office room to the President of the Sahitya Akademi "along with an office and personal staff commensurate with his high responsibilities". Though how this increased bureaucratished base of 'culture babies' will assist and further the cause of promotion of art and literature achieves in the country, needs a second look in fact, has practical experience not shown otherwise? There seems to be no directly relation between

increasing the office capacities to provide employment to class II and class III government servants and a pronounced efficiency in dissemination of government funded promotional schemes for Art one one hand, and the restrictions of accessibility as well as politicisation of the posts of the chairpersons President by enhancing the lucration of their official capacities and perquisites. Keepint in mind the same objectives of the Akademis which they exist for, on the other hand, in fact making these posts so lucrative and remunerative would only lead to increased canvassing, manipulation and politisation, which is exactly what should be avoided.

#### CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The report seems to have heard people from all over the country complain about absence or a lack of adequate infrastructural facilities abvailable with Akademi centres and other similar institutions for the encouragement of artists in painting, sculpture, exhibition space, theatres to rehearse and auditoriums to perform. Hence the report found it quite "condusive" to invest public funds in "creating a physical environment in which the artists persuits

became easier and more rewarding".

The Haksar Committee Report, in a realistic suggestion after admitting the absence of adequate infrastructural facilities for the "promotion of arts" at a decentralised level, said that "the creation of such infrastructure should be the common concern of National and State Akademi, financially supported by them respective government as well as by the various existing Zonal Culture Centres. Others bodies which can help are the Municipalities and Urban corporations.

\*6 Though the report talked of a well defined time frame in which at least one such cultural centre with adequate facilities (like studios, auditoriums, rehearsal rooms etc.) was to be established in every district of the country, it did not either recommend a specific duration or at least the outlines of such a plan, the details of which could be the concerned state Akademis, nor did it talk of corresponding suggestions on availability or chanelization of National/State funds for this purpose, not to mention the enromity of the task of setting up such facilities in each district. This is not impossible but needed concrete backups in term of additional resources, schemes, funds

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87. p.37, (3.37)

and other motivational factors.

The report talked of constructing sales counters which supplied subsidized art materials on outlet for publication of National and State Akademi and a place where artists could get together. On networking the report talks of a perspective plan which could stretch over ten years, or even more to be worked art by the Central and State Governments and the Union Territories with adequate support from public funds. Instead of Grant-in-aid allocated by Central Government, the report suggested practicing-grants to be given by the States as well, however, when they talk of established new cultural centres in each district, could it have crossed the minds that may be in source districts the main art form practised are not Akademi stylised studio arts but crafts, village theatre etc. Theatre such centres to encourage and sustain these or transplant urban forms?

Considering past precedents, it is usually not in the nature of such reports to talk of the scope for associating industrial and commercial concerns also in such ventures. Hence, the Haksar Committee Report is the first of its kind to talk of channelisation of private initiatives for the creation of facilities for

theatres, art gallerys etc. "within the framework of planned development of cultural infrastructure", of course. It gives examples of "creative endeavours undertaken by private institutions like "National Centre for Performing Arts in Bombay, Sangeet REsearch Akademy in Calcutta", etc. It is for the first time that the Chairman of such a committee wrote to a number of "distinguished industrialists", seeking their view on how one could sustain, on a continuing basis, "an organised involvement of Indian Industry, trade and commerce in the field of art and culture and enquiring whether one could envisage the creation of a National Dndowment Fund for the Arts. <sup>88</sup> The response, the report saw, by enlarge as positive.

Consequently the idea for such a fund was taken from the method of corporate funding operations in the United States of America. The report quotes Robert Hughes, a distinguished American Art critic where he explicitly enunciates the need for a National Endowment for Arts fund by saying that "Our problem is too little government support for the arts, not too much." <sup>89</sup>

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88. p38 (3.41)

89. p22 (2.37)

In an interview with Mr. M.L. Khatana, (Section Officer, Deptt. of Culture responsible for implementation of the Haksar Committee Report proposals) he revealed that this was one recommendation which might be taken up seriously by the government. He said that presently (March-April, 1992) the secretary of the Ministry of Human Resource Development was on a tour of Europe to study the operation of such a system in France and U.K. Though no time frame has been fixed by the Government for the implementation of these proposals, he is hopeful that even if 50% of the reports recommendations are fulfilled it would make a "marked" difference on the state of Culture and Arts in the country.

#### ZONAL CULTURAL CENTRES

In the seventh five year plan (1985-86), the Government of India, envisaged a new thrust to culture policy formulation and orientation, inaugurated by the new elected Prime Minister Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, which apart from other plans and programmes, conceived a scheme for setting up five Zonal Centres for culture. Two more centres were added in 1986-87. They claimed to cover the entire country with four to eight state/union territories particularly in the activities

of each zonal cultured centre. Seven states were associated with two centres. Details are shown in Appendix - 3 of this text where the country has been divided into seven zones with their corresponding centres. The specific common objectives of the seven zonal cultural centres apart from other things, listed out in their memorandum of association, are "to preserve, innovate and promote the projection and dissemination of arts in the concerned zone; to develop and promote their rich diversity; to encourage folk and tribal arts and the preservation of vanishing art forms". The centres are to encourage the involvement of youth in creative cultural communication, and lay special emphasis on the linkages among different areas. Every centre is expected to develop a cultural complex including exhibition galleries, auditoria, cultural parks, musical archives, etc. Initially the Government of India envisages granting of Rs. 5 crores to each of the Zonal Cultural Centre towards equipment and infrastructure including buildings. The centres activities were to be financed from the interest accruing from a "Corpus Fund" built out of

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90. Source: Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, documentation section.

contributions received from the states. Subsequently it was decided that part of the Government of India's contribution could also be utilised for building up the corpus fund. The land required by each centres was provided free of cost by the state in which its offices were located. The Government of India has released its promised contribution in instalments during the last five years. Each centres has also received between Rs.3 to 5 crore approximately from various states. Thus the total outlay of the centre and state governments has so far been Rs. 8 to 10 crores for each Zonal Centre. In addition the Government of India has also made other specific grants for the centres participation in inter-zonal cultural festivals initiated by it. The pattern of expenditure incurred by the Zonal centres so far, on their various activities and promotional programmes is illustrated in Appendix - 4 of this text. As one can see from this chart that except in the case of the North-East Zonal Centre, the proportion of expenditure on the creation of assets is low in relation to the amounts spent on impresario activities. Each Zonal Centre has a governing body, whose Chairperson is the Governor of the State where the headquarters are situated. Each participant state or Union Territory is represented by



its Minister and/or the senior most official dealing with cultural affairs. The Chairman of the Sangeet Natak and Lalit Kala Akademis or the president of the Sahita Akademi are members of the Governing Body of every Zonal Centre; so are the Union Minister of State for Education and Culture and the Secretary of the Department of Culture in the Government of India. The Governing Bodies may appear to be too large for their purpose, which has caught the attention of the Haksar Committee Report.

Due to the fact that the amount of funds with each Zonal Cultural centre has exceeded far beyond the initially planned Rupees five crores (doubling perhaps), in addition to specific grants given for the centres participation in inter-zonal cultural festivals initiated by the Government of India; the report fears that these centres with excess of funds, by and large have been functioning on their own, overshadowing other institutions and without bothering about accountability to the governments, state National Akademis. The report calls this a "reliable financial corpus". It says, that these centres seem to be creating an unhelpful contrast with other public-funded cultural institutions in the states. The Report says that

there may be the "possibility of duplication of efforts. Institutions at the centre and their corresponding bodies at the states level may be working at cross purposes with zonal cultural centres. Hence, the report recommends that substantial portion of the resources available with these centres should be put aside for creation of infrastructural facilities for cultural activities, which as small open air theatres, space for rehearsal, art galleries etc. Such centres should be set up in district headquarter areas and even smaller towns. thereby complementing the reports previous recommendation of planned development of this cultural edifice. It also recommended leaving the responsibility of organisations of folk and tribal performances to the National and State Akademis.

Haksar Committee Report says that these Zonal Cultural Centres alongwith Art Akademis at National and State levels, should take up the documentation and dissemination of "authentic" folk art forms in a major way.

Now, firstly, if the organisation of performances have to be handled by the National and State Akademis then would the "Lakit Kala" and "Sangeet Natak" be able to reach (at such a decentralised level) the

"authentic folk art forms" (as they describe them, overlooking the ambiguity in their definition of the term itself) in a manner as familiar and as available as with the Zonal cultural centres. One is not making the argument that these zonal centres have been an exemplar and have been almost efficient and thorough in their appropriation and dissemination of these art forms, but simply that since they have been in the field for about six to seven years now they would be more familiar with the same.

If this is the case, then, Mr. B.C. Sanyal, Ex-Chairperson of the National Lalit Kala Akademi in an interview had suggested, that why does the Government not go down to the Block District officer level in its supposed jest for decentralisation, instead of confining its efforts to the Zonal level only. Besides what happens in states where there are no state Akademis? And there are many states like these. For example, Maharashtra, Sikkim, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Nagaland, Dadra and Nagar Haveli etc. (Refer to Appendix - 5 of this text).

Secondly, while suggesting that the Zonal Cultural Centres should "closely associate with the Akademi at National and State Levels" p.40 (3.51), the report

seems to have forgotten that the National and State level Art Akademi only deal with limited forms of art production, mainly studio arts, plastic arts etc. while turning a blind eye to an existing proliferation of Art forms at the district, small town and village level. These areas probably still (inspite of much invasion and attended exposure) live in a distinct paradigm of art creation, appreciation and cognisance. For these levels art may have a totally different set of meaning-constructions, both conceptually and practically, probably enveloping in it's construction many more forms of productive creations which have not been compartmentalised yet in bureaucratically defined categorisation, like, for example, art versus craft or theatre versus "Nautanki" etc.

Thirdly, if in any case the National and State Akademis, in one of their main constitutional objectives, are professing to promote research and documentation in the fields of creative arts then would it not mean a duplication of efforts and wastage of resources here while recommending that the zonal cultural centres repeat the same task along with these Akademis?

Fourthly, in its Terms of Reference, the Haksar

Committee Report has only included in its task, suggesting steps, for the networking of the central and State Akademis with the zonal cultural centres. Now how can crying and concern about the situation of "excess-funds" with these centres be rectified by the attempts of this report, if it does not indulge in more than "networking" of these zonal centres. For this it has to thoroughly go through their role and functioning too.

Fifthly, in Previously mentioned predelictions of the report there was much hue and cry on the politicisation of official positions in the state akademis and similar cultural institutions. [P29 (3.5).] The report goes on to say "we want art programmes to be administered by artists and not by political personalities and bureaucrats". However, when it comes to these Zonal Cultural Centres, the report seems to be content to mention that the Chairperson of the governing body of each centre is the Governor of the State, where its headquarters are situated. Each participant state or Union Territory is represented by its Minister and or the senior most bureaucrat dealing with cultural affairs. The Union Minister of State for Education and Culture in the Government of India is also a member of the governing

body of every zonal centres.

Sixthly, another problems arises when the administrative setup for looking after activities under 'Art and Culture' are grouped under different departments at the state level. For example, how would the orientation be for such a cultural administration, if they are, as they are in Kerala-where "Cultural affairs are looked after by the Minister for Fisheries; and museums alongwith Zoological parks by the Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs; or as in Chandigarh where cultural affairs are handled by the Public Relation Department? (Refer to Appendix - 5 of this text).

#### FINANCE AND BUDGET

A survey of the past fast few years itself would make it evident that in the total scheme of the Government of India's expenditure, the share for the promotion of cultural activities is a marginal, if not a negligible one. For example, in the first year of the seventh plan (1985-86) the expenditure as art and culture was about Rs.50 crores, thus making the proportion of the outlay on culture to the total expenditure of the government as only one-tenth of one percent. Expenditure of the Government of India as

Art and Culture from 1985 to 1990 is given in Appendix-13 of this text. Expenditure of all states put together as art and culture in 1988-89 was Rs.105 crores only. The proportion of this to the total Governmental expenditure was very small, being less than half of one percent in most cases. For the year 1988-89 statewise expenditure as art and culture and its proportion to the total state government expenditure is given in Appendix-14 of this text.

In 1988-89 the expenditure of the three National Akademi aggregated to about Rs.5.4 crore or a little less than four percent of the total culture budget. (Refer to Appendix-15). The Union Government expenditure of about Rs.135 crores on art and culture in the same year which included the outlay on museums, public libraries, Archaeological and Anthropological surveys, the National Archives, and promotional activities including cultural festivals and those of the Zonal Cultural Centres. The Haksar Committee Report in a move towards strengthening the 'Autonomy' of the Akademi has made some forthcoming suggestions which have pleaded for structural and constitutional changes and need to be mentioned. First of all, it asked for substantial augmentation of the present

outlays, i.e. larger resources be made available to the three Akademis in future. This is while saying that the Akademis must make a "forceful impact on the cultural life of the country" (p45) and for this the need to increase the scope of financial support they are extending to institutions and individuals all over the country, and must undertake more extensive research documentation and publication projects as well as initiate schemes for implementing some of their projects the agency of their counterparts in the states and Union Territories. For this the Akademis need full freedom to utilise available resources. But again the report did not give any plan as to how this should be done. The Haksar Committee Report fully endorsed the Khosla Committee's suggestion (1972) which had asked for the creation of "Cultural Fund" to free the Akademis from financial constraints imposed by annual budgets. In this each Akademi had to be paid a lump sum grant every year, to be indexed for inflation and also allowing for a progressive increase in activities.

This would be paid into a separate fund in the case of each Akademi, and all its receipts were also to go into it. Each Akademi was to prepare its own budget every year and would have had full freedom to incur



expenditure from its fund subject to its own approved procedures. This would end the need for each Akademi's budget proposals to come to the government for approval for the annual reports of the Akademi would provide government the basis for judging their effectiveness and performance. The Haksar Report has further suggested that in each Akademi there should be a well devised system of periodic internal review, not only for its financial transactions but for its performance as a whole.

Another recommendation of the Haksar report for streamlining the financial organisation of the Akademi was to recruit the Financial Advisor of each institution as a full-time functionary, appointed by the Akademi and answerable to the General Council of the Akademi. Presently the Financial Advisor of each Akademi is an officer in the department of culture nominated by the Government to be a member of its General Council. Hence these officers have their own departmental work to do and can devote their services only marginally Appendix-16 shows the present composition of the Finance Committee of each Akademi as prescribed in their constitutions. The full time financial adviser of each Akademi would also be a member of the Executive Board.

and the Chairperson of the Finance Committee. His qualification, the report suggested, would entail him to be a "Senior enough financial officer of the Government of India of of the Public Sector, whose services could be borrowed on the basis of deputation for a sepecific term not exceeding five years. The financial advisor of the Government of India's department of Culture would also be a member of the governing council of each Akademi. However, these suggestions would require certain changes in the constitution of the Finance Committee of each Akademi, the composition of which is prescuted by each constitution of the Akademis. So this would in turn entail same amendment to the Akademi's constitution but would also lead to more autonomy in day to day financial allocations.

## **CULTURE AND EDUCATION**

### **(Formal and Non-formal Patterns)**

It is time that we grow out of the "limited-need" administrative system in education today which has been existing far too long now, a direct hangover from our colonial past. The kind of educational system established then had only a need to train a small group of Indians for minor clerk jobs. The curriculum was so

biased in favour of a literary approach with an emphasis on English and European history and civilisation. There was a total neglect of Indian language (here languages taken as an entire way of life, a system of living, thinking and belief) and an absence of an approach which would inculcate a sense of cultural homogeneity and identity of the Indian people with their National Cultural moorings. What happened after 1947, was this transplanted, favoured policy orientation of the imperial power towards infusing its own values and systems in education of Indians, was replaced by a this new cult of English educated Babus who were a consequence of this former process. The appearance of a minority educated class capable of holding official posts and manning educational institutions was inevitable then, but it became a group apart, separate and isolated from the large uneducated but cultured masses of India its isolation from traditional scholars as well as rural masses was also complete. While the effects of this educational pattern are socio-economic growth were inevitable, by and large the system was not geared for preparing the individual to meet the social and economic needs of the nation.

However, in spite of its definite aim and bias, limitations and handicaps, it was this kind of educational system which produced a group of Indians responsible for inculcating a sense of deep respect for the learning acquired through foreign languages and culture while retaining a sense of identity with their national heritage; it was this group which provided the intellectual perceptiveness characteristic of many national, political social and literary movements in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, examples like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Chittranjandas, Mohan Das Karam Chand Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rabindernath Tagore, Abindranath Tagore etc. who are symbols of the action and interaction of being influenced and provoked through a confrontation with an alien culture. Characteristically branches of the Indian tree which had grown to touch alien ;skill through back roads into the ground. But all did not possess the potential of these grants; the educational system needed a cultured orientation. Independent India attempted to redefine the goals of education and reshape the tools through which this would be achieved even though it was keeping the basic principles of elitist education the same. Besides the monumental problem of numbers (of the teeming millions) the new India had to be prepared

with a recently shaped novel identity, altered to his/here culture, capable of inter-regional dialogues, equipped to play a significant role as a citizen of an independent nation, both domestically and internationally. Even though the Government launched policies for universal free compulsory education for children of school going age, social education for illiterate adults, the higher education to provide manpower for the developing economy of the new social order, extensions and advancement of scientific and technical education, but the introduction of some cultural content (for example understanding, comprehension and tolerance to the great Indian diversity etc.) in the educational curricula was missing. From 1950's to 1970's many committees were set up to review and reorganise elementary, secondary and university education; other expert committees were set up to reorient scientific and technical education to produce the skilled knowledge necessary to meet the challenge of modern science and technology.

Out of all such committees the most significant review was of the commission appointed in 1964 in context of redrafting the cultural content in education. It recommended to formulate a national integrated system of education which would be, it

hoped, rooted in basic values and cherished traditions of the Indian nation.

**A programme of Education with an orientation for sensitivity to culture and promotion of the Arts**

This Education Commission appointed in 1964 went into all aspects of the educational pattern and recommended the introduction of creative activities at the lower and high primary stages. Mahatma Gandhi has propounded a similar system based on developing the entire curricula at these stages through a craft or an art. In 1933 there were a number of schools all outside the governmental orbit, which followed this pattern known as basic education. From 1950's the Indian Government attempted to assimilate some of the unique features of this pattern into the educational system now recommended for all schools in India. About fifteen to seventeen state governments are following this pattern in their lower and higher primary stages in which a craft activity is compulsory. At this level many claim that there is some introduction to art, an attempt made both through regular curricula and through special courses, to introduce the study of some aspects of Indian heritage to familiarize the child. This attempt, however, should be carried for the development

of secondary education as well. for the government - some schools, amongst other things, the basic recommendation of the Education Commission was to shift the emphasis of the secondary curricula from a literary content to a variety of disciplines and fields. From amongst the eighteen boards of High Secondary education, there are eight to ten which offer courses on Indian music and dance. In the Central Board of Secondary Education, for example, a student has to offer a craft as a compulsory subject : this includes spinning, weaving, wood work, metal-casting, leather work, pottery, printing book craft, designing, paper craft etc.\* The student has the option of choosing courses in music (vocal and instrumental), drawing and painting, modelling, sculpture and dancing.

However, courses offered at this stage naturally do not prepare the student to take up a professional career, but twenty to thirty who take these subjects at the higher secondary level. However for such programmes which protest a fundamental consanguinity, a great deal of reorientation is necessary both of the reading material of the intellectual equipment of the teacher. Course in art also need to be designed in such a way that they also able to inculcate a sense of

taste rather than providing mere skill in a particular art or craft. But then both are integrally complimentary. Unfortunately, art courses especially fine arts are still considered peripheral to formal education and have continued to be neglected, sometimes on the lack of adequate facilities for the training of teacher in music, dance and individual arts and the difficulty of getting teaching aids easily. In order to attempt a rectification of a situation (which was a consequences of defective policy orientation of the government in the first place itself) the Ministry of Education, in 1970's launched a scheme called "Propogation of Art and Culture in Schools and colleges. The scheme was designed to prepare teachers to teach courses in Indian art and at the higher secondary and junior college levels. A complete audio-visual kit was prepared for distribution to a certain percentage of schools and colleges. A supplementary scheme related to the award of scholarships to children of the age group, seven to seventeen who were exceptionally gifted in any of the arts. It is proposed to provide opportunities for such children to get training both in the schools and outside.

Another such programme was the establishment of Bal Bhavan's (Children's homes) by the Union



Government. These institutions were set up as autonomous bodies, and were financed by the Ministry of Education. They have several sections comprising of short term workshops for art teachers, demonstrations in art teaching, puppet and doll making activities for children and group activities centred around, dance, dramatics and music. These institutions (in a network) also have a science education centre which enables the children to gain experience in electricity workshop, radio, mechanics etc. These bodies are primarily out of school institutions and enrol children of a particular area. Refer Appendix-6 of this text.

However, the period 1990-93 has been exceptionally detrimented to Bal Bhawan. This unique national experiment for the overall balanced development of the child, has suffered a setback because of financial constraints and a visual lack of concern by the government. the Bal Bhawan Director, Dr. Madhu Pant, feels that the problems created by financial constraints were further compounded by the attitude of scorn shown by parents towards the non-formal education being imparted here. The Statesman, October 3, 1992 'Bal Bhawan hit by lack of funds. It is apart time that non-formal education system.

The financial constraints are so severe that more than two-thirds of the budget of the institution went towards payment of salaries to the staff and building tax among other things, leaving virtually nothing for other activities and the growth of the institutions. Now in all its drive to establish and promote such institutions is it not for the Government to also sustain them? For one does not dispute the resource crunch but there are way of helping such a government funded (yet proclaimed as autonomous) institution by, for example, reducing not the faculty members but the additional staff in the office concerned mainly with nothing more productive than paper work, or by exempting organisations from building tax (like they have granted land free a cost to the ;three National Akademy of Art at a private location in the capital). Once acclaimed as a national movement for building up a healthy future, the Bal Bhavan was granted merely Rs.1.5 crores a year, out of which Rs.1 crore went towards non-plan expenditure like payment or salaries and taxes (!!)

Another possible input to rejuvenate such an organisation would be to encourage the vocationalization of education as this would send only

the really interested ones towards academic pursuit while others could be absorbed in vocation of their choice.

However the Bal Bhawan founded in a tin shed at Turkman Gate, Delhi by Nehru, has grown throughout the length and breadth of the country and its total membership from a mere 300 in 1956 has grown to more than a lakh in recent years. What is comendable is that to meet the requirements and needs of children who cannot afford to participate in Bal Bhawan activities in its Central office on Vishnu Digamber Marg in Central Delhi, 52 Kendras have been opened all over Delhi. Similarly a whole network of state and District level Bal Bhawan's have been established and all of them affiliated to the main Bal Bhawan at Delhi.

Yes, the Government cannot afford to let such organisations die due to mismanagement, defective policies and channelisation of funds elsewhere. For this is a movement where children grow internally to become multi faceted, talented, independent and strong human beings. Through the basic concept of Bal Bhawan, the activities are designed in such a way that an attempt to bring about remarkable changes in the consciousness and sensibilities of our future generation

are embarked upon. Children have absolute freedom to create objects of their own concepts, they learn through playing and without any fear of workload, they learn through a free environment of expression of ideas through different media of puppetry, dance, theatre, music, painting, sculpture, pottery, photograph, building, games, computers; all helping in the all around 'balanced' growth and development of the child who is the focal point of all initiative and programmes are so designed so as to explore the inner potentials and expressions.

A somewhat similar line of policy-reasoning, purely at a pedagogical level, saw the setting up of a National Institute of Educational Research and Training with a department of Art Education for experimenting in producing art-education kits for teachers at the school level. 'Some aspects of cultural policies in India, UNESCO, 1970. There are roughly about some four hundred special institutions providing institution in the visual arts, music, dance and other fine arts, run by voluntary effort and occasionally with assistance of the state governments. Many professional artists have been products of these art schools, particularly those situated in Calcutta, Bombay, Baroda, Delhi.

The Government of India has a Central Board of Technical Education which lays down policy and finances art schools and polytechnics. There is also a school of Planning and Architecture run by the Central Ministry of Education which offers an integrated course in town and country planning, architecture and urban design. An in continuation of this line, the Universities facilitate curriculums in commercial and applied arts. Other institutions provide training for teachers in fine arts who are absorbed by high schools and university departments.

**Training Programme in the arts, outside the pattern of formal education :**

Training in fine arts today has become more or less institutionalise.

Besides, the Government, there is a vital role played by voluntary organisation especially in the field of fine arts. For example, the All-India Gandharva Mahavidyalaya and the Bhatkhande Vidyapeeth, have been responsible for making musical training accessible to persons belonging to the middle and the lower middle classes. Such institutions are of all-India character with a country wide network and their diplomas and certificates are unanimously recognised,

including by the Government of India. Refer to Appendix-2 of this text. Similarly in certain forms of dance, particularly Bharatnatyam and Kathakali, institutions such as Kalkshetra and the Kerala - Kalamandalm acclaim national and international meetings. The austerity of Bharatnatyam continues to be maintained in the training imparted in Kalakshetra Kerala Kalamandalm does the same for Kathakali and the genius of the poet Vallathol was responsible for obtaining the cooperation of the best traditional gurus of Kathakali. The remarkable feature of the training imparted in these traditional centres has been the capacity of the graduates of these institutions to project these highly contextualised art forms before a largely unfamiliar national and international audience.

A scheme was launched in 1960's by the Government of India, to provide fellowships to enable traditional masters to train students and performers in the age group of 30-40. The objective was to maintain the continuity of the oral tradition and that traditional art forms were used for new experimental work. For example, a Guru versed in a tradition of a particular classical dance form is attached to a new and experimental group working on choreography. attempted

at a complementarity resulting in valuable enrichment to modern choreography as distinguished from traditional forms.

Theatre, however, has always qualified to present problems of a different level, both in training and in opportunities for professional work. Theatre does not form part of the curricula. Professional training programmes are available in less than half a dozen academic institutions of the country. The most prominent of these are - the National School of Drama which is centrally financed. Since theatre continues to be mainly in regional languages of certain areas (Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Bengal etc.) graduates have difficulty in finding suitable academic posts. Some of them are absorbed in schools for extra-curricular activity few in radio and television and yet others in the film industry. A few have continued their amateur activities while taking up other jobs.

With a view to bridging the gap between training programmes and the maintenance of professional groups, another limited scheme was launched in 1980's by the Government of India which will give grants to training-cum-professional voluntary organisations and institutions so that they have regular sustained

financial support.

The cultural dimension of education is quite obvious but surprisingly one often tends to lose sight of it. In reality our schools and colleges, indeed our entire system of education is not geared to the task of promotion and spontaneous assimilation of this kind of education.

The National Policy on Education formulated by the Government of India in 1986 was an attempt in this direction. It read :

"The existing scheme between the formal system of education and country's rich and varied cultural traditions needs to be bridged. The preoccupation with modern technologies cannot be allowed to sever our new generations from the roots of India's history and culture ..... Education can and must bring about the five syntheses between change oriented technologies and the country's continuity for cultural tradition.

The curricula and processes of education will be enriched by cultural content in as many manifestations as possible. Children will be enabled to develop sensitivity to beauty, harmony and refinement.... the role of old masters who, train pupils through



traditional models will be supported and recognised.

Linkages will be established between the university system and instructions for higher learning in art, archeology, oriented studies etc. Due attention will be paid to the specialised disciplines of fine arts, museology, folklore etc. Teaching, training and research in these disciplines will be strengthened so as to replenish specialized manpower in them".

In 1979, the Government of India had set up an autonomous body called the Centre for Cultural Resources and Training (CCRT) situated in the capital, it has been organising a variety of in service teacher training programmes to enable teachers of different regions to exchange their different cultural knowledge and attributes to become better equipped to deal with an integrated cultural aspects of education. It organised orientation and refresher courses, seminars, workshops etc. and also produces cultural kits consisting of audio visual material covering literature, visual and performing arts and architecture. It also has a scheme for cultural talent search scholarships.

While the objectives of the CCRT are praiseworthy,

in practice its activities are seen as marginal. In 1988-89, for example, the number of teachers trained were only about 2,300 and the number of cultural kits issued were less than 400. On the whole, so far, the total number of teachers trained and kits issued is around 15,000 and 4,000 respectively, whereas there are more than 5.3 lakh primary schools and over 2 lakh middle, secondary or higher secondary schools in the country. The Haksar Committee Report, 1990 P.42 (3.55). This Centre for Cultural Resource and Training has now been entrusted with the task of developing pilot projects for the implementation of the National Policy on Education.

This institution is the modal agency for five specific schemes envisaged by the Government of India -

1. namely, production of cultural resources and software for education;
2. Introduction of the cultural component of education in schools;
3. Assistance to state and Central Institutes for the preparation of model studies and cultural software;
4. Studies in value oriented education; and
5. Setting up of evaluation studies.

Apart from this, the Government has circulated a policy document titled 'National Policy on Education-A Programme of Action (November 1986). Under this the National Council of Educational Research and Training, the Union Grants Commission and the Centre for Cultural Resources and Training have all be assigned specific roles. However, what has to be seen is whether the actual resources allocated to the ambitions programmes would make a meaningful impact on the lakhs of primary schools spread through art the length and breadth of the country.

The key to success of this New Education Policy orientation (with its special homage to issues sensitive to Art and Culture lies in the will of the Central Advisory Board of Education, Government of India. The Haskar Committee Report here recommends changes in the Constitution of the Central Advisory Board of Education, if necessary. The report recommends that matters relating to education and culture be looked after by the same department of the Government both at the Centre and the States in order to bridge the growing dichotomy between the two as subjects of Governments concern ;what is happening however is the contrary. Refer to Appendix-5. as

mentioned before in several states a separate department has been created to look after culture as a compartmentalised activity and in others of lagging on culture to Public Relations or Tourism as if it was a package to deliver publicity material and earn foreign exchange.

The Cultural content in education is more than a matter of introduction of courses in fine arts and practical crafts. Problems such as lack of appropriate reading material, teaching arts, trained personnel, adequate physical and financial environments are constantly being battled against; socio-cultural education continues to be neglected.

The shift in the educational system has certainly diversified the acquirement of skills and opened many new avenues of pursuit, but has not been able to produce a rounded integrated personality as a product of the system : A few individuals who have succeeded have done so in spite of it, not because of it. The Akademis, special institution of art have been somewhat more successful but there is still a wide gap between the qualitative training of a Shishya under a Guru and those brought up in such institutions, with exceptions of course. Most disturbing of all is, that in spite of

so many Government and other efforts, there the lack of courses or opportunities for the educational community, both in urban and rural areas to become initiate into the appreciation of the arts or to participate in a corporate manner in creative activities such as the crafts. Nevertheless a sizeable minority to keep appearing to raise hope that from among these will be found people who will have the capacity to communicate with the past and keep pace with the future, to hold the "still centre" of inner life would continually adapting and renovating outer forms, providing vital dynamism to a listless souly white retaining faith in human values.

#### STAFF STRENGTH OF THE ART AKADEMIS

The Haksar Committee Report justifies the staff strength in context of the "increasing activities of the National Akademis, there has naturally been a progressive growth of their staff". The Haksar Committee Report, 1990, p.43 (3.60) Appendix-8 of this text, shows the pattern of such growth since 1972 and the proportion of staff salaries to the total expenditure of each institution in 1984-85 and 1989-92.

The staff strength of the Sangeet Natak Akademi

has doubled since 1972, that of the Lalit Kala Akademi has tripled, and for the Sahitya Akademi, it has increased by 33%. Between 1982 and 1989 the staff strength has grown by 33% in Sangeet Natak Akademi, 58% in the Lalit Kala Akademi and 59% in the Sahitya Akademi; staff salaries accounted for 16% of the Sangeet Natak Akademi's expenditure in 1988-89.

It was 24% in case of Lalit Kala Akademi and 32% for the Sahitya Akademi. It is interesting to note here that after reading the above increase. The Haksar Committee Report does not even hint at an attempt of debureacratization of Art institutions should undertake intensive work studies under expert guidance, as a step towards optimal utilisation of existing strength and any future additions to the staff must be made with discretion. It thereby does not suggest any step for cutting down the mounting expenditure from the limited funds allocated to these Akademis, which go in paying salaries to these progressively increasing staff members.

Instead, the Report talks about certain disparities in the salary scales of comparable staff in the three Akademis, starting with their secretaries. (Details of these are shown in Appendix-10 of this

text). It is recommended that the status and pay scales of the three secretaries of the three National Akademis of Art and literature, should be identical and equal to that of a profession in the Universities. For disparities at other staff levels in the hierarchy, the Report recommends a measure of parity between staff of comparable functions which would be arrived at any mutual consultation between the three National Akademis and the National School of Drama. Technical personnel who have no normal avenues for promotion may be brought under a scheme of assessment and advancement of higher grades, as in the case of technical staff in autonomous bodies in the field of science and technology.

The Report, after admitting that in these institutions there may be functionaries who may not be either efficient or sensitive to the requirements that their official posts demand, who may lack the knowledge, training or background necessary for performing their tasks with understanding, initiative sensitivity and communication - does not even remark on their dispensability. On the contrary it seems to be content in saying that effective programmes for training and retraining the staff in all the institutions should be initiated. Where does the orientation, will resources, and funds come for such

programmes; the Report does not even consider.

#### **OTHER ASPECTS :**

##### **Licensing of Performances**

Theatre activity thrives on different kinds of professional theatre groups, the National Theatre of the country and a variety of amateur organisation. However, one of the hangovers of colonial rule in our country has been the statutory imperative of a licence from the police and the magistrate to enact dramatic performances. This more or less entails pre-censorship, the obvious damage of which is a common knowledge. The Haksar Committee Report not only touches upon this issue, but also leaves it by saying "Pre-censorship has no place in our democracy and must go". (p.48). However, it does suggest the exemption of entertainment tax for dramatic performance in many states in India. Except for tickets exceeding fifty rupees, there should be exemption from entertainment tax. But what about cultural shows, programmes etc. which are sponsored by private patrons, the ITC sammelans etc. which have very high priced tickets making their entry very restricted for the common person. There are a host of other similar issues which the report has not even seen let alone highlighted



deficiencies of recommended solutions.

#### **GOVERNMENT AND PARLIAMENT SCRUITINY**

The general tenor of the Haksar Committee's recommendations is that almost the whole of governmental support to activities in the fields of Sahitya, Sangeet, Natak and Lalit Kala should be channeled through the Akademis. It further states that the Parliament then has to ensure that "this does not develop into an exercise of patronage of any kind either by the Government or by the Akademis themselves" (P.50). It suggests that both the Government and Akademis "should desire maximum benefit from the twin concepts of accountability and institutional freedom" (ibid) thereby making it essential for the parliament to concentrate its scrutine only on broad issues of government policies, programmes and initiatives leaving internal autonomy of day-to-day administration to the officer of the Akademis.

#### **ON AUTONOMY : GOVERNMENT AND MARKET**

The Haksar Committee report very categorically affirms the imperativeness of 'Autonomy' for the working and sustainance of the Akademis. It states;

"we want to declare unmistakably that we are for less and not more state control of art, we want art programmes to be administered by artists and not by bureaucrats". (p.41). The report also quotes approvingly from the speech made by the first Vice-Chairman of the Sahitya Akademi, S. Radhakrishana, during its inaugural ceremony; ".....if we are to have creative literature and not managed literature in our country, it is essential that the Akademi should remain completely autonomous. I am glad to know that Maulana Saheb who just gave it, the first push recognises that it will not be right for the government to interfere in the activities and the administration of the Akademi....." (P.8). It even echoes Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, who categorically rejected the necessity of a ministry of culture in India. Speaking during the one of the discussions in the first Drama Seminar organised by the Sangeet Natak Akademi. She made a notable intervention : "Again and again I hear, not only in this seminar but also outside, how nice it would be to have a ministry of culture. God forbid, if such a thing happen there will be an end of all cultural activities in our country. I do not cherish such a hope because I know how the governmental machineries function. A ministry is a ministry and, as

such, it will have to go through so many formalities and procedures. I remember a very pertinent remark made by Krishna Menon in the film seminar about the creation of a ministry of culture said he "you should be thankful that there is no ministry to interfere with your activities. I do not say that the government will interfere but I firmly believe that no cultural activity can be carried on by a ministry. All the time they will be busy in collecting data, statistics, blue prints and hundred and one theories. That is the way how they work and sow seeds of discontentment. All of us know it. So please banish the thought of having a ministry of culture from your minds."

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Everything Kamaldavi was protesting against - re-tapism and bureaucratise of the worst kind - may have all been consolidated through the assured 'Autonomy' of the Akademis themselves. Hence this makes one a little skeptic of the issue of "right of self-government in

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91. Source : Sahitya Akademi Library, Documentary Section Excerpts from discussion of Mulk Raj Anand' paper at the first drama seminar organised by the Sangeet Natak Akademi. It is a telling comment on the state of our Akademis that such valuable cultural documents have not been published in a book form or available for wider distribution. In the printed version of the proceedings of the seminar Kamaldevi's comments are to be found on p.357.

the Arts, especially when institutional autonomy is almost proposed by every government sponsored document or policy statement. For example, while examining official cultural discourse of the mid-50's in India, one can observe that our leaders were very keen on keeping art free from political surveillance. So even though we have no ministry of culture, we have a department of culture and a whole network of Art Akademis that function (more or less) exactly the way Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay feared in the above statement.

However, what needs to be addressed here is - can the case for institutional autonomy be sustained, if at all, through such strong governmental ties assuming that these ties are imperative to bind an infrastructure for the sustenance of art form. (For example, even though Kamaladevi viewed governmental ministries as destroyers of creative autonomy, yet she was not averse to cooperating with the government and in the first drama seminar she announced that she was "drawing up a programme under the five-year plan" that would enable the Sangeet Natak Akademi to finance the construction of a single theatre in each state (ibid). And then are we not falling into a paradox which on one hand sees a ministry of culture as a weapon of political interference and on the other its absence

legitimising the government's lack of responsibility to the arts on the name of protecting 'Autonomy'. This leads us to consider the self-defeating possibilities of government funding for cultural institutions in the absence of multiple sources of funding and other modes of ensuring self-sufficiency.

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Rustom Bharucha and even the Haksar Committee report talk of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) fund in the United States of America where too a general critique of governmental interference in cultural matters have been propounded. He says, even limited government funding to organisations like the NEA and "ideological" or "Moralistic" grounds have not stopped this interference. The Haksar Committee report quotes extensively (in pp.22-23) from Tobert Huge's "A Loony Parody of Cultural Democracy", which criticises the attempts from senator Jesse Helms to prohibit government funding to any "obscene or indecent" art projects that "stray from the centreline of American eithical beliefs." In america, however there has been a strong corporate support for the arts, which in India

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92. See, Rustom Bharucha, "Autonomy of Official Culture Discourse. A non-Government Perspective", economic and political weekly, August 1-8, 1992

is just beginning to emerge. Lately there have been some sponsorships of "gazhal nites" 'Jugalbandis' by cigarette companies etc. But the Indian corporations are fairly new to this task and it would be sometime before they are able to commit themselves to long term sponsorship of the arts, not just of particular shows and spectacles but of activities and groups on a more permanent basis.

On the whole, Indian artists have remained hopelessly in need of financial support, what with limited state funds and resources and the markets more or less self-regulatory demand-supply mechanisms. Even then many art forms, (such as the traditional street acrobats, jugglers or 'Nats', the 'Nautanki' or 'Tamasha' performers, the 'ek tara' street singers of Bengal and Maharashtra etc.) being outside the perview of the state's concerns for promotion of the arts, have all managed to survive, more or less, but barely at a subsistence level. This has essentially meant two things. firstly that they work out some sort of a living relying totally on their own facilities and capabilities while being present in the market. And secondly that it is time that any official cultural

discourse or review recognises, if not encourages, such art performers, who too may have a lot to contribute to the general 'art and culture' scene in the country, on the whole. It is here that the Haksar Committee Report has been more than forthcoming by saying, "it is the market rather than the patronage of the state which set the pace for cultural endeavour after 1947", (p.21). But this may not be altogether true. For the report's consideration of possibilities of other avenues of funding for such art promotion activities may be due to keeping the tune with the new economic policy of the government which sees "liberalisation" as a way of organising discourse which seems to be integrally connected to modernity. On the other hand, if these alternative avenues of funding are not considered, existence of active solicitation of different views and possibilities may also go unmarked. Our government at the core of this new policy perspective keeps the view that when choosing between relative roles of 'plan and 'market' the flexibility offered by the latter is of greater benefit than the costs associated with atomistic decision-making by the state in any avenue of planned civil life (whether industry, agriculture, technology or culture). However, the nature of a market is defined by a set of structures which predefine the

distribution of economic benefits.

The equilibrium of the market which is set on making not just money to break even but even profit will then obviously not invest in non-commercial ventures or gamble with such art forms which are experimenting with new techniques and forms of presentation or which have been marginalised by mainstream national life. It is here that the state can help but with a strong respect for artistic autonomy whereby state support and encouragement can be drastically differentiated from state interference, intervention or even dictatorship.

State support is essential, for lots of admirable art does badly at first, it's rewards to the patrons are not immediate and may never come. Hence, there is a need for organisations like the NEA of United States of America or the "Culture Fund" suggested by both the Khosla committee Report (1992) and the Haksar Report (1992). Such funds could help self-realisation of that form of artistic activity which is not immediately successful. Corporate underwriting may produce magnificent results but it requires a delicate balance with government funding to work well.



On the other side, however, the Art Akademis have great difficulty in sustaining their Autonomy and this can be due to their centralised administrative structures in the capital and a lot of political maneuvering for some of their decision making posts. Even in smaller capitals, the report complained of undue interference in the activities of local Akademis which has resulted in their becoming mere "limbs of the state government" (p.29). For autonomy tied up with time and effort consuming details of governmental "clearances" and "advice". To counter this, one may need to necessitate a fundamental restricting of the Akademis. for example, the chairpersons need not be "appointed" by the President of India as enunciated in the report, but should be elected and then one could give the President the option of selecting two members on a three member Search Committee. To give another example, the report recommends that the financial matters of the Akademis should not be supervised on a part time basis by an officer of the department of culture. For autonomy to sustain itself, artists themselves will have to be more actively involved in the programmes and policy decision of the Akademis. (But how ? The report does not even give a clue to its procedural details). The members of the General

Council will also have to meet more than once or twice a year for their deliberations. The chairpersons would have to be more than titular heads who use the Akademis to enhance their own prestige rather than serve it. But most crucially there is a need to explore multiple channels of funding so that the Akademis would not have to rely on meagre funds received from the government (in light of their varied activities) which almost circumscribe their 'autonomy' in the first place.

All these issues need to be substantiated before one can see through realise the strong and yet unrealised recommendation made by the Khosla Committee in 1972 regarding the establishment of independent Akademis in all the Indian states, on lines of the National Akademis. Even the Haksar report, before entering into the minutiae of how such Akademis should be linked (with its terms of reference including "networking") much work is needed in reconstructing the model of the National Akademis and most of all in redefining "Autonomy" in terms of the needs of the artists and people rather than the state.

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93. See, Rustom Bharucha, 'Autonomy of official cultural Discourse in India : A Non-government Perspective', *ibid*

## THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE IN THE REPORT :

Any cultural discourse assumes a spectrum of definitions in relation to culture. It has meant varied things to different people. It is not as if it is a hard word to define,<sup>94</sup> but it is a concept which is explored and interpreted differently by people in different cultures. The Indian synonym of "Sanskriti" however is made up of much more than the arts, "Sahitya, Kala and Sangeet" may denote much more than what constitutes "Culture" in English. For instance, "Vidya, tapa gnyana, sheel, guna, dharma". The report defines culture as "What distinguishes human beings from other creatures in the process of natural evolution."<sup>95</sup> Without this we would be like "...mere animals even if we did not possess horns or tails."<sup>96</sup> However, in order not to be like "mere animals" "with horns and tails", in order to be seen as cultured, one had to refer to a list of traditional attributes quoted from an ancient sanskrit source which the Report provided. Not that there was any ambiguity here, but

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94. As Rustom Bharucha contends in "Autonomy of Official Cultural Discourse, A Non-Government Perspective", Economic and Political Weekly, August 1-8, 1992, (p.1670).

95. P.7, Haksar Committee Report (July 1990).

96. Ibid

just that it indicated, "how much work is left in grounding these indigenous nuances and attributes of Indian Culture (not just Hindu culture) within a predominantly western idiom of official cultural discourse today."<sup>97</sup> The report further illustrates the definition of culture as that 'activity which is closely related to other social processes in society .... and ... culture and cultural creativity, as we perceive it, are integral constituents of the totality of social activity within a community."<sup>98</sup>

Nevertheless neither does the report care to talk about the importance of community activity within society nor its place in art practice. For it is not social activity, but community activity within society today which seems to be more threatened, especially in the domain of art practice.<sup>99</sup> While on one hand, the report states - "Our definition of culture quite conciously reaches out to individuals and communities as a whole. It does not differentiate between the specialist creator of culture and cultural artefacts and the lay citizen, who partly draws upon the creative world of the specialist, partly also contributes to

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97. Rustom Bharuch, *ibid.*

98. P.7, Haksar Committee Report.

99. This aspect has been talked about in Chapter one.

cultural production through his own creative efforts" -  
----- on the other hand, in the same breath, it  
contradicts the above statement by saying - "...in  
modern societies, ktyhere is necessarily an allocation  
of specific roles and productive functions to different  
individuals. For this reason some individuals become  
specialists in culture and cultural production, while  
other specialise in generation of material goods." <sup>100</sup>

Besides in the former statement there seems to be a  
tendency to standardis all are activity and talent.  
Then does one not give consideration to the exclusivity  
of art and skills which have to be acquired, not  
everybody has them. Besides if there is no  
differentiation between the specialist creator and the  
lay ;citizen, then why bother to have specialist  
institutions like the Art Akademis at all? there is  
also the issue of the attempt to standardise  
creativity. Just like one cannot sponsor the creation  
of culture one cannot create specialists of culture  
either. The furthest the Govt. can propose to attempt  
is to give shape and direction to Form in creativity.  
But within that form one has to leave ample space for  
individualised innovaiton, individualised techniques of

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100. P.7, The Haksar Committee Report

perfection of skills. As representations of innovativeness are different with different individuals. To validate this line of reasoning one could give an example from Folk, classical or traditional forms of representation in art, when creativity is civilised and socialised, i.e ., enmeshed in everyday living and practice, it produces a form which can be inculcated by acquiring, articulating and perfecting of skills. Creativity, generally speaking, is inherent in humans. It makes them progress and skills are produced, learnt and taught by practical experience. within this Form. Through skilled technique, there is always enough space present, left or given for innovation and genius. But this basic Form has to be learnt. It is known as "Parampara" in the classical Indian arts (i.e., condensed knowledge and tradition). For example, the form in classical Indian Music is called "Gharana" and the skills for all talented, innovative artists are the same, known as "Sur", "taal", and "laya". Each "ustad" or "Guru" (Pandit) within the "Gharana" has had the opportunity of mastering the same "Ragas" so within the broad principles of a 'Gharana' they have had an opportunity to practise and perfect their own stylisations.

The critique then is not against the idea of exclusivity of art which is also progressed by the Akademis but against first, the elitism of these Akademis in their inability to reach the entire country at large; secondly, against the limited congregation of art practice that these Akadmis have envisaged (limited to some studio arts, plastic arts, visual arts and some urban literatures) leaving out a host of folk, tribal, village and other forms of art representation and thirdly against the allowance of very little space for innovativeness of the kind talked of above. Even within the Akademis, urban artists are more bothered about connections at high places and procedures for selection of government sponsored awards than about new forms of experimentations. For it is very rarerly (if ever) that a young unknown artist has got state recognition in terms of a grants, awards or fellowships to carry on with his or her work of innovation or experimentaion. Besides, the marked distinction by the report between culture and cultural creativity on one hand and cultural production and market production on the other hand, seems to illustrate a certain disconnectedness with which the reader can quite apparently see that the report itself is uncomfortable with. "Materially productive

activity" and "creative activity" may be both culturally produced, for does not our level of cultural development reflect our mode of material production ? Further, culture denotes, envelops, identifies, signifies creativity, and hence, is a dynamic, on going, dialectically progressive and ever evolving process, enmeshed in ideas and practises. We also learn from the report that "diverse cultural activities" and " forms of artistic self-expression" provide "reflective poise" and "spiritual energy" so essential to "maturing of the good society" (p.6). But what is this 'good society'? It is repeatedly used again and again in the report until it seems to become a scale of measurement of such values and ideas of society which themselves are fague and not properly defined. Besides whatever one may conceptualise as "good", may have constitutive links with power. The challenge then is to release this good from this nexus.

This 'good' can be constitutive of the cultural reservoir of resources (talked about in chapter two) can be the progressive growth of knowledge or can also be innovative forms of creative self-expression which provide the individual and the community with a poise necessary to energise productive activity and sustain society, provide a sense of direction to the system of



interactions of human beings with the environment, with each other and the universe as they contemplate their future. However, the report nowhere cases ;to illustrate what it means by a 'good society'. Repeated interminably in the report, it sounds like the most prosaic of absolutes.

The report quotes extensively from Nehru's speech at the inauguration of Indian Council of cultural Relations, Mahatama Gandhi's attitude to culture, Dr. S. Radhkrishnan's caution against 'managed literature' etc. and thus forgoes the attempt to sharpen its discourse through its avoidance of critical inquiry research and assessment. It quotes these leaders as though their opinions and words are beyond reproach and so stand as aspirations for the nation.

It takes pains to emphasise that it does not differentiate between 'high' and 'low' cultures (p.10). "We would like to suggest that any theory of culture which commences with a differentiated view of the cultural activity of a society is, in oru opinion, a flowed view of such activity". (ibid). It acknowledges the "variety of cultures" that are created through differentiated communities. Yet it does not feel that through this diversity or differentiation Indian

culture could be meaningfully identified. It related culture of differentiated communities as that of "close constituencies" and reiterates the need for a perspective which needs to look beyond these closed groups.

To summarise the whole chapter, one could start by saying that the report is a very comprehensive document. It also entails some new recommendations on the role and functioning of the concerned Akademis (as detailed in the following chapters of this work). However, in the study of some of its recommendations for each Akademi separately one notices that it has, many a times, stated its observations rather than given any detailed plan, worked out carefully to recommend any structural changes in the role and functioning of the Akademis, as it claims to do in its terms of reference. For example, in Chapter Six on the Sangeet Natak Akademi, amongst other things, it is content to suggest that the "Serious deficiencies which exist in classifying, indexing and cataloguing the archival material must be made good" (p.166). However neither does it give any clue as to how these "serious deficiencies" which it sees as "constraints of space, equipment and experienced staff" (p.106) can be removed

nor does it recommend any back up plan to financially streamline the allocation of limited funds in a manner which would probably attempt to solve such "serious deficiencies" (not to forget the) controversial dimension of "experienced staff", i.e., would this mean an additional increase in the staff strength of the already top heavy Akademis, or would it mean a replacement of some of the lesser "experienced" staff members with those of the former).

Furthermore the methodology followed by this report-informal unstructured questionnaires, free discussions, interviews, letter etc. (p.3) seemed to be more conducive to that of the previous Khosla committee Report (1972) which used a set of structured questionnaires sent to only a hundred chosen persons for their "Views and suggestions"<sup>101</sup> as compared to the Haksar Committee report's sample size of "over a thousand distinguished persons" [p.3]. Compared to the Khosla Committee Report, which claims to have made on "on the spot assessment", "on the impact of the Akademis and ICCR on cultural life",<sup>102</sup> (though how that is possible itself is quite doubtful), the Haksar Report's methodology seems to be more conducive to its

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101. The Khosla Committee Report, 1972. (p.5)

102. *ibid.*

terms of reference. For example, in a review on the working of the three Akademis, apart from their records it claims to have scrutinised the agenda and proceedings of their policy-making, executive and academic bodies and internal committee as well. (p.3)

But when it comes to giving a concrete assessment on its findings regarding the "role and functioning of the Akademis", it merely concludes by addressing itself to battery of questions, the answers of most of which it leaves to the disposition and intellegibility of the reader. Questions like "What is the state of health of cultural institutions in various parts of the country? (p.147) or "Is the multiplicity of institutions supported by public funds an invitation to order or chaos?" or "What should be the kind of linkages or working arrangements, and the divisions of labour between them"? (ibid) or "Are these institutions actively serving, supporting, rewarding those engaged in literature, music, dance, drame, fine arts and so on"? "To what extent are they actively involving the artists among themselves, or doing serious research in problems connected with our classical and folk arts - preserving them, seeing that these are available to students of art and literature ....."? (ibid.). Not

surprisingly then it would make the reader wonder whether such queries should have been initial predilictious with which any such document should have started its research, rather than a conclusion with such unanswered formulations. This is over more so the case for this report because it's terms of reference are addressed precisely to these issues and claims to attempt an answer exactly such questions. For example, the report's first term of refernece states that it has to review the workings of the three National Akademis, the second states that it has to recommend structural changes consistant with 'autonomy and public accountability' of these institutions, and the third sates that it has to suggest steps for their networking with similar state/central bodies (p.2). Now the report in its concluding chapter claims to have not only fulfilled the tasks of its terms of reference, but even goes a step further to say that, "our terms of reference have wider connotations which cover larger ground ....." (p.147).

Nevertheless, even though the report does not go into details, it does say that "We have found that while all the three Akademis have done some good work, there has not been widely felt." (p.147) It says that their impact on the cultural scene has not been widely

felt and the accent they have tended to place on research and documentation has not been strong enough." Their publications do not reach out to the average educated home and their interaction with the system institutions in the state and union territories has been far from adequate, not only due to their own fault but because of the poor state of health of many of those institutions". (p.147-8) And since the report sees that the "Akademis have not been able to contribute much to the growth of active association of artists and literacy people" (ibid), it makes certain recommendations suggesting structural changes with regard to each Akademi. An attempt has been made to review these recommendations of the Haksar Committee Report in light of the present role and functioning of the Sahitya Akademi, the Sangeet Natak and Lalit Kala Akademi in the Chapters that follow.

## CHAPTER SIX

### INSTITUTIONS OF ARTS AND CULTURE

#### IN INDIA

By churning the ocean of culture with a rod of authority we may find to our horror that instead of Amrit, what has swirled up is poison and there may be no Shiva to drink it up.

There was a particular orientation with which the Indian elites started on their path of national development and a peculiar context in which the concept of institutions of art promotion like the Akademis was imported into India. Such institutions which were to be autonomous in their functioning yet largely State funded, were to be established in a newly independent nation which aspired for the kind of modernity which illustrated a certain kind of affluence characteristic of western nations. Like talked about in chapter one, the kind of Art practice to be promoted through these Akademis by the State was to be oblivious to indigenous Art forms like Handicraft production, cottage or village industry production (like weaving, pottery), traditional forms of entertainment like "Tamasha" theatre, "Nautanki" Street Singers, "Nats", 'bauls' or the "Chao" dance form or the Birhor wall paintings of the tribals of the Chhota Nagpur plateau in Bihar, or even the promotion and research of a reservoir of folk literature, poetry, ballada (which have all been a strong medium of dissemination of certain cultural influences and messages of political communication during India's struggle for independence). It was because of such an orientation of our nationalist elite that the kind of Art that was to be promoted through



these Akademis was in tune with that of Western Anglicised traditions. For example, at the Lalit Kala Akademi studio's at Ghari, New Delhi, there is a programme for the extension of sculpture in Art pottery. Now both sculpture and "Art" pottery have been recognised and promoted by the Akademi, but when it comes to the "Murtikars" of Gaya or the "Prajapathi's" of Gorakhpur or even the Metalcasters of Muradabad, these Akademis have failed to even notice this enormous section of artists and craft persons.

This chapter is mainly an attempt to emphasize on two things. Firstly, that there was an amazing diversity of Art practice prevalent in India before it got colonised, when it got colonised and even after it attained Independence. This diversity has sustained and nurtured Art production at all levels of society, some of which flourishing through voluntary efforts of the community over time (like examples given above) and others crying for official sanction and assistance (like many of the marginalized and monetarily impoverished forms of entertainment like the santhal paintings of West Bengal or the Chitrakathi folk performers of Maharashtra or the Kurmi house decoration patterns of Chotanagpur plature in Bihar or even the Rajgarhi pottery of the Kutch or the ballad chanters of Madhya

Pradesh or the street singers of Bengal etc. - who would all probably need financial state assistance to continue). However due to a host of reasons like limitations of funds, a certain occidentalism of the nationalist elite etc., the three premier Art promotion institutions of India, the National Akademi, aimed to concentrate only on a few Art forms while others got neglected, marginalised, battling with their circumstances while trying to survive on their own with whatever meagre means available with them to do so. So this chapter also talks about the cultural infrastructure present at the time of independence. What in effect seems to have happened was that some of the institutions which had been established by the colonial authorities were only further streamlined and consolidated. Very few structural change were brought about in the already existing institutions to sensitise them to indigenous needs and requirements and very few new institutions were built for the promotion of Art and culture which would attempt to have a wise access to the diverse forms of cultural production prevalent throughout the country. The three National Akademis have come into focus again and again because they were inaugurated and projected as the country's premier Art promotion bodies after independence in which a major

chunk of state funds and other resources were channelised. Also their functioning for more than forty years not has focused on the complexities of administering culture in the Indian sub-continent today.

Secondly, part two of this chapter talks of these Akademis specifically the orientation, and purpose with which these Akademis were established, the need for indigenisation of this imported concept (starting with the adopted term "Academy"), the institutionalization of art forms, their role and functioning over the years, their reach and target beneficiaries, their prevailing structural hurdles, programmes, their inefficiencies and achievements. This chapter deals with the Sangeet Natak Akademi and the Lalit Kala Akademi, whereas the following chapter deals with the Sahitya Akademi in detail.

#### **PART ONE :**

An Indian legend regarding the creation of the first (and earliest) treatise on esthetics says: Brahma, the creator, went into a trance and created the fifth veda by taking word from Rig-Veda, and sentiments from Atharva-veda, to create a fifth veda, encompassing all sciences and branches of knowledge, spheres and

religions, accessible to all classes and castes, enabling and creator and participation alike to learn the manifold techniques through which a state of 'harmony' could be evoked and experienced. A reading of the first compendium which is as theoretical as it is a practical guide or manual for artists, tries to show the existence and recognition of the main streams and levels of experiences, categorise in the artistic sphere as the highly classical, stylized, and popular and common mass. The word culture then could be substituted for "artistic". However, both this first text and subsequent history, bears some testimony to a wide prevalence of the practice of the arts & crafts at different levels of society but which constantly influenced each other and conditioned form and styles. The distinction of the "Margi" and "Desi" (of the path of the sage and of the people) - of "Natya and Loka" (stylized and realistic) are pointers to these distinctions.<sup>103</sup> Texts such as this and others would make one read that cultural activity would be manifest at all levels of society. Sometimes the king or ruler was the patron-in-chief and other times highly sophisticated forms were sustained and nurtured through individual

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103. See Kapila Malik Vatsayan, "Some Aspects of Cultural Policy in India", 1972, UNESCO, Paris

effort of a small group of people subscribing to a particular faith which normally revolved around a monastery or a temple which served as important cultural centres. The agricultural cycle of a season, astronomy marked by the moon calendar, and festivities revolving around the epics of Ramayana or Mahabharata and those concerning the Buddha provided ample opportunity for cultural activity of all kinds.

The Mughals came in with a distinct culture of their own and carried it with them as rulers of the society. They took over the position of affluent kings, who were patrons and donors. But there were other patrons like priests and rich traders who mingled with such individuals who were fostered and promoted into positions of social power through such royal patronisation for their own social prestige. Finally, there were traditional academic schools of learning some which could trace their origin back to the universities of Nalanda and Taxila. These too specialised in the transmission of knowledge in highly technical branches of learning and through the oral and written word. Between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries, a cultural pattern continued to evolve in which on one side there was an amazing diversity character-

ized by a fast developing regional culture and on the other side a culture restricted to the places and courts of the kings and small rulers and the temples of the priests. However, what is interesting is the evidence of another form of cultural institution and promotion in art production. Under these small pockets of royal patronage of the arts, especially in architecture, painting and music there was a flourishing traditional culture sustained through voluntary efforts of the community. By the seventeenth century, with the onset of European invasions, these patrons felt an increasing desire to evolve styles in arts with the view to give them official sanction. All these forms and styles so evolved created around the end of eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth century, especially in dance and music, were deeply rooted in the folk traditions of the region. The patron, who was usually the ruler was culturally isolated from the people but had a choice to identify with them through the medium of music, dance painting and architecture above all, while maintaining his authority of power and at the same time enabling him to participate with the people of his region. The origins of contemporary schools of classical dance could be traced back to this period.

However, by then, interestingly, one trend had treated in due to the limitations of funds, cultural activities came to be restricted to those which could be practiced without a manifestation of large cooperative activity. Music, dance, painting and writing received a higher priority than architecture. When India was colonised, it was being politically conquered on one hand, and on the other its culture, or at least a curiosity of it, was making inroads into the minds of administrators and organisers representing the rulers. Many British civil servants who came to India were oriented in the eighteenth-nineteenth century liberal arts tradition of Europe: Once the cares of the states had become routine, they set out to explore the cultural treasures of a country whose civilization and attainments had already become known to Europe. The interest began with literature, with the discovery of a few manuscripts but soon spread to other branches of learning, particularly art and archaeology. There was a plea made with British government for more facilities and funds for the establishment of a few societies of oriental learning such as the Asiatic Society of Bengal; Queen's College, now the Sanskrit Varanasi Visvavidyalaya; the Archaeological Survey of India, the Imperial Library (now called the National Library); the National

Archives; and to establish schools of art like the Calcutta school of art etc.

None of these institutions founded, however, were guided solely by the motivation of intellectual discovery and the adventure of Indian cultural pattern; a new element of cultural policy had entered the picture; this was Lord Macaulay's minute on founding a new educational system of India. The specialised institutions so funded sought to demarcate studies of national or indigenous culture from knowledge and learning which was being imparted to the Indian through a newly established educational system which sought to detach the English educated Indian from his cultural moorings so that he gradually but surely subscribe to a set of imported values and cultural patterns. For those associated in the new schools and colleges this aim of alienation was achieved in a large measure, the continuity of tradition for this aspiring Indian middle class was weakened, if not broken.

**The Cultural infrastructure present at the time of independence :**

About a decade or so before independence since all energies of the nation at practically all levels were directed towards the one goal of attaining political



independence, the idea of a common culture with a unity took' precedence in Indian political official thought even though regional cultural diversity continued to evolve. As a consequence, there was an inherent complexity of launching a uniform central cultural policy. However, just before independence, there was an organisational pattern and structure of institutions of culture. The central government administered and financed a few cultural institutions, such as the All-India network of the Archaeological survey of India, the National Library, The National Archives, the four central departments called the Botanical, Geological, Zoological and Anthropological surveys of India, a few institutions of oriental learning, two institutions of the visual arts etc. Similar departments of varying qualities and in varying degrees were sustained by the state governments. The Indian princely states themselves maintained sustained efforts in the fields of performing and literary arts. Mass media units like the All-India Radio had been set up primarily for the dissemination of official information but had already begun to entertain some art forms like music, vocal and instrumental, classical folk and light etc. Some universities had introduced courses on the history and civilization of India and Europe but they were seen as

optional courses with not much academic importance. No state, financial or organisational facility was available to sustain what was left of the crafts. But the "Charkha" of Mahatma Gandhi & the 'Swadeshi' movement of the Indian National Congress had once again revived the concept of small scale cottage and village production. In 1947 when India assumed responsibility for governing, an honest effort was made. This included a gradual introduction of courses of Indian civilization, culture and the arts at high school and university levels; encouragement of community programmes in villages and districts and of village, cottage industries and cooperatives; adult literacy drives; strengthening already existing cultural institutions like the department of archaeology, the National Museums, libraries, archival collections, etc. Publication programmes in literature for children, students, scholars and adults; establishment of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in the Government of India to supervise All India Radio, Television and the Publications division; Governmental programmes for rehabilitating the traditional artisan and craftsmen, financed and administered under the All-India Village and Khadi Industries Board; the establishment of the Akademis and institutions in the fields of literary, performing and visual arts, to

be financed by state or central government but autonomous in their policies and programmes; launching schemes for assistance and subsidies to voluntary organisations working in various cultural fields; assistance and maintenance grants to artists in indigent circumstances etc.

An analysis of the working and role of these Akademis of Art would probably be able to focus on some complexities of administering culture in the India sub-continent, especially the difficulty of carving a central cultural policy, in some cases explicit, in others implicit.

## PART TWO

### The National Akademis of Art and Literature :

The Government of independent India very soon realised that to achieve objectives of promoting and fostering 'National integration' a national level effort was required through an awareness of "Cultural Unity" (Refer to Appendix 1 of this text) The attempt was to do this through the institutionalization of the performing, visual and verbal arts embodied in the three National level Akademis at New Delhi, namely the Sangeet Natak, Lalit Kala and Sahitya Akademis and

their affiliated state level institutions. The role of these institutions, as the Haksar Committee report suggests, over and above the extension of sustenance, was to provide forums for debate and discussion between persons of different regions engaged in creative activity. Also to enable artistic work of such individuals to reach out to their peers and others. The foundation of these institutions were laid on the belief that the results of cultural activities would shape for the community a sensibility which would guide and reflect India's entry into modernity at the same time as it married the Indian past to the best of what contemporary world had to offer.

For the government these institutions were the most prominent mediators if not embodiment of Indian culture. (This was apparent from general government policy programmes and funds allocated to these institutions as compared to others, various government sponsored review reports etc. from time to time).

However, it is significant to note that to name these institutions, the term "Akademi was chosen (and not due to a lack of other available names). It is more than just a name. It denoted an entire way of congregation of art practice more prevalent in medieval

Europe, not India. Historically, 'Academies' (from which 'Akademis' was derived) emerged in medieval Europe in opposition to 'guilds' as 'schools of art and learning'.<sup>104</sup> Not only did these Akademis emphasise 'Secular' learning in contrast to predominately religious affiliations of "guilds", they also focused on the arts as opposed to the crafts. In working the classical model of Plato's Academy, the Akademis in renaissance Europe gradually became identified with "learned societies" focusing and specialised disciplines and areas of knowledge. By the mid 18th century these societies became associated with "academicism" to which these were reactions from the proponents and upholders of more creative expressions of art.

It would seem that when the Akademis were instituted in India the mid - 50s they were viewed as 'cultural organisations but with pretensions of emulating the earlier (European) tradition of 'academies' as 'learned societies'. How exactly the term 'Akademi' was chosen by our leaders has yet to be clarified. Certainly the word was sufficiently equated to desig-

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104. See the Encyclopedia of social sciences, volume II, pp. 56-60 or see Raymond Williams, "Culture", Foutana Press, 1986, pp 60-61.

nate the high ideals of an emerging nation which could be proud of such national institutions that could match the reputation of the long standing academies of art and languages, especially in England and France.

The indigenisation of the word was effected through a change in spelling (Akademi) and the use of Sanskrit compounds like 'Sahitya', 'Lalit Kala' and 'Sangeet Natak', whereby the differentiation between literature, 'fine arts' performing arts was institutionalised. Before 1947, the Urban level, music, dance and drama were patronised by the Indian princes who subsidised musicians and dancers in their courts through a retainer system. Individual artists were retained, often with titles which represented cases of 'official organisation'. In painting and music, especially, this kind of patronage was extremely important and lasted for many centuries. The detailed arrangements varied, but what is generally true about its form of social relation is that the artist was typically retained or commissioned as an individual professional worker. For the rural masses, the arts continued to feature as a major functional, recreational and participative activity. However, in visual arts, painting and sculpture, perspective and colour in painting had

changed irrecoverably; in nineteenth century imported academic styles had left their deep impression whether in adherence or through a start reaction. The vision of the artist had changed; he was no longer the vehicle or communicator happy in his anonymity learning heavily on literary content but was an individual creator expressing himself through the autonomy of the plastic medium.

105 The government of (independent) India's main effort, then lay in the establishment of the three National Akademis of Art, through which it hoped to sustain and review the traditional arts and create opportunities for artists to express hope and aspiration of modern India in contemporary language. Briefly one could say that even through the word Akademi, was transplanted, in needed to be adapted to respond to all the ideocencracies or the varied characteristic differentiations produced out of the Indian environment of working, belief and existence. Then what became relevant was not the imported word 'Academy (or Akademi) but its components (such as the thought behind the specialisation, demarcation and institutionalisation of art form into different categories, the type of organisational arrangement which it -

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105. See Kapila Vatsayan, 'Some Aspects of Cultural Policy in India; 1972, UNESCO, Paris, (pp 34-35).

signified etc.) which went into making (and viewing) of these Akademis of Art as "an entire way" of modern western organisation of Art practice. For otherwise, one would tend to look at the Indian institutions of the 'Gurukuls' (where the Guru-Shishya Parampara signifying 'an entire way of living whether it was for the promotion of art practice, education or professional skill). But this is where the irony lies. What is in a name one may ask why so much fuss? May be because it gives an idea of the orientation of the institutions in question, for example, the government could have adopted an indigenous name like "Sangams" (The Tamil Sangams) which were communities or associations in medieval India of "creative minds" and have a history as old as that of Plato's "Academy". 'Sangam' poets were made to perform on a common platform as today's "Mushaira" through an agency - which brought them together and preserved their work for posterity. In fact if our National Akademis also intended to indulge in similar functions as the Sangams with longer coverage and bigger scope, then why there arose a need to adapt an imported concept at all, one often wonders.

The government of independent India wanted to do everything for the people and the people looked up to



it from feeding the body to feeding the spirit. Religion and cultural activity was food for the latter. While it was not only dangerous to double with the former it was also too much a part of daily ritual of living in India. Not that cultural production was not but it was still an avenue for the Government to explore the "creative potential the Indian mind" and of enriching life with its enjoyment. It could unite people (as well as divide them) so the government of independent India saw this native vitality languishing for lack of adequate promotion.

However, even Mr. Krishna Kriplani the first Secretary, Sahitya Akademi (1954-71) believed that the main role of these Akademis was an attempt at "Consciousness building" in art practice and not the creation of artists, which no institution can do.

They could only attempt to stimulate, strengthen awareness, understanding and appreciation of immense diversity of culture. At the time of their founding the Akademis neither intended to preempt other support for the arts nor did they include programmes to support individual artists. Instead, independent institutions already in existence were given official recognition by the Akademis; a practice later discontinued in favour

of associating most regional organisations with state level Akademis. Although supported by annual government grants, the three National Akademis were administered by and through government ministries and their bureaucracies. Officials have used this close relationship to influence the Akademi's organisational activities and policies. Expressions of dissatisfaction and efforts to reconsider earlier decisions have led the government of India on three occasions to appoint committees to look into the workings of cultural organisations and make recommendations for the improvement. It seems quite interesting that from the initial statements of K.Kripalani that the Akademis should not be either teaching or performing bodies (!), the Haksar Committee report (July, 1990) which was the latest of the three reviews on the role and functioning of the three National Akademis and their networking with their state affiliates, seems to be primarily concerned with mainly with what Krishna Kripalani warned against the Akademi indulging in i.e. acting as "teaching institutions for creation of talent". We have certainly come a long way.

Contextualising the emergence of these Akademis within the larger birth of the nation, the Haksar Committee Report singles out luminaries like Jawahar

Lal Nehru, Maulana Azad and Dr. S. Radhakrishnan for their seminal contribution to the conceptualization and organisation of Indian culture in post-independence India. A case is made for state intervention of the arts in the context of disappearing most of patronage through 'darbars, courts and religious bodies', it also emphasises the limits and dangers of the market in regard to cultural creativity. It would seem that the Akademis were created to counter these longer socio-economic trends.

However, one cannot deny that these Akademis were a part of the larger political task of 'nation building'. They were expected in their inception to facilitate shaping of a "sensitivity" which would guide and reflect India's entry into modernity.<sup>106</sup> Instead of questioning the seeming equation of modernity in India with nation building, the report merely goes on to quote Nehru's speech at the inauguration of the National Art Treasures Fund in 1955, in which he desired, "every child in India" to "assimilate, even if in a small measure, the genius of India, which adopted to modern traditions, would make the country grow". (p. 19). One again one is left in doubt as to what these

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106. The Haksar Committee Report (p. 48)

modern traditions really constitute. Are they simply those traditions which are prevalent in Western nations or are they to be imported and then adapted to Indian conditions? It may almost appear as if the 'genius of India' (the term itself being quite ambiguous), is almost not enough for the 'growth' of the nation without intervention of modern mediations like art funds and cultural institutions. Along with the growth of the nation, the Akademis are also contextualised in the report within the larger context of "revival" of culture (ibid). Here again it merely illustrates its point by quoting Maulana Azad uncritically almost as if his words lie beyond questioning. On one hand one notices Azad's acknowledgement that "there has been a renaissance in India since the middle of the 19th Century", but this is promptly qualified by the explanation that "this was due to the release of new forces in society and owed little to the state. That is why it was not as extensive or deep as it should have been had it received necessary state support" (ibid). But at least here there is an acknowledgement of a renaissance before the advent, if not intervention of the independent Indian state which in turn the report saw as "the organised manifestation of the peoples will" from which it assumed that arts can draw their 'sustenance'

(ibid). Rustom Bharucha while talking on the National  
107  
akademi, says "Today, if we have to talk about  
Akademis, it would be necessary to acknowledge that  
they are neither "learned societies" nor "cultural  
organisations" but bureaucracies that are merely  
extensions of the Government. 'Autonomous in name, they  
have failed to disseminate and explore diverse culture  
activities in their own right, perpetuating the norm of  
a larger machinery".

Suresh Awasthi, the former secretary of the San-  
geet Natak Akademi (1974, New Delhi) stated that,  
"Inadequacies of structure, autonomy and resources  
continue to bedevil most of the Akademis established to  
nurture the arts. Our cultural life generally and art  
forms specifically can give vigour by attending to  
strengths inherent in traditional art forms and cultu-  
ral institutions. To show continuing cultural renewal  
in a changing milieu, it is important to organise  
training in arts and provide varied cultural material  
108  
for different agencies". He further added that the

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107. Rustom Bharucha, "Anatomy of Official Cultural  
Discourse, A Non-Government Perspective, Economic  
and Political weekly, August 1-8, 1992.

108. Suresh Awasthi, 1974 Source: Documentary Section,  
Sahitya Akademi Library, New Delhi.

administrative structures for planning and development of these Akademis are utterly centralised and bureaucratic. National Akademis have very few regional branches and state Akademis do not have either formal links with National Akademis nor branches in different regions of the state. A move was made in 1980's by the Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi to establish Zonal cultural centers, instead of expanding branches of the state Akademis. Even though the management of these akademis is autonomous, it is curbed and artists have little or no say in policy making decisions. Resources with the Akademis are inadequate and authorities have still to realise the value of investment in arts and culture for a developing country, cultural development integrated into programmes of economic growth. The programme to support traditional arts has been hesitant and uncertain all along even though it got high priority in the objectives of the Sangeet Natak Akademi. There is also a need to attend to training in the arts as well as the production of popular and academic literature of art and artistic material in Indian languages. New methods, techniques, materials for teaching arts institutionally have not yet been up to the mark, (except for a few examples in the National School of Drama, New Delhi).

Then may be the above mentioned deficiencies as well as achievements of a state promoted system of art practice can be studied in a more thorough way if one looks at its functioning through each of these three National Akademis specifically - their role and functioning over the years, their present orientation, reach and target beneficiaries, their prevailing programmes, their discontentments, problems, inefficiencies and achievements.

THE SANGEET NATAK AKADEMI  
THE ACADEMY OF DANCE, DRAMA AND MUSIC

"Four types of idols behest human kind :

- The idol of the tribe;
- The idol of the den;
- The idol of the market;
- The idol of the theatre."

- Frances Bacon,  
Novum Organum



This Akademi was inaugurated in 1953 and registered as an autonomous society in 1961. Its objectives as set out in its Memorandum of Association and Rules and Regulations are given in Appendix-1 of this text. Briefly it aims to do two things: to promote research in the field of Indian dance, drama and music and to coordinate activities in these spheres, most of which have been dispersed, comprising of organising competition, seminars, festivals awards to performing artists of different categories, grants to institutions working in music, dance drama and publication of, or subsidy for research work of dance, drama and music.

In its first few years of inspection, the Akademi tried to "revitalise" an interest in performing arts through the holding of a series of National Festivals and seminars. The tasks that lay before this Akademi were quite different from those of before the other two Akademis of literature and plastic and visual arts. To start with the documentation and cataloguing of a staggering multiplicity of theatrical, musical and dance forms prevalent all over the country, was itself quite a task which the Akademi professed to do first of all for whatever purpose this solved.

Some of the functions of the Akademi are taken up

systematically thereby highlighting inherent problems, gross, inadequacies in functioning and management and some recommendations by the Haksar Committee Report. The Akademi attempts to sustain its "impact and influence" by conferring a number of Awards and fellowship on what it identifies as deserving talent, funding research and documentation, organisation of events etc.

#### AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

One of the stated objectives of the Sangeet Natak Akademi is "to award prizes and distinctions and to give recognition to individual artists for outstanding achievement in the fields of music, dance and drama". In pursuance of this goal, the Akademi had instituted schemes of annual awards and Fellowships in 1954. These are bestowed on contributions of an abiding nature made over a period of time. (Persons below the age of fifty are not normally considered for a Fellowship; the corresponding age for awards is thirty-five. A person who has received an award is not eligible for receiving another; but he or she may be considered for a Fellowship after the lapse of ten years. No fellow is eligible for an award).

Over the decades the categories in which the awards are given have increased. At present, they include several categories of music (Hindustani and Carnatic, both vocal and instrumental, creative music, folk and other forms of music); various categories of dance (such as Kathak, Bharatanatyam, Odissi, Kuchipudi, Manipuri, Kathakali, Mohiniattam, Chhau, Sattriya, creative dance; folk and tribal dances); and, in the area of drama, acting, direction, playwriting, puppetry, lighting and make-up.

The awards are not necessarily given every year in each category, nor are they restricted to only one person in any given category. At present twenty-four awards, each carrying a monetary value of Rs.25,000 are made every year. However, there is considerable flexibility in deciding how they are distributed among the different categories.

In 1989, there were eleven awards in music, including two each for Carnatic instrumental and folk music, and three for Hindustani instrumental. There were four awards for different kinds of dance, and nine in theatre (two each for acting and playwriting).

Until recently the annual award ceremony used to

be held only in New Delhi, but of late the Akademi has started organizing it in other cities -also. Bhubaneshwar, Calcutta, Lucknow and Bangalore are some of the places where this has been done. In connection with the functions, short recitals by the award winning artists are also organised. The Haksar Report recommended that honoured artists may also be offered an opportunity, if they agree to perform at a few other places of their choice in the country during the year following the award. This may be done in collaboration with the State Akademis or other similar institutions, thereby "expressing these artists to a larger and more varied guidance" and making some kind of impacts on these Akademis at a decentralised level too, not just in metropolitan centres. However the report recommended that these artists may be given an opportunity to perform at a few place of their choice. However even without demarcating specific regions, the places, their choice may precisely be big towns cities and metropolices, this defeating the very purpose of performing in villages and districts altogether. But the report does not seem to be bothered with this for it is quite vehement in its view when it says "...the achievements of the Faculty of National School of DRama can be most effectively tested only in a major

cosmopolitan environment where there is a well informed responsive and critical audience". (p.129). Habib Tanvir, the famous folk Theatre proponents while narating his experience as a teacher and Director of the "Naya Theatre" of the Chattisgarh district (where he has attempted to sevive many folk theatre styles like the "Naya-Nautanki, tradition or the narative ballad style Pandavani).<sup>109</sup> States that after having critically observed audience behaviour and attitudes in many rural and moffussil contexts, he observed the audience in these areas are not just "well informed" "responsive" and "critical" but engaged in what they are seeing. And this applies as much to the so called "ritual" or "traditional" performances as to modern works.

This does not mean however, that the responses of rural and moffussil audiences should be valorised as more "authentic" than those of the meropolitan audiences. The point is that 'ways of seeing have to be contextualised within particular modes of living and should not be differentiated on a qualittitative basis. It is not that the rural audience are more (or less) discerning" than their metropolitan counterparts, but

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109. The Hindustan Times, August 13, 1992, "Wedded to folk theatre", Kavita Nagpal.

that they are discerning or not discerning in different ways in relation to different pressures, taboos, contradictions and circumstances.

This report has also pondered to a process of decontextualising modes of seeing which in turn only reinforces assumptions of "high" and "low" culture that the report tries so emphatically to refute, thereby contradicting itself.

#### **Research and Documentation**

One of the primary objectives of the Akademi is to promote research in the fields of music, dance and drama. The Akademi's support for worthwhile research schemes by the grant of research fellowships and by undertaking research ventures in collaboration with other institutions has been marginal. The Haksar Report suggests that it is not necessary that all such research should be done directly under the aegis of the Akademi. It should seek out institutions where the potential for purposeful research exists, and sponsor and support activities through them. Universities, State institutions including State Akademis, private institutions and private individuals with the necessary capacity should all be harnessed for this purpose.

In the past few decades, the Sangeet Natak Akademi has built up a collection of gramophone discs, specially recorded cassettes, documentary films, photographs, etc. It has also produced its own studio and field recordings, on videotapes and in sound. While the Akademi acknowledges that there are many gaps to be filled in classical dance and theatre, much good work has been done in the case of classical music as well as tribal and folk traditions.

For the Akademi documentation in the context of performing arts means sound or visual recording for, there is no matching collection of written material to support the recordings which "should not be overlooked". The Haksar report says its documentation work is somewhat disjointed and there are deficiencies in classifying, indexing and cataloguing the voluminous archival material available at the Sangeet Natak Akademi. The work itself is also handicapped by constraints of space, equipment and experienced staff. The maintenance and preservation of archives also needs immediate attention. Nor are any classified catalogues of the collections printed and made available to all those who wish to have them. These were some of the difficulties that one faced upon trying to get information from this section of the Akademi.

Besides what is interesting is that how will this Akademi achieve its broad objective of reaching to the people at large (also echoed by the Haksar report) when even senior faculty members in professional teaching institutions of the performing arts are unaware of the contents of the national institutions archives(!) The facilities for retrieval and references available in the Akademi's premises in New Delhi are sadly inadequate and the Akademi has not even considered the question of making available for sale, subject to consideration of copyright audio and video cassettes prepared out of its present and future collections, paying the necessary royalty.

There is gross mismanagement even when the Akademi concentrates on just being a show window or a house of collection and dissemination of collected material. The Haksar report has suggested a close collaboration with the State Akademi's, universities music and dance schools and colleges and other cultural institutions to improve the country wide accessibility of its archival material.

However, even in the building of its archival material, the Sangeet Natak Akademi has failed to take cognisance of traditional theatre groups, teachers and



gurus in classical music and auditorial facilities in various towns and cities. Also one of the objectives of Akademi (professing the establishment of a museum and library for research) led to a good collection with the Akademi of musical instruments (both classical and folk), arts facts such as marks, costumes, puppets, jewellery etc. about two thousand or so items. However only a very small portion is on display on the Akademi's premises. The Haksar report too barely touches upon this problem without recommending any alternative plan for more space and funds.

#### **Organizations of Events:**

The Sangeet Natak Akademi has a mandate for foster cultural contacts between the different regions of the country and with other countries in the fields of music, dance and drama, co-ordinating the activities of regional or State Akademi's. The Akademi is also expected to revive and preserve folk forms of performing arts in different regions, and to sponsor national festivals and seminars on music, dance and drama, as well as to encourage regional festivals.

But there has been inadequate interaction between the National Akademi's and other cultural institutions

in the country. However, a welcome expectation is the Inter-State Cultural Exchange Programme for encouraging the mobility of performing artists and toupes among various States and Union Territories. Since the early 1980s the Sangeet Natak Akademi has been taking part in this programme, functioning as a co-ordinating agency. An annual meeting of representatives of the States and Union Territories is held to monitor the results and formulate schedules for forthcoming activities. However, there would appear to be some clash between this activity and similar activities of the recently established Zonal Cultural Centres.

Nevertheless, the Akademi continues to organise events. The Kathak Kendra organizes an annual dance festival named after the renowned guru, Shri Maharaj Bindadin, in which artists from various parts of the country, including those belonging to other dance forms, participate. Another annual event, the Saracchandrika Festival, presents young solo dancers. The Kendra organizes seminars and workshops featuring not only the Lucknow and Jaipur gharanas which figure in its teaching programme, but other styles as well.

The Jawaharlal Nehru Manipur Dance Academy offers instruction in Manipuri Raas and Nata Sankirtan, and

also related music and dance and martial arts. It offers a three-year certificate course, a three-year diploma course, and a two-year post-graduate diploma course. The faculty has a principal, a vice-principal, thirteen gurus, and six other teachers. The Academy also utilizes the services of some old and eminent masters as visiting gurus, mainly for teaching the post graduate students.

However, what is the differentiation used in qualifying criterias of "Gurus" as different from "teachers" in these diploma-granting institutions and programmes has not been specified. The Haksar report complains of the inadequate accommodation at the Kathak Kendra, cramped hostel facilities, the scarce remuneration offered to faculty members and the shamefully low scales for visiting gurus in context of the glaring incongruity between the honourable place they have in the Akademi's scheme of things. The report also pointed out to another pressing matter of pending with the Union Grants Commission's for recognition of diplomas/certificates (as the highest stamp of artistic ability approved by these state run institutions) given by the Kathak Kendra and Manipur Akademi which are sponsored by the Sangeet Natak as well as by

institutions like the kalakshetra, Karala Kalamandalam etc.

Joan Erdman's paper, "who should speak for the performing arts? The case of Delhi Dancers" focusses attention on questions of professional standards and representation. Government's reluctance to respect the autonomy of cultural organizations created to promote interest in the arts (and history) is in part a reflection of its paternalism, its habit of authority and penchant for discretion that accompanies it. She says these characteristics link the outlook and actions of today's official to traditional forms of court patronage.

The tension between the performing arts understood as a government service that meets a low priority public need and as a form of life that shapes perception and reality, further exacerbates the differences over standards and the allocation of resources that separate officials and artists. She illustrates an example of protest launched by Delhi dancers on April 26, 1977 for modifying policies of the Sangeet Natak Akademi to make them more conducive to their benefit. On April 26,

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110. Joan Erdman's paper in Lloyd I Rudolph (Ed), "Cultural Policy in India", Chanakya Publications, New Delhi, (PP 77-104).

1977, the Times of India, under an article entitled "where is Akademi, ask Dansuses", stated that the President of the Sangeet Natak Akademi lives in Kerala, the Vice-President in Bombay and the Secretary thinks there is no standard of dance in India any way. Some one does not know who to talk to. There is always a mention of higher authorities but no one knows who they are focus on the Sangeet Natak Akademi and the Department of Culture of the Ministry of Human Resource Development indicated the status of the artists discourse. These were not a group of successful artists pleading for a share of the states patronage; rather they represented India's currently most successful dancers living and working in the capital. They were protesting for facilities to teach and practice, publication of criteria for grants from the Sangeet Natak Akademi, funds for projects in experimental form etc. What is relevance then is what provokes such an out cry of dissatisfaction with the Department of Culture and the Sangeet Natak Akademi from time to time? What makes their performing artists want to become involved in the process of selecting artists and arts organizations for grants and scholarships? This could lead one to see the gaps between the Sangeet Natak Akademi promise

and performance. There seems to be no accountability to the artists or the public at large on how annual budgets are distributed and spent. The Akademi does not involve any other cultural organisations in the coordination, assessment and evaluation processes. More generally it lacks cohesive national programmes of cultural activities. "Ad hocism" and "narcissism" are the rules rather than the exceptions.

Some of the problems have lingered down over two to three decades with the Akademi. Problems such as the questions of autonomy of the Akademi, the place of expertise in evaluating and selecting grantees and honoured artists; the need for improved facilities and communications networks for artists; adequate representation in decisions about the allocation of available reserves and their distribution, the balance among bureaucratic, political and artistic concerns on policy formulations etc.

Interestingly, in spite of serious criticism, nowhere did any artists or critics suggest that the state should not be responsible for the support of performing arts. Private support was welcome and discussed but only in areas where state funding had

either proved inadequate or where alternate funding was considered.

### **Dissemination of material and information**

Dancers and theatre persons have a very special problem. Books, paintings, sculptures and musical compositions survive the life time of their creators. Even the performances of musicians get widely recorded. But the art of great dancers and theatre persons would vanish with them unless there is a determined effort to make audio-visual recordings. The report talks of this as one of the tasks of the Sangeet Natak Akademi to build up archives of such recordings. In doing so, a sustained programme of collaboration with Akashvani and Doordarshan, as well as other institutions, would be productive. (The report recommends that the Akademi should undertake continuous collaborative projects with organizations all over the country to record musical and dance performances of all grade living artists. In addition, the Akademi should search out rare items of classical, traditional and folk music dance and drama particularly those that are in danger of disappearing for want of performers and record these on audio and video tapes.

Programmes incorporation with the Indira Gandhi National Centre of Arts, the State Akademis and voluntary organizations like the National Centres of Performing arts in Bombay, the music Akademi and kalashetra in Madras to name only a few, should be highly rewarded.

There is a need to produce a large body of literature on the performing arts, and commercially available recordings and viewing for the benefit of ordinary people. Perhaps there are problems of copyright, which create some constraints. But commercial houses could be persuaded to issue audio and video cassettes bearing the stamp of Akademi. It is important for the Akademi to realise that such ventures cannot be successfully undertaken by itself in isolation, but most necessarily be collaborative.

### **Publication**

The Akademi has brought out books and monographs in various categories, such as expository works on musical dance and theatrical forms, biographics, compolation of lyrics, critical histories and research volumes. It publishes and quarterly English journal, Sangeet Natak.



It has also published or assisted in publishing rare and old manuscripts. But there are many more of these which await publication. In fact there may be many whose existence is not even known. There have to be located and published.

The report suggests here again, as in the case of the publications of the other Akademis, arrangements for the distribution and sale of publications can be greatly improved. It should be possible for anyone wishing to possess a publication of the Akademi to buy it easily in any of the cities or towns in the country. If it is necessary to enter into suitable arrangements with private publishers and booksellers for this purpose, this must be considered. What we have said in this regard in the chapter on Sahitya Akademi will apply equally here.

#### **PROLIFERATION OF FESTIVALS**

Sometimes, despite best intentions, the great jest of the Government to "promote", "encourage" and "seek out" artists and art forms, does more harm than good especially if it results in the organisation of various utsav and festivals all over the country. There has been a tremendous spurt of promotional activity by the

Government at the national and state levels. But encouraging of art has come to mean, more or less, the arranging of more performances, especially in cities. What has snow balled probably began with the inclusion of folk dances in the Republic Day parade in the capital. These performances have become like packaged commodities ready for sale and export and facilitated a new class of cultural contractors and middle men.

In this context, there is a practice of the Akademis and Government agencies to organise performance, with free tickets. This more than anything seem to be leading to a devaluation of these performing arts. It is not the monetary value (or the lack of it) which serves as an indicator to the respect associated with performing arts but the value identified by a ticket (which can be priced very reasonably to suit the common person's pocket and interest) in the general psyche which holds relevance at a decentralised stage of dissemination of such art forms. Or else, as has been happening, the audience tends to lose seriousness of purpose. Besides attending cultural events becomes a status symbol or a cultural button hole rather than a quest of artistic experience. They can have yet another impact. These

festivals may foster a new kind of cultural bureaucracy, create a competition for patronage among artists themselves and a rush for opportunities to be sponsored for visits abroad. This in turn would lead to undue canvassing politics and manipulations in bureaucratic posts in the Akademis, converting them to seats of power and corruption, spreading a sense of discontentment generally.

The Haksar Committee Report has been very forthcoming to highlight this trend, it talks of the Indian tradition of "sahridayata" namely the deep rapport between the artist and audience which cannot be analogous to the relationship between the producer and consumer, it states,".

Performing artists who belong to our traditions - whether classical, folk or tribal - should not be treated either as museum pieces or as export commodities to be exhibited in India or abroad. While some of the festivals of historic spots like Khajuraho and Elephanta are imaginative, we should be careful to avoid the 'mela' approach.

We wish to reiterate our strong reservations about the value of the so-called big-impact festivals, whether held abroad or within the country. We are

convinced that there is an urgent need to reorient one's entire approach towards the performing, visual and narrative-literary arts of the folk and tribal people of India.

#### THE LALIT KALA AKADEMI

"the Academy of Plastic and Visual Arts"

"All works of art are not good simply because they are ancient. Nor is a work of art to be scorned simply because it is modern. A good critic will decide on the merits of the work. A dull critic allows himself to be influenced by the opinion which he has not formed himself."

- Kalidas  
"Malavikag Mitram"

The Lalit Kala Akademi was inaugurated by a Parliament resolution on 5th August, 1954 by the then Minister of Education, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, and was registered as an Autonomous society in 1957. Its objectives as set out in its 'Memorandum' of Association, are shown in Appendix-1. Although the aims of this Akademi are wide in scope, its programme emphasis has been in two main spheres : One of publications and the other of exhibitions. In the last

three decades the Akademi has established its institutional personality through the award and honours it confers on artists, the exhibitions workshops and seminars and it organizes and its publications and journals.

### **Programmes**

In the 34 years of its existence the akademi has organised numerous programmes and brought out several publications on art, both in Ancient and Contemporary areas. Among the salient features of the programmes, the akademi holds annual National exhibition of Art to find new talent among artists. the participation in the exhibition is open to all creative artists of the country. The awards are given to the best works judged by Jury nominated by the General Council.

### **Exhibitions and Awards :**

The akademi organizes several exhibitions every year in India including the annual National Exhibition, the international Triennale, and some retrospectives and special exhibitions. It receives and mounts exhibitions from foreign countries in collaboration with the Department of culture and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, and works as an exclusive

channel to select and send Indian entries for the competitive international exhibitions. the ICCR and the National Gallery of Modern Art also receive exhibitions from other countries and send out touring exhibitions of Indian art abroad as a part of the cultural exchange programmes. The Akademi often sponsors visits of participating artists to the venues of international biennials. Its exhibition hall at Rabindra Bhavan, available on rental at a reasonable rate, is used round the year by artists and organizations for group and individual shows.

The National exhibition, which is held in New Delhi, features around three hundred exhibits, including paintings, sculptures and graphics. Each aspirant can submit up to three entries. They must be works created within the preceding two years in the case of paintings, graphics and drawings, and within the preceding five years in the case of sculptures. the selection of exhibits is made by a jury consisting of three or more members, constituted by the Executive Board of the Akademi and approved by its General Council. The jury also chooses ten of the exhibits for the conferment of the Akademi's annual awards, which carry a cash prize of Rs.10,000. The signed report of

the jury is published at the time of declaring the awards. Works by some invited artists are also shown in the exhibition. There is no bar on an artist receiving the award on more than one occasion.

Some of the works exhibited in the National Exhibition are acquired by the Akademi on the basis of the recommendations of a purchase committee constituted by the Executive Board/General Council, and added to its permanent collection. The outlay on this activity amounts to about Rs.2 lakhs per annum. The Akademi charges 10% on the sale of exhibits from the National Exhibition which goes into the Artist's Aid Fund.

In the past the Akademi had adopted a system of attracting the participation of artists in the National Exhibition through the corresponding Akademis in the States, fifteen per cent of the works shown in the exhibition being reserved for this category. But this scheme is no longer in force, while National Exhibitions have served as the country's most useful and prestigious exhibition, several artists reported to the Haksar Committee that its standards have been on a decline during the last ten years or so. Complaints were made that the selection of works to these exhibitions was not fair. Some were also said about the awards.

The Haksar Report has attributed this to what it calls the 'politicization of affairs of the Akademi's as it was alleged that underserving works were allowed to be selected for the National Exhibition to inflate the roll of supporters in the artist's constituency ;which elect fifteen members to the General Council of the Akademi. However, the Haksar report was content in leaving this issue without any apt recommendation by stating 'we sincerely hope that the Akademi realises the gravity of the situation and take effective steps to restore the dignity of the National Exhibition and Awards.

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#### The Triennale :

The Triennale, which is an international exhibition of contemporary art meant to be held once in three years, was initiated in 1968. So far the akademi has organized six such exhibitions, at intervals varying between three to four years, the last one being held in 1986. Countries with which India has cultural exchange agreements are invited to participate. On the last two occasions, more than forty countries took part in the exhibitions.

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111. Haksar Committee Report July, 1990, p.82, Paragraph 5.6.



The Lalit Kala Akademi, acting on behalf of committee, which appoints National Commissioners for selecting the entries of Indian artists. Every invited country is requested to appoint its own commissioner to make the selection within the country. all the Commissioners are invited to help in mounting the exhibition, and take part in related activities like seminars and workshops. the exhibition is organized by a Triennale Cell responsible to the Triennale Committee and the Akademi's Executive Board.

(The Triennale has over the years established a reputation of being an important art event). (The massive operation of presenting thousands of works of art was handled more effectively in the past, but of late the Haksar committee Report sees need to prepare appropriate infrastructure and enlist the services of experts with extensive organizational experience in International art).

However, with the recommendation of appropriate infrastructure, the Akademi must also have an active and continuing support to the special cell to collect world-wide information on artistic events, obtain catalogues of exhibitions held abroad, and generally be a clearing house of information on developments in the

international art scene. The cell can establish and retain constant liaison with parallel organizations in other parts of the world, to ensure the quality of the exhibition as well as the related activities like workshops, seminars and visits of foreign participants. the cell may send out video-recordings of the even to various art schools and organizations within the country and abroad.

However, there has been a progressive decline in the quality in th quality of Indian exhibition. The Haksar Report, (like many conceived artists) have related this to what it calls (the heterogeneous selection to accommodate a large number of artists represented by one or two works each and the unwillingness of many deserving ones to be represented in this manner. Here a possible solution could be to emphasise quality rather than quantity by selecting not more than ten artists, each represented by a substantial number of work, as the report has suggested.

#### **Research and Documentation :**

(The Akademi's research and documentation programme include surveys of contemporary, classical,

folk and tribal arts). (There is a continuing programme of preparing copies of select murals. The Akademi's ancient manuscripts unit located in Bombay has done good work. It would be useful to have the research and documentary material transferred to the premises of the akademi to facilitate their use by research scholars and more interpretative studies of classical Indian art and its sociological context are undertaken.

The publications on Pithoro and Warli paintings under the Lok Kala series are well-documented. It is interesting to note here that while the important exhibitions into the capital are photographically documented, there is no effective cataloguing or retrieval system for scholars to use. It is essential that the documentation extends to exhibitions and events in other art centres of the country. The inadequacy is often reflected in the publications of the akademi including the journals of contemporary art. An exception must be made in the case of an Artists' Directory. However, it needs updating.

Taking into account the extent of the work done, one cannot avoid the impression that greater priority should be given to research and much more should be

accomplished. the Akademi should also enlist the collaboration of the State Akademis in taking up survey projects. There is a need to adopt video-recording techniques for the documentation of processes of making murals and prints, casting of sculptures etc. for wider dissemination, in addition to taking photographs and making slides.

#### **Publications and Dissemination :**

The best way the Akademi can reach out to a wider public is through publications and by sponsoring films on art for television or home viewing. The akademi has publication programme in classical, folk, tribal and contemporary art. It has two English journals, Lalit Kala and Lalit Kala Contemporary, as well as a Hindi journal, Lalit Kala Samakaleen. However, these are published without any specific periodicity and hence they cannot enlist subscribers. The Akademi might consider making them regular. It has also published books on classical, tribal and folk art with standards of high scholarship and production in values. the albums of miniatures and murals, cards and large reproductions are quite illustrative to the urban public. The publications on contemporary art include monographs on individual artists, albums and books of

essays on art, besides the two journals. the standard in terms of scholarship, research ;and production values is rather erratic, with some notable exceptions.

While the akademi's publications are generally well printed and priced extremely reasonably, they are not well known in the absence of an effective distribution system. The Haksar Report has recommended that the Akademi must consider this problem urgently and work out ways of disseminating art in collaboration with commercial distributors.

The Lalit Kala akademi has been working mainly in isolation in this sphere. In the area of Publication and Dissemination of its art material, it can collaborate services with state Akademis, universities, museums and institutions like the National Book trust and the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts. The Haksar Committee report has very pragmatically recommended that the Lalit Kala Akademi should "take advantage of the medium of television, not only to make the Akademis exhibitions accessible to a very wide viewership, but also to have perceptive discussions on art and dialogues with artists". It has also suggested that Akashvani, Doordarshan and the IGNC be represented in the Akademis General Council.

## Acquisition of Art Works

Although the akademi has a policy of acquiring some of the works participating in the National and other exhibition, the expenditure allocated for this purpose has been very less and most of these works are kept in store rooms in the Akademi's premises.

Very less and most of these works are kept in Store room in the Akademi's premises thus defeating the entire purpose of accessibility to the public for viewing. Some of the works are occasionally shown in exhibitions in India, but this is not done systematically. According to the Haksar Committee report, the standards of preservation are not up to that mark, and certain works appear to be deteriorating. The expenditure incurred by the Akademi on conservation is negligible. The cataloguing of the collection has also lagged behind.

Interestingly, when the National Gallery of Modern Art indulging in the same function of acquisition and exhibition of art works, then this activity of the Lalit Kala only seems to be a wastage of time, energy and resources especially of the akademi neither has to adequate space to store the collection properly nor to

exhibit it in systematic rotation. then these valuable funds allocated for the purchase of art works could be more deservingly utilised in other activities of the akademi, as there may be other ways of encouraging contemporary artists besides buying their works.

**Regional and Garhi Centres :** The Lalit Kala akademi has set up four Regional Centres, in Bhubaneshwar, Calcutta, Lucknow and Madras, and a community art centre in Garhi, New Delhi. these centres provide workshop and studio facilities for painting, sculpture, print making, ceramics, etc. they also arrange exhibitions, seminars and artists camps. Young artists are given scholarships for a year to work in the centres. However, there have been certain conflicts in the affairs of these units. In many and most State capitals did not have similar centres there. The Haksar Committee Report has made clear for having common cultural centres in many cities and towns, catering for the needs of visual and performing artists and writers. It suggested that each of the National Akademis, as well as the State Akademis, can make a contribution towards attaining this objective, and the Zonal Culture Centres could provide the essential infrastructure, with the Central and State Governments sparing matching funds.

**Art Organizations :** It is a prescribed task of the Lalit Kala Akademi to help the development of art associations and give them recognition and assistance. The Akademi's constitution provides for the inclusion of a person in the General Council to represent the art organizations in each State and Union Territory. The Akademi currently recognizes sixty such organizations, spread over fifteen States and one Union Territory. Out of these organizations, only those in thirteen States have their representatives on the present General Council. Details are shown in Appendix-11.

#### **Incentives of Artists**

There has been a great frustration about art materials of good quality not being available in the required quantities and the quality of paints, canvas and other requirements of the artists produced in the country not being upto the mark. Imported materials are scarce and prohibitively costly. The Akademi's centres do supply some art materials, including imported ones, to artists but this hardly meets the existing demand. Thus one cannot see any reason why production within the country cannot be augmented and improved in quality, especially if the government



allocated enough funds for this and also when the imports are not of a very heavy nature. The Haksar Report recommended that art materials should be placed on the Open General Licence. There should be no import duties on such materials, or there should only be a nominal one.

It is the declared policy of the government of India to set apart a portion of the outlay on public buildings for the commissioning of murals and the purchase of paintings, sculptures, etc. for display. This amount used to be one per cent of the cost of the building earlier. It was decided in 1972 that it need not a fixed one per cent but could be a variable amount not exceeding two per cent of the building cost. (The relevant memorandum of the Government is at Appendix 12. But this decision is not generally being enforced in reality. The Haksar Report recommended that the Government may reiterate the decision and take appropriate steps for its enforcement and the Lalit Kala Akademi and major art experts should be associated or consulted.

Another very forthcoming suggestion of the Haksar Report the proposal of income tax rebate on corporate expenditure on the acquisition of artistic works for

the encouragements of the same.. this has been discussed subsequently in many seminars, debates, cultural forums organised by concerned citizens and the Department of Culture, New Delhi, between 1990-93. The approach paper (1992) on a proposed culture policy circulated by the Ministry of Human Resource Development too has touched upon this issue.

There are also some serious procedural bundles when Indian artists are offered and financed by international art organisation and museums abroad, or when connoisseurs abroad are interested in purchasing works of Indian contemporary artists. the report has also leaded for benefits like provision of housing and studio space for artists, bank loans for house buildings etc.

While there is sufficient mobility of the artists and exhibitions in different parts of India there is still a need for dialogue between the akademi artist and his audience, the Akademi artist and his audience, the Akademi artist and the folk artist (or the traditional artisans), at both the urban and the rural level. Indeed Lalit Kala's 'Modern art' activity exists only at the Urban level and is restricted to a minority. the idea from the Akademi was to "take it to

the people" with increased Government incentives, attention and help there is no reason why this should not be genuinely attempted at now as ever before.

To conclude this section one could say that both the establishment of Art Akademis as well as the purpose for which they were established were actions which are to be seen within the larger attempt of nation-building by our leaders, the modern way of organisation of civil society and its multiplicity of activities (including that of art production) by the state. Hence three essential tasks of the Akademi of Dance, Drama and Music were to be undertaken - the first was Research, documentation, cataloguing and dissemination of material and information of various performing art forms prevalent in the country; the second was to coordinate performing art activities by organisation of largely Akademi funded events like competitions, seminars, festivals, instituting awards to individuals and grants to institutions, publication of research work or subsidising it; and the third was an attempt to "revitalise" interest in these arts by the organisation of national festivals and seminars. On the other hand, the akademi of Plastic and Visual arts sought to aim wide but its programme emphasis has been mainly in two spheres; that of publication of

available information and dissemination of material and of the organisation of exhibitions, workshops, seminars (like the annual national exhibition, the international triennale etc.). Apart from this it also indulges in research and documentation, acquisition of art works, conferring awards and honours etc. It was an attempt at a systematic congregation of almost each aspect of forms art production through these Akademis. The following Chapter talks about the Sahitya Akademi in detail.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE SAHITYA AKADEMI;

### "THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF LETTERS"

"There is the first the literature of knowledge and secondly, the literature of power. The function of the first is, to teach; the function of the second is, to move."

-- De Quincey, Essays  
on the poets : Pope

### Art through Literature :

Art is a form of giving. Indeed, it is the only form of giving which does not lessen what one had before. Literature is also, in this way, a form of sharing. It arises out of the most spontaneous of human instincts which makes, us when we see something wonderful, say 'look'. Literary criticism is not an enterprise in which the variety, the fluidity of literature is reduced to scientific explanation. It is, rather, a way of enhancing literature, of extending the literary mode. For criticism does to literary objects and objects of art what literary seeing or literature does not the world. Art finds the world an object of enjoyment and wondering. Literature simply extends this method to the text itself, and treats the text as a locale, object, text of wonder. From looking for the world the text has brought into being, we come to look at the world as a text.

Our relation with the world is provisional thing something that we have set up tentatively, always open to improvement, to appeal, to refinement. We constantly craft this relation through our experience; literature both is shaped by this experience; and structures it. We see, here, experience the world always; yet we

can always see, hear and live it differently. Seeing, hearing and living are in that sense paradoxes, always present, always mastered, but always mysteries, which are not entirely mastered or controlled, which we can do better. For example after reading Kalidas, we come to see what we always saw but never noticed before. It sets up an encounter with the world, the most exciting encounter of all, the most quotidian, the most mystical, the most common place.

It is in this context that literature (or "Sahitya") is a delight (but much more than that) which should reach everyone possible. The more literate a nation, the more assured it is of its progress, peace and contentment. Seen in this light, the Indian independent State (post 1947) too endeavoured to built institutions which could foster the accessibility of literature to as many citizens as possible. It established the National Academy of letters (the Sahitya Akademi) with a network of affiliated institutions in various states and state capitals.

#### **A Legacy for the Sahitya Akademi ;**

The situation which entailed the establishment of the Sahitya Akademi, the National Academy of letters

was slightly different form that of either the performing arts such as dance, drama or music or the visual or plastic arts.

In pre-independence India, many moments of historical times coexisted in the works of writers, poets and novelists from different parts of the country. The age old tradition of signers, chanters and minstrels of oral tradition continued to recite their poetry in villages and in small towns. Some of them also found their way to the institutions of oriental learning set by the colonial authorities. These performers and their art (though in authority and not very marked in their reach, impact or dissemination) were still the repositories of living sources of creativity rooted unmistakably in Indian culture.

The educated Indian writer very often made use of their knowledge. There was then the writer of the first half of the twentieth century in India, introduced in the national struggle, often a member of political party. Keeping aware of the need for social and economic reform, and who expressed his bondage, both political and intellectual, through his letters. In this group there were mainly singers and revolutionaries who aroused the Indian people to stand united



inspite of differences of caste, and creed against a common foe. In the thirties and forties of the twentieth century appeared yet the movements in literature which should the ethos of the modern literary movements in the western world. The titles of a few literary conferences were telling: "The Progressive Writers' Conference", "Anti fascist Writers' Conference", etc. The writers before independence was supported only through private literary organizations and through and publications. Some worked in the Universities teaching English and others had begun to be associated with the All India Radio. This history of many famous poets and novelists of India of the Thirties, however, is a history of object poverty and non-recognition during their life time.

Seeing this situation, the government felt an urgent need of independent India (to put it in the words of the Dr. Bhabha Committee report 1964 "to provide ways and means of preserving and fostering the arts through governmental efforts." The government's main effort materialised in the establishment of the three National Akademis of Art, which it hoped "would sustain and revitalise the traditional arts and create opportunities for artists to express their hopes and aspirations of modern India in contemporary language."

(ibid).

The Sahitya Akademi was established by a government resolution on 12 March, 1952. The broad objective of the government of India in setting up the Akademi, as stated in the concerned resolution, was "to establish a national organisation to work activity for the development of India letters and to set high literary standards, to foster and coordinate literary activities in all the Indian languages and to promote through them all the cultural unity of the country". As the Khosla Committee report 1972 in an attempt to define the concept of cultural unity in official discourse states that behind the incorporation of the Sahitya Akademi there was the acceptance and recognition of the complex unity underlying the variety of Indian languages and literatures. It was also a bold reassertion of the faith that variegated richness, variety with regional vitality and authentic quality was a blessing rather than a curse - to be preferred to a monolithic unity without the capacity of fluidity, flexibility and diversity.

The Akademi's specific objectives are set out in its constitution (vide Appendix-1). Its activities extend to all the fifteen languages enumerated in the

constitution of India and seven others recognised by it for this purpose. A list of the languages recognised by the Sahitya Akademi is given in Appendix 17 of this text.

Though set up by the Government, the Akademi functions as an autonomous organization. It was registered as a society on 7th January, 1952, under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.

Three programmes of the Akademi have received special attention. They are (a) to embark upon a programme of translations of literary works from one Indian language into others and from non-Indian languages into Indian languages (b) to publish works of literary history and criticism and books of reference like bibliographies, biographies etc; (c) to popularise the study of literature amongst the masses, and to encourage publication of works in Devanagari and other Indian scripts.

In the previous chapter some problems common to all the three National Academies have been discussed yet in this chapter the attempt would be to analyse not just some of the problems and the Haksar Committee's recommendations aimed at solving them but even the

controversies which have more or less paralysed the achievement capacity of the sahitya akademis.

#### Literary Awards :

The Constitution of the Sahitya Akademi professes to award prizes to works of outstanding excellence and to honour writers of eminence. Grant of awards to literary works in each of the presently - tow recognised language is one of major Akademi activity. The first literary set of awards ever to be financed through the Central Government was institutional by the Sahitya Akademi in 1955 for the most outstanding books published in the previous seven years. Since then the Akademi has awarded prizes to the most outstanding books of published in any recognised Indian language but these prizes related to books published in the previous three years only. The award amount which was Rs. 5,000/- since inception has been enhanced to Rs. 10,000/- from 1983 and it is Rs. 25,000/- from 1988. A Sahitya Akademi Award is approximately around Rs. 25,000/-, it is modest in comparison to others e.g. the recently instituted "Saraswati Samman" by K.K. Birla Foundation offers Rs. 3 lakh, Jananpith Award Carries a prize of Rs. 1.5 lakh. Other State Government Award, the Maithilishran Gupt Award & the Iqbal

Samman Award of Madhya Pradesh or Srimanta Sankardev Award of Assam - all carry a hefty prize only worth Rs. 1 lakh. Appendix 8 gives an illustrative list of such awards.

But Sahitya Awards are prestigious because of their character, the vast expanse of the Akademi & also the immense prestige attached to its annual awards, literature from all over the country vie with each other to become members of the select club of award-winners.

However, recently (June 1992-1993) there has been a great deal of dissatisfaction and resentment expressed about these annual awards of the Akademi, especially in its existing procedure of selecting the award winning works.

It is interesting to note that from the beginning the Akademi itself has been actually sensitive to this issue. And in the usual bureaucratic style of expressing this; it has had the mechanism of selection reviewed many times by committees consisting of what the Haksar report calls "eminent personalities". From 1959 to 1978 as many as six different committees reviewed the system. They were chaired respectively by

Dr. C.D. Deshmukh, Mr. K.G. Saidyadian, Dr. Zakir Husain, Prof. K.R.Srinivasa, Iyengar (twice) and Prof. U.K. Gokak. All this has been in an attempt to down certain criteria for selection of books and for evaluating relative merits of this which figure in the short lists.

However, the recent controversy on this issue has show balled into a major debate involving writers in big cities who have has access to the Akademi and its network in institution and claim a potential state for its awards. Whether the fault lies with the Sahitya Akademi and its procedures or the general insufficiency of limited resources for a progressively increasing group of aspirants, is yet another issue.

For this one would have to look into the prevailing criteria of the Sahitya Akademi governing the procedure of selection for awards as well as the circumstances which have led to a crisis of overall discontentment, resentment and frustration amongst the city based Sahitya Akademi aspirants.

The present criteria governing these awards is simple. Every year, in each of the twenty-two languages recognized by the Akademi, an award of Rs. 25,000/- is given to the book which is judged to be the

most outstanding literary work published in that language in the three preceding years. Posthumous works are also eligible if they are published within three years of the authors death. Translations, anthologies, abridgements, edited or annotated works, incomplete books and treatises prepared for a university degree are not to be considered; to also books written by persons who are Fellows of the Sahitya Akademi or members of its Executive Board. No author can receive the award in more than one occasion.

The present procedure is as follows: To begin with the Akademi prepares a ground list of deserving books, incorporating the titles obtained from one expert for each language (two experts in the case of Sanskrit, representing the North and the South), and any titles that might be suggested by the literary associations recognised by the Akademi. This list is referred to twenty-five persons figuring in a preliminary pane. Each of them is requested to suggest independently not more than five books, either drawn from the list or including other books, either drawn from the list or including other books of his own choice. All the members of the Akademi's Advisory Board for the concerned language other than its convener are invaria-

ble included among this set of persons. The titles suggested by those who respond are placed in a short list which is sent back to the preliminary referees, each of who is now invited to recommend a single book. The names of the individuals consulted up to this stage (other than the Advisory Board members) are not revealed to the public.

In the next stage, the final recommendations received from the persons who have thus screened the books are referred to three final Readers, each of whom is invited separately to make a studied evaluation and arrange the titles in the order of merit, supporting the choice with detailed comments. The member representing the language of the Akademi's Executive Npard (who is also the Convener of the concerned Language Advisory Board) is always one of the Readers.

In the concluding stage these findings are considered by the Executives Board, which determines the priorities on the basis of the preferences given by the Readers. Where two out of these three Readers given any book their first preference and the third does not consider it unworthy of the award, the issue is settled automatically. But where any conflicting pattern emerges, the Executive Board considers the detailed



opinions of the Readers and takes its own decision. Since 1981, the names of the Readers are announced at the time of declaring the awards.

It may be noted that for deciding who shall be the expert preparing the initial ground list, the Secretariat of the Akademi requests every member of the concerned Language Advisory Board to suggest at least ten names of literary critics, librarians or research scholars who are actively watching the current literary scene. Similarly, each of the Advisory Board members is invited to suggest twenty-five names of eminent writers, scholars or critics for the preliminary panel, and also ten names of distinguished authors, critics or teachers for the panel of final Readers.

The procedure of preliminary screening by a set of competent persons, detailed evaluation by three final Readers, and consideration by the Executive Board has been followed since 1959. Consequent on the Deshmukh Committee's report. Subsequently the preliminary panel was enlarged, the criteria governing the eligibility of books were spelt out more clearly, and the idea of preparing an initial ground list of deserving books is consultation with an expert and recognized literary associations was introduced.

In order to illustrate it simply, the present Award procedure (which has been prevalent since 1959 consequent to the Desh Committee Report) is as follows:-

THE EXECUTIVE BOARD                      FINAL DECISION MAKING  
THREE FINAL READERS

THESE CONSTITUTE THE FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| EACH REFEREE NOW RECOMMENDS ONE SINGLE BOOK EACH | 1. Ten names for the final list of readers to suggest by the Language Advisory Boards.   |
| SHORT LIST SEND BACK TO PRELIMINARY REFEREES     | 2. Each of the 3 readers are invited separately to to make a studied evaluation and arrange titles in order of merit supporting choice with detailed comments. |
| SHORT LIST PREPARED                              | 3. On the basis of preference given by the 3 Readers choice of executive board.  |
|  | 4. Since 1981, names of readers are announced at the time of the awards  |

Each member suggests independently not more than 5 books either drawn from grand list or from own choice

PRELIMINARY PANEL      Consisting of - Composed of Language Advisory Board members (other than convener)  
25 persons

Ground List is referred to Preliminary Panel.

GROUND LIST      Titles of Books in Ground List are  
detained from:

1.    One expert in each language
2.    Literary associations recognised by the  
Akademi
3.    Members of concerned Language Advisory Boards  
suggest 10 names of Literary experts who can  
help prepare Ground List.

The main area of discontent seems to lie in the Akademi's overall functioning & structuring of its Governing Executive and Advisory forums, in the impression that there is concentration of power in the hands of certain groups or individuals. Also the literary associations recognised by the Sahitya Akademi which have an important role to play in the initial stages of preparing the ground list, one not always fully representative of some of the literatures.

In order to rectify this problem somewhat, the Haksar Committee report has suggested the following measures, seem quite reasonable and practical.

First of all it suggests that the awards should be decided not by the Executive Board but by the Readers themselves.

At present the Readers give their final evaluation separately, and the Executive Board collates and interprets their opinions, and gives its verdict in the

case of all twenty-two languages. Since each member of the Executive Board is not likely to be familiar with most of the languages, in effect the Board is likely to be influenced by the opinion of the member representing a particular language. This would give him a decisive voice, strengthening the impression that there is a concentration of decision-making power.

"We believe that the right forum for judgement should be a jury of three eminent persons in each literature. They should sit together and come to a joint decision. If there is no unanimity in their choice, the opinion the majority of the members should prevail. The jury must prepare a citation, setting out why they consider a book worthy of the prize. Once there verdict is given, the Akademi should abide by it. In order to enhance the credibility of the system, members of the Executive Board may not be included in the jury. At least one member of the jury must be a fellow of the Akademi or an author who had won a Sahitya Akademi award in the past. As in the case of the Readers at present, the names of the jury members should be announced at the time of declaring the awards, and their citation published. If there is total disagreement among the members of the jury in any

language, the award should be withheld that year, and the reason announced.

This is a good suggestion but one cannot help noticing that after the report marks are the area of discontent as concentration of power in the hands of certain groups or individuals "(P 54) it suggests exactly the same thing, that is, decision making not by the members of the Executive Board but a three member jury (!)

Secondly the report suggests that the language Advisory Boards may be closely associated with the process of initial selection. It is true that even now the members of the Advisory Boards are consulted individually in the matter of nominating the expert who helps in the preparation of the ground list and drawing up the preliminary panel of judges as well as the final panel of Readers, and they are also invariably included among the twenty-five persons who screen the ground list. But it envisages a role for the Language Advisory Board as consultant bodies in the context of the awards, extending to the preparation of the ground list as well as its screening.

Another reason for discontentment was that the Sahitya Akademi has a practice of considering only

books published in the preceding three years for the awards. Also each language has to have a category for an award but for not more than one book each. Now this has raised a lot of questions. Firstly both the above practices resulted in some deserving authors being overlooked especially in those languages which are blessed with plenty. Secondly, the question arose whether the award be for a book for an author in line of his life time contribution. The Haksar report's answer to this was that the award should be for both the reasons. It recommended the institution of an additional award in each language to be given periodically at intervals (which could be decided by the Akademi) to a distinguished writer in each of the recognised language, without reference to any specific work. The monetary value attached to these awards may be the same as for the awards given for individual works. The procedures for shortlisting and selection could be devised on similar lines and the jury could be discussed by the Akademi and concerned writers jointly.

However, where this additional financial outlay was to come from, was not discussed by the report. It also suggested that if no book or author in any given language come up to the mark in a given year, no prize

need be awarded. Most of time, it is given as compromising gesture of not "excellence in literature" but more as a measure of language development and promotion. This in turn defeats the entire purpose of institution awards for accomplishment. For the purpose of "promotion" and encouragement of languages there are other funds specifically allocated under defined programmes and schemes of the Akademi itself.

Today the Sahitya Akademi seems to be at cross-roads. Questions ranging from its purpose of existence to streamlining its structure and functions have been raised by the community of authors in recent times.

Rumblings of discontent regarding this prestigious institution meant to set high literary standards, to foster and coordinate literary activities in all Indian languages, have for long been voiced but in dots and dashes. Today they have become more than mere. They are fully potent statements.

It is for the first time that the community of writers have got divided into two camps; a group demanding restructuring to make the Akademi more democratic and accountable and another formidable group asserting the status quo & protest the inbuilt autonomy of the institution.

Examples like the following regarding controversies, lobbying, corruption of bureaucratic positions in this institution, canvassing etc. have become very common for the Akademi. For example, the recent controversy (August 1992 - October 1992) over the selection of a Punjabi award has shown that the Akademi awards have encouraged a rat race amongst writers. Whatever the reason, the reason for the controversy was regarding the Punjabi award presented to Harinder Singh Mehboob for his 828-page collection of poems entitled, "Janan di Raat". It came under attack for containing scurrilous references" the late Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi (though not by name but by implication). One of the poems openly enlogised the role of her assassination, Beant Singh. This controversy surrounding the selection of material for the Sahitya Akademi awards gradually shoballed into a major crises with angry outbursts. The entire issue got politicised. It was as if it was waiting to be picked up by not just the community of writers but also political activists (ii) Youth Congress workers while presenting a memorandum to the Akademi functionaries against the award resorted to blackening the face of one of its senior officers (Aug. 1992),. The Ministry of Human Resource Development typically maintained a stoic



official silence. The Sahitya Akademi President Dr. Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya apologised on behalf of the organisation by admitting that there had 10 member committee. He announced the setting up of a Akademi out of controversy in its future award selection.

The controversy of the Akademi's and selection procedure as old as the Akademi itself. Allegations of manipulation corruption, favouritism, appeasement have been levelled from time to time. This issue is as old as when Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, President of India ordered reconstitution of the jury in his capacity as Chairman of Sahitya Akademi so that a particular aspirant close to him could be accommodated. This candidate recommended by the lower panel of assessors. In seven or so odd cases, honoured writers have declined to accept the Sahitya awards due to various reasons. The noted Marathi writer G.A. Kulkarni returned the 1973-Akademi award in consequence of aspersions caste on him with regard to date of publication of his book of short stories 'Kajal Maya'. V.R. Narla, whose Telgu play 'Sita Josyam' was elected for 1981 Award, accepted the honour only to refuse later on the ground that not only an adverse review of the book was published in the Akademi own journal - 'Indian Literature' - but the Akademi

also declined to accede to his request to put a ban or further discussion on his book in the journal! Suresh Joshi, whose 'Chintayani Manasa' was chosen for the Gujrati Award in 1983, refused the prize saying that this book contained only stray essays and did not deserve the award. he believed the Akademi only gave awards to writers who were 'spent forces'. The Award in Urdu to 'Atish-e-Chinar' (Fire of Chinar wood) by late Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah for 1986 created another controversy as the book carried critical references with 'tounge-in-check' comments on the two politicians Jawaharlal Nehru & Sardar Patel, consequently Atish-e-Chinar was written by the Secretary of J & K Cultural Area, Mohd. Yousuf Teng. The 1991 award in Urdu to Salahuddin Parvez for his work 'Identify card' was resented by a section of urdu writers with a very few appreciating the selection Mr. J.P. Das whose 'Anhika' was selected from the 1991 oriya award, declined to accept it for purely personal reasons: However, to services close to the noted oriya writer, he was loath to get embroiled into the politics of selection that would have grouped him with a particular fashion of writers in his home state.

The present Sahitya Akademi Secretary, Prof. Indra Nath Choudhuri believes that if out of 592 books award-

ed in various languages of the country, there has been controversy with regard to 8 awards, then it is not alarming given the involvement of as many as 638 writers/scholars in 22 languages in the selection process. And in any case the Akademi's Executive Board has made efforts to review & revise the process of award selection as many as 6 times previously incidentally. The 7th review was planned earlier but coinciding with the ongoing controversy has further streamlined the 'selection process' by eliminating possibilities of any lapse, so Prof. Choudhury says.

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Here again this makes one ponder upon the various doubts and queries which have surfaced in these acrimonious debates from time to time. Queries which follow the line of questioning, like have the National Akademi of Art & Culture failed in achieving their lofty ideas enunciated at the time of their reception? What and where are the parameters dramatic functioning within an autonomous structure? Is there a need to substitute the award procedure by another procedure of honouring deserving scholars & literature would it be better to scrap the awards altogether? Is there too

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112. Jay Raina "Sahitya Akademi, when Awards lose their sheen", The Hindustan Times, August 31, 1992

much ads being made about non-such-a significant issue  
when you weigh <sup>113</sup> it in the context of indicating,  
what K.S. Duggal Calls 'a time honoured institution  
which enjoys a prestigious position in the National  
Academi of letters internal organisation. Well,  
inspite of everything one has to admit that the Sahitya  
Akademi is invited to literary meet seminars, symposia,  
writers workshops would over and alternatively which  
are organised by the Academi in reciprocation.

For deficiencies in the Awards Procedure, the  
solution could lie in a slightly different avenue under  
this, apart from other considerations, creative solu-  
tions, one looks into the Haksar Committee's Recommen-  
dations, and their aftermath consideration and execu-  
tion, if any. Amongst some of the interesting and more  
feasible suggestions <sup>114</sup> and things done in order to  
arrive at such suggestion, the Haksar Committee sent  
few suggestions & comments of over 120 writers the

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113. K.S. Dugal, The Hindustan Times, October 21, 1992  
- "Award Issue, whose fault"?

114. There were two such Review Reports befor the  
Haksar. The first was the Dr. Bhabla Committee  
Report (1962) & the other was the Justice Khosla  
Committee Report (1972). MOst of the suggestions  
of Bhabha were declared as unfeasible and non  
applicable. Not practical enough to be  
implemented.

country over. It got different responses from those who put their signatures to the memorandum addressed to the Human Resource Development Minister. While the Committee nowhere suggested the scrapping of the awards. Among the 120 writers who sent then signed memorandum to the Human Resource Development Ministry, were Prof. V.K.Gokak, Mulk Raj Anand, K.V. Puttappa, Swaram Karanth, T.K. Joshi, Bhushan Sahni, Namwar Singh, Sisir Kumar Das, Subhash Mukhopadhyay, Vasant Kanetkar & Vidya Niwas Misra, In their written rejoinders to the Akademi in connection with the Haksar Committee recommendation, they rejected the suggestion of the Committee that the President of the Akademi be nominated by the President of India as against the election by the Akademi General Council as per prevailing practice. The 120 writers while rejecting the suggestions pointed out the acceptance of Haksar Committee suggestion may militate against autonomy of the institution and dignity of the writers it sought to represent.

However, since every cloud has a silver lining. In recent times, the community of writers have got together and strengthened their feedback mechanism to the government even though the lobbying may have ignored larger issues.

Many writers allege that the Akademi does not exist powers to power to discover unpublished, brilliant young talent & usually perfect the safety of maintaining a status quo. Awards are given, at times on compassionate grounds to the old leaving the prize money in the hands of children of the honoured, they complain the Akademi's Executive Board member Shivanath suggested sometime in August, 1992) the scrapping of the 'noble system of awards', Shivanath has found favour from writers like Kushwant Singh in his finding fault with the present day structure of the Akademi alleging too much power in the hands of the Akademi President and Secretary.

In the wake of this controversy, as if in continuation of their markers of protest On August 12, 1992,<sup>115</sup> another 67 writers addressed another memorandum to the Union Minister for Human Resource Development, Mr Arjun Singh, questioning the process of Award Selection, and the organisation of the Akademi since the selection shows wilful flouting of procedure and canons of fairplay under the cover the autonomy. They have urged the minister to subject it to an

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115. The Times of India, August 19, 1992 and The Indian Express, August 22, 1992.

indepth injury. The writers and playwrights included Mahasveta Devi, Amrita Pritam, Nirma1 Verma, Mu1 Raj Anand, Satyadev Dubey Ali Sardar Jaffri, P Ankesh, Girish Karnad, Habils Tanvir, Gulabdad Broker, Trilochan Shastri, K V Subbanna, Utpal Dutt, Dr S L Byrappa, Prasanna, B V Karnath, Ram Gopal Bajaj, Geeti Sen, Dr K S Karnath, Dr Kartar Singh Duggal and Shivarudrajppa. While others like Krishna Sobti, Vishnu Khare, Sagar Sarhaddi, Manmohan Shyam Joshi, Tara Singh Kamul were of the opinion that it would only be to scrap the awards altogether whereas Qurratulain Hyder, a recipient of the Janpeeth and Sahitya Akademi awards believed that there was no need for restructuring it is very important to maintain the autonomy of Sahitya Akademi and the award procedure should be satisfactorily modified now. Subhash Mukhopadhyay, was of the opinion that while the Akademi's autonomy should not be disturbed it should function in a more democratic manner.

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These sixty seven signatories further stated that since the akademi felt short of providing professional facilities, the nations premier literacy institute

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116. Jay Raina "Rumblings, the Sahitya Akademi, The Times of India, August 31, 1992

should be restructured, made more democratic and accountable. However, indignant writers, playwrights and scholars of large from different parts of the city have felt that the group of sixty seven has many disgruntled Delhi based writers who are angry at being kept out of the top echelons of the Akademi, and point out that since pieces of the Akademi cake have been plenty full (500 awards given in its 38 years of existence) the frustration too has ground aec by many of these people have been closely associated with the Akademi Awards, speakers in Seminars employees, participants in different programmes while some of these outstation scholars have volunteered to put a record their appreciation of the Akademi's functioning, especially in the past few years, others have suggested constructive and creative innovation not changes in the award selection and award presenting proceedings. And almost all have resented the attempt to take away the powers vested in the General Council, which comprises representative writers from all over the city.

However, in this society of peers, it is healthy to have differences but not divisions. If the Akademi has lapsed, the writers should get together and correct it and not the government or lese the Bhopal story of



the Bharat Bhawan would be repeated here too because of governmental interferences. Eminent Hindi writers, Nirmal Verma said <sup>117</sup> "I have always apposed moves in the past of curb and auto of Bharat Bhawan. I will equally deplore it in the present case." This memorandum of sixty seven writers to the Ministry of Human Resource Development, he saw as a part of the self destructive streak which made us seek faults in any organisation that was doing some work, for a sleeping organisation could make no mistakes surely. Yes there could be some amount of rationality in what Nirmal Verma has had to say. But to try to camoflange deficiencies in any organisation which has conceptually monetarily and in the employment and deployment of skills and resources reserved a place for itself on the national agenda since its inception, would be like to turning a blind eye to the problems or to the National efforts made on state run just on the whole. These efforts, even though in terms of finances may have been meager in the past few decades, yet have tapped on many other national resource energies like creativity, talent, organ on networking, institutional on finance allocation, etc.) if not national aspiration.

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117. "Akademi to review Award Procedure" The Times of India, August 19, 1992

Hence constructive criticism is always an antedote if not the very foundation of reform and progress, but this does not justify unnecessary lobbying against one another, especially it is within the same peer group as UR Ananthamurthy the new President of the Sahitya Akademi believes. And may be instead of criticism, if some of the multifarious and more constructive activities of the Sahitya Kala Parishad are focused upon and encouraged whether they are 'Meet the Author Programmes; the 'men & book series; the translation awards, the seminar & workshops where writers get to meet other creative minds, the volumes on history of Indian literature, a journal on contemporary Indian literature besides the lively festival of letters which coincides with the award giving ceremonies and helps writers to cross the languages barriers G.P. Deshpande, Satyadev Dube and Prasanna also felt that ignoring all its achievements the Akademi should not be judged only by a few controversial awards out of the 592 given so far. The current controversy would best be solved by writers readers & the General Council. All three none of these are novelist feel that the awards were a recognition of the craft of writing. The money was not a very significant consideration since these days even tutorials payed lakhs to bright candidates. These

awards focused attention on the awarded works and increase our awareness of the writings in other languages with which we could not otherwise be easily familiar. In fact to consolidate the gains of the awards, the Akademi should dramatise the award & make the writings more high profile and yet at the same time accessible to the common persons comprehension. Instead of awarding only established writers and curtailing the spending seminars, the Akademi should support avant grade writers. May be it is the secrecy involved in the current award procedure that gives the feeling that it is manipulated. Both the names of the jury & the members of the 3 best works should be announced even the differences & deliberations over the award should be made public. Foreignorship, secrecy or inaccessability never promotes creativity, harmony and productivity.

In this respect, the Haksar Committee Report has shown statesmanships by recommending that the jury should be made entirely responsible for the award and that literary merit should be the role criteria for giving the award. There has been a art majority of oponion, including the one expressed in the Haksar Report or by the President of the Sahitya Akademi that

if in a particular language no book is artistically good enough to get the award, then no award in that language is constituted. This would only increase the credibility of the award. The constitution of the Akademi admits a provision to withhold awards if no author for work is deserving enough. However, for ten years (approximately) between 1981 and 1992, every year religiously awards were presented to fill in the slot of each of the Sahitya Akademi's language categories, even it meant awarding mediocrity. But due to this outburst of writers, the situation has changed since last year 1992 Sahitya Akademi Awards by the executive meeting of the Akademi in December, 1992, keeping the above consideration in mind no award was given for Singhli language. Also these books were selected on basis of recommendation made by a 3 member Jury in concerned language's including Kashmiri, Konkani, Maithili. And over and above that there should be freedom of expression writing and belief.

These seems to be no reason why a certain literary treat with creative academic legitimacy should be held back from being a consideration in the Award selection process, if it seems to imply suggestive derogatory symbols to a certain sentiment, belief or personality which is considered sacred in the majority psyche

otherwise what kind of freedom are we talking about in any case? A freedom which only allows us to mender within STRAIGHT jacket compartmentalised categories carved for us by our 'founding others'. (Please note the use of themasculive in this very commonly used phrase) And creativity and innovation then is only a matter of whocascades moe enthusiastically and in a more novel posture within the strict route of this meandering.

Following the Haksar Committee Recmmendations, in August 1992, a ten member committee was set up by the Akademi to recommend changes in the Aware procedure. The Executive Board meeting which followed ecidedto democratise the award givingprocess by making the decision of the three-member jury as final. This jury read the short list of books recommended by twenty five other writers and decided upon whom to confer the award. Earlier the practice was that the Executive Board used to have the final say. Subhash Mukhopadhyay, and envinent scholar, recalled that in the '70's when he had bee a part ofthe akademi's Executive Board, he had raised the point that a Board member should not be a part of the three member jury which decides on whom to confere the award. The others

had not agreed then but a change has now been made. And had some of the Haksar Committee Recommendation been acted upon earlier may be things would not have reached such a pass.

This controversy has interestingly through up some larger issues which need cry for considreation.

It has become necessary to rise above the mentality of fault finding at a very restricted level., One has to look beyond the question of whose fault this kind of lapse entails whether the fault of the "eminent" jury in whose jurisdiction thsi objectionable poem had escaped notice; or the fault of the Akademi's Executive Committee who fails to even glance though it before deciding the award; or further still was it because of a total lack of concern and interest with other writers and people concerned with akademi affairs, who on one hadn did not bring any such 'Scurritous portion' of the poetry collection to the attention of the award selection committee of the Akademi and on the other hand first acclaimed the announced award and then started speaking in a different voice. <sup>118</sup> Then what had to be seen today is, whether we now for a long time

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118. K. S. Duggal, "Award issue, whose faulty?". The Hindustan Times, October 21, 1992.

have dwelled in variously defined perspectives of back biting and distinctively under cutting each other and whether out questions have been wrongly framed altogether. Then does the state (or such state run institutions like the National Academy of letters') really have the privilege (let alone right) to define and disseminate what constitutes "Surritious" writing "inconduasive to public sentiment and morale" as contrasted with "ethical" nationalist etc. <sup>119</sup> For this "privilege and right the state survely appropriates for itself; as an example, of this was clearly reflected in Maulana Azad's inaugural speech at the Sahitya Akaedmi in which he said; "...In a democratic regime, the arts can derive their sustenance only from the people, and the state, as the organised manifestation of the people's will must therefore undertake its maintenance and development as one of its first responsibilities. <sup>120</sup> Then may be today this

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119. The Haksar Committee Report has explicitly quoted Robert Huges's article, "A Loony Parody of Cultural Democracy", in the Times Magazine, August 14, 1989. In this article Huges has criticised senator James Helms for proposing a measume that would forbid the Amenical National Edowment for the Arts to give money to "promote, disseminate or produce" anything "obscene or indecent".....

120. "The Haksar Committee Report, 1990, (p.19 paragraph 2.30).

logical conception of causality between the state as an embodiment of the organised manifestation of profiles will, and hence, its first responsibility as a maintainer and developer (of society in general and) the arts (in particular) - needs to be reconsidered.

It is not a question of, why in this acrimonious debate scurrilous portions have been obliterated from consideration (intentionally or otherwise) but it is possible to shift out our parameters of concern whether to a position from which we could hope to grapple with the question as to why does any state run institution or public policy have a right to stop (omit or commit) any text from receiving an honour it so deserves? Yes, writers and other concerned citizens have freedom of thought expression belief in democratic India and so they can demonstrate, India and so they can demonstrate, lobby or protest. Take for instance, the above mentioned Mehboobs award controversy (1991). Must one controversial poem under a creative writers lifetime work? Out of the 828 pg. volume, what apart his 1212 pgs. magnum opus which traces the evolution of the Sikh faith with remarkable insight and scholarship, the literary excellence of poetic expositions? But then the question arises, where does one draw the line



bet freedom of speech and expression and independence of writing and being,. Yet hist line has to be drawn and declared a more immediate level, in reference to the Sahitya Akademi, in order to rid it of parochial senseless controversies and make it more accessible to India at large, may be what is needed is a more through mechanism in regard to at least to areas of its functioning:-

1. The streamlining of the "Accountability" of office bearers within the Akademi's structure of bureaucratic hierarchy, and
2. The streamling of the "Feedback" avenues from the public (and writers) at large to the Akademi (or Government).

Both the above measures being mutually complementary. For it is only if office bearers are made accountable for their decisions, actions etc. (for example, the priority and/of channelisation of state funds through the Akademi etc.) and these are made public, that the common person would find it more within her/his power to voice her/his grievance and make a difference in any matter of her/his concern, inturn enabling the Akdemi to serve the audience for which it professes to be constituted in the first place.

THE "ELECTIONS" OF THE PRESIDENT OF  
THE SAHITYA AKADEMI:-

Based on the Haksar Committee's recommendations, the Akademi should have its President not unanimously elected as has been the case since its inspection in 1954, but the name to be nominated by the President of India.

Even on the eve of the elections to the eighth President of the Sahitya Akademi in February, 1993, a formal notification was issued by the Department of Culture Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, which asked the Sahitya Akademi to reconsider the Haksar recommendations especially the "nominate" of the Akademi President by the President of India and increasing the membership of the General Council.

The illustration of this case is a telling comment on the amount of 'Autonomy' allotted in working and decision-making of the largely state funded institutions like the Sahitya Akademi by the state. Despite official policy statements by the government departments involved in 'art and culture', facts of bullying and bull dozing by bureaucrats and politicians have not seized. On December 21, 1992, the present

secretary of the Department of Culture (Mr. Bhask Shosh) wrote a letter to the (former) Akademi President Mr. Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya which said "Urgent action" was to be taken by the Akademi: to incorporate the Haksar Committee's report's recommendation on the "nomination" of the Akademi President. Until this happened the General council whose term expired on December 31, 1992 postponement of the reconstitution of the General Council which meant the amendment of the Akademi constitution, making it difficult for the Akademi to convene a meeting to discuss the above notification. Consequently, the Sahitya Akademi's Executive Board held a meeting (on December 27, 1992 at Bangalore) in which it unanimously rejected the government decision of 'nomination' of the Akademi President. This, it felt would directly impinge on its autonomy or whatever was left of it. The sole representative of the Department of Culture, Government of India, present at this meeting made an official statement justifying the government's stand by saying "since the government set up the Akademi, it had the right to change its constitution at will". December 22, 1992 the Times of India. In January this year (January 3, 1993), the President of the Sahitya Akademi wrote a five page letter to the Ministry (Mrs. Arjun

Singh) or Human Resource Development which asked the Government of reconsider its adamence on the nomination of the Akademi President as writers Kand Akademi members all over the country were not likely to agree. Among other directives, the Akademi also formally rejected the Haksar Committee reports recommendation on the constitution of the Akademi's General Council, the Vice-President of the Akademi to be elected by the General Council and the decision by the Government to 'appoint' the Akademi's Financial Advisor as member Secretary of its Finance Committee.

All the above mentioned charges would have entailed an amendment to the Akademi's constitution. The letter also exposed the intention of the Akademi to approach the Prime Minister and President of India directly with this issue and if that too failed, it was ready too fight the Government legally in the Supreme Court.

Most of the writers concerned with the Akademi felt. (as expressed in the letter) that even though the constitution of the Akademi had not achieved many of its objectives, yet it upheld a certain structure of democratisation as elections to most of the decision-

making posts were held annually. They expressed view to explore alternate channels of undoing as then the government could into bully on account of its grants.

For the Sahitya Akademi presently has an annual budget of Rs.2 crores and the Government often tries to interfere in the internal affairs of the Sahitya Akademi by deliberate and actiful delays in the release of money by three to four months which sometimes disables the Akademi totally (and it cannot even pay salaries).

Interestingly the Sahitya Akademi where the President is 'elected'. the other two Akademis, the Lalit Kala and the Sangeet Natak, have their Presidents nominated by a "Government" selected Panel", something on the lines of a "Search Committee of Government Officials" recommended for the Sahitya Akademi.

#### TRANSLATION

From the earliest times, translations have played a great role in building up the world's cultural heritage. It is through translation, retelling and adaptation that the great works of the different civilizations have been known to people elsewhere.

Only a few can read masterpieces in the languages in which they were originally created. But the translator brings these works to the very doorsteps of willing homes.

The good translator is something of an evangelist. There is an Italian saying which calls a translator a traitor, inasmuch as he never can do full justice to the original. Translation of poetry particularly bristles with problems. "Can you translate music?" Voltaire asked, in this. Dealing with the subject, Edmund Wilson has pointed out that the best translations of poetry have been achieved by persons who are poets themselves, and where they "depart most widely from the original". He cites the Rubaiyat as an example.

One of the objectives of the Sahitya Akademi, as defined in its constitution, is "to encourage or to arrange translations of literary works from one Indian language into other and also from non-Indian languages into Indian languages and vice versa". In practice, the Akademi has not greatly concerned itself with translations to and from foreign languages. Since 1954 till now, the Akademi has, either directly or through other publishers, got 263 books translated

among Indian languages.

In view has often expressed, in the Akademi's General Council meetings and witnesses before us, that books which have been given the Akademi's award should be translated. Out of 526 works which had won the Akademi's awards until 1988, only 33 have so far been translated into other Indian languages; even these translations have been done into very few languages (in the majority of cases, not more than three).

This art is difficult as can be seen by a perusal of the translations published in the journal of the Sahitya Akademi and in the journals of the State Akademis. It deserves to be praised more for the earnestness of intention than the literary quality and achieved. A literary translator has a challenging task (and a much less remunerative one) than the interpreter in court-rooms and conferences. The Haksar Report says, Higher remuneration is certainly one answer, but not the only one. There would be no point in paying more for the same product.

However, one can and should pay for maintaining the quality of the same product. A reference to Appendix - 1- of this text would illustrate the disparities in the pay scales of higher and lower staff. Here two

essential things need to be mentioned which, one can see, have been overlooked by the report.

Firstly, (if we refer to Appendix-10, we will notice that in the context of limited state and public funds available with the Sahitya Akademi, there has been a somewhat unnecessary overlap of official duties and positions for more or less the same functions. For example, all the three Akademi have a number of official designations as Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Additional Secretary, Assistant Secretary etc. all drawing very handsome salaries.

And secondly, some of the indispensable lower staff like photographers, Translators, Accountants, Sales Manager etc. are paid a very meagre salary. To enhance the standards of presentation, translations, publications, sale of Akademi books and keeping financial accounts streamlined, there would be an urgent need to look into this pressing matter too.

Translation is a skill, and it is surprising to see that the 'National Academy of letters' in India, more than any one else, has failed to recognise it as a skill, in spite of the fact that this Akademi in its annual publications professes priority to its translation programmes and launches schemes with its



limited allotted funds, for the promotion of translation skill. These funds then are wasted on the whole. It is even more surprising that this is not even suggested as an objective task of the Akademi in its constitution.

No wonder then that the Akademi prefers to spend so lavishly on office bearers at the level of Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries and has only frugal salaries left for these indispensable workers of any literature-promotion institution. Such workers who head to have the skills to translate verbal, social and cultural in each language so that they are perceived in proper perspective in the sistern language without any loss of significance, meaning or context.

Inspite of this, the Sahitya Akademi has taken a number of initiatives.

It is currently engaged in the preparation of a national register of translators. Commencing from 1989; it has introduced as separate annual award for translation of books into each of the recognized languages from other. It has organized two national workshops in New Delhi and three regional workshops in Srinagar, Trivandrum and Calcutta, bringing together

translators of literary works from different parts of the country, focusing attention on the specific problems faced by them, and also providing them with a forum in which to gain new insights into the theoretical and practical aspects of translation.

However at times, the Sahitya Akademi in its ambitious zeal has lost perspective which could lead to a wastage of precious time, effort, manpower, material and resources in terms of limited available funds.

For example :

Among other things, it visualizes the translation of five classic works every year from fifteen languages into fifteen others. The translation of the ancient and modern classics of one language into others is a laudable idea. but whether it would be possible to choose 375 works and secure 5625 translations of high literary quality in a mere five years, and find first-class translators to undertake the tasks, is somewhat doubtful. Even the required outlay running to more than Rs.2 to 3 crore per annum is hardly likely to be found. Crash programmes are good, but they should not crash. There is a need for a pragmatic approach with realizable goals.

The Haksar committee Report here, has been quite forthcoming to suggest that the Akademi may undertake a comprehensive survey of what material already exists, identify the important gaps, and then set out to fill them in a well-conceived order of priority, in respect of classics as well as award-winning and other modern works of literature. In the case of many fine translations done in the past which are no longer available, it could encourage reprints, offering and subsidy to publishers. The Akademi can hardly expect to cope with such an extensive task single-handed. It must seek the active cooperation of the Sahitya Akademis or equivalent organizations in the States wherever they exist, both in surveying the ground and in implementing the programmes. Its with private publishers and booksellers must also be strengthened, not only for the publication of translations, but also for their distribution and sales. There is scope for involving the literary associations too in this activity.

There is one prize of Rs.10,000 every year in each of the recognized languages. Entries are invited from translators and publishers through advertisements in the Press, and the members of the Language Advisory Boards are also requested to send in nominations

individually. The Akademi had noted that the response in the first year, 1989, was not satisfactory. It has since introduced the concept of having also a ground list of deserving translations prepared by an expert in the initial stage.

For each language, there is an expert committee with three members, one of whom is the convenor of the concerned Language advisory Board, and the others are chosen by the Secretary from a panel of fifteen to twenty-five scholars approved by the President of the Akademi. According to the original procedure, this committee was to prepare a short list of five translations from other languages, each of which would be referred to a source-language expert who knows the target language also, for opinion. Thereafter each member of the expert committee separately was to give his recommendation in order of preference, indicating the reasons therefore, and the Executive Board was to take the final decision. Following the 1989 experience, in view of the great difficulty encountered in finding experts who knew both the source language and the target language, the practice of referring the short-list to such an expert has been given up altogether. If the members of the selection committee

wish to consult any particular expert, they can still do so through the Secretary of the Akademi. the final decision continues to rest with the Executive Board.

It is evident that the actual process of judging the merits of a translation is even more complicated than evaluating those of an original work of literature. The Report says that the idea of consulting source language experts was by no means an arbitrary one, and abandoning it on the basis of a single year's experience does not seem to be a wise decision. If none of the members of the target-language committee happens to know a given source language (which may often be the case), how can they be sure of the fidelity of the translation unless they consult some responsible expert who knows both the languages? And if it is impossible to overcome such language barriers in the case of the selectors, will there not be the risk of errors? How can public confidence in such a vulnerable system be generated and sustained?

The Report feels that in the context of these awards also, as in the case of literary awards, it would be desirable to let the members of the Language Advisory Boards have a collective role to play rather

than being associated individually, and to appoint an independent jury consisting of three eminent persons whose collective verdict would be final. We recommend that the whole issue may be discussed in the national symposium we have suggested in the case of the literary awards.

Possibly as a result of the Khosla Report's recommendation 1972, the Akademi has slowed down on translation of books from foreign languages. With the growth of private publishing houses as well as the publishing activities of some foreign embassies, foreign books are being translated into many Indian languages. But largely the translations are from English, French and the languages of the Soviet Union. There is a paucity of translations of authors from Africa and Latin America. Similarly there are few translations of Indian works into the language of Asia. The Akademi might perhaps give some thought to these two aspects, enhancing such south cooperation internationally.

#### **Publications :**

One of the ready tests of the vitality of a literary organization is the quality of the books it

sponsors. Without an active publication programme the Sahitya akademi cannot fulfil the basic tasks assigned to it, namely setting high literary standards, fostering literary activity in all the languages of India.

The Sahitya Akademi till 1990 published about 1750 books, including translations. Some 35 manuscripts are in different stages of publication. The particulars by language are shown in Appendix - 19 of the text.

One of the major achievements of the Akademi has been the preparation of the National Bibliography of Indian Literature. Among its current programmes are the compilation of an Encyclopaedia of Indian Literature in five volumes (three of which have been published), and a critical inventory of Ramayana Studies in the world. These are praiseworthy undertakings, even if there might be complaints about their inadequacies. The Akademi has also drawn up a massive project for preparing an Integrated History of Indian Literature in ten volumes.

The Akademi publishes three journals, viz. Samakaleen Bharateeya Sahitya, a quarterly in Hindi, Indian Literature, a bi-monthly in English, and Samskrita Pratibha, a half-yearly in Sanskrit. Before

the report had suggested that there should be a prize for an author's total contribution to literature. Here the report suggests that selected works of such an author may be taken up for translation along with award-winning books. There have been awards recently instituted for translations.

However, not only is the accessibility of these journals to the public at large doubtful, but at a glance, one can see that the quality of these publications in the matter of contents, format, typography and standards of editing and proof-reading is far from being to the mark. Literatures of certain languages are not receiving the attention they deserve. Also keeping the prices so low does not seem to serve any purpose, least of all sell them more. On the contrary, it may devalue these publications, apart from restricting earnings from sales. Instead a special circulation drive would be more helpful.

The Haksar report suggests that since the Sahitya Akademi's publications are facing stiff competition from the other competent publishing houses within the government itself, let alone private ones (like the National Book Trust, the Publications Division of the I & B Ministry, the Language Departments of Universities,



some State Akademis. The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavans, the writers workshops etc.), so the Sahitya Akademi should concentrate on and sponsor a set of one hundred great Indian classics, ancient and modern Britannica publications, in Hindi and English as well as other languages.

Apart from contradicting its previous suggestion of streamlining the publication policy of the Akademi in order to face national and international competition, what purpose this reoriented concentration would solve, was not clarified. While the material considerations are important, there is a large challenge before the Akademis publishing programme. The last few decades of our country's history have witnessed a great upsurge of linguistic chauvinism. In the name of language and literature many agitations have been launched and blood shed. The reorganisation of states largely on linguistic lines has not fully assuaged the chauvinism. Even this intense price in one's languages alas, has not led to any great increase in book-reading and book-binding. Rather it has certainly led to a disinclination to learn the languages of other regions and read good literary works of these languages.

One wonders whether the Sahitya Akademi has foreseen this and taken it into consideration enough in order to execute upon some plan to counter this trend.

The other points of discontent seem to be quite rationally valid. The increasing amount of unsold books have become growing source of wastage where alternative means of selling in terms of material selected for print run or better marketings executing or advertising skills could guarantee a better job. As compared to private publishers who go in for a print run of at least 2000, the Akademi's print runs are usually limited to 1,000 copies barring certain exception where the private runs may vary from 1,100 to 2,100 and in certain select cases to 3,100.

As of March 31, 1992, the Akademi had published 36,95,673 books of which 25,33,385 have been sold and 2,29,169 given away free (these include the books sent to various book exhibition in India and abroad). But over 25.2% of the total equalling 9,33,119 books are lying unsold in the Akademi godowns.

Another significant point of discontent pertains to the slow rate of the publication of translated version of the award-winning books. The Akademi does

not publish original works but only translations. As per the Haksar Committee Report, of the 526 books selected by the General Council for its awards till 1988, only 33 books had been translated and that too in only 1 or 2 languages in the entire country.

#### **The Sahitya Akademi Library :**

The Sahitya Akademi set up a library on its premises in New Delhi in 1956, with the object of building up a national centre for the study of Indian and world literature, and making it a clearing house for information on bibliographic and literary matters.

The Haksar Committee feels that the library has been providing useful technical support to the Akademi in respect of its symposia and workshops, monographs, journals, and compilations including the Encyclopaedia of Indian Literature. It also provides borrowing, copying and free reading facilities to the public, and counts many scholars, research students and eminent writers among the regular users. The library has recently launched a valuable six-monthly Indian literary index of articles, reviews and reports appearing in a substantial set of journals and newspapers. It has started preparing subject-wise

bibliographies of its holdings, which are sent to selected literary institutions and personalities. It answers queries received, and in some cases furnishes photocopies of material to users outside Delhi.

The contents of the library, however, are not uniformly rich in respect of all the languages recognized by the akademi. The largest section is that of English and there are good sets of books in Bengali, Hindi, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu. but there are lacunae in languages like Assamese, Gujarati, Marathi and Oriya, apart from which the literary output is not very large. There are no specific language-wise allocation of funds for acquiring books.

The activity of addition to the stocks is overseen by a Book Acquisition Advisory Committee, consisting of the Secretary of the Akademi, the librarian, and senior members of the Akademi's staff. Suggestions for acquisitions can be initiated by any member of the committee, or by members of the General Council and Executive Board, the heads of the akademi's three regional officers, or by scholars who use the library. In the acquisition committee appears to rely exclusively on the Language Members of the Executive Board. But their contributions have been uneven. The

inadequate familiarity of the library staff with some of the languages seems to be a handicap, affecting the services rendered to users.

The instrument of the Language Advisory Board, which is an innovation of the Sahitya Akademi, does not appear to be associated at all with the library's affairs. Offering advice in the matter of acquiring books in the concerned language should be an important function of each Advisory Board. There must be a specific allocation of funds in respect of each language, and an equitable distribution of resources. Unless the section on every Indian language recognized by Sahitya Akademi is constantly reinforced, the library cannot hope to fulfil its mandate of being a national centre for the study of literature.

The report found that the audio-visual material available in the library was rather meagre. The Akademi should take the initiative to produce recorded readings of their own works by eminent authors, especially poets, and to have facilities for their easy access to public. This could be done in collaboration with Akashvani and Doordarshan.

While the standards of house-keeping and services maintained by the library at present are good, there is

an urgent need to modernise the equipment and facilities. A computerized storage and retrieval system is essential if the library is to keep pace with the requirements of the massive information base which the Akademi must build up progressively. Ambitious projects like the Encyclopaedia of Indian Literature, which would need regular updating and corrections cannot be implemented efficiently unless manual methods are replaced by word processors. The report recommends that the Akademi should take early steps to identify the precise requisites of comprehensive data bank suitable for its specific purposes.

#### **Language Advisory Boards :**

In the case of the Sahitya akademi, there is a system of setting up a Language Advisory Board for each of the twenty-two recognised languages, corresponding to the term of each General Council. This is not provided for in the constitution of the Akademi, but is a device adopted by it for securing wider association with distinguished persons in respect of each language and its literature.

No specific rules have been framed by the Akademi for the constitution of these bodies, but a certain

practice has been established over the year; Each Language Advisory board consists of ten members. the person who is selected by the General Council of the Akademi to be a member of the Executive Board to represent that language (referred to hereafter as the Language Member of the Executive board, for convenience) becomes the Convenor of the concerned Language advisory Board ex officio. For selecting the other members of the Board, the Convenor is requested to prepare a list including writers and scholars including all the members of the General Council who can be identified with the given language, also ensuring that there is adequate representation of library sub-zones and viewpoints, as well as at least one woman writer. The Executive Board selects the other members of the Advisory Board from this list, invariably including the members of the General Council who figure in it.

What is in effect happening is that there is a overlapping of membership of the apex bodies like the General Council, Executive Board etc. into bodies like the Language Advisory Boards, all written a centralised hierarchial structure so the same set of members just alternate between these bodies keeping within the

boundaries of decision making. Also, what was not clarified by the Haksar report is that how does the Akademi ensure adequate representation of literature sub-zones when the majority of the members are from General Council.

The Language Members of the Executive Board and the other members of the General Council being selected from panels submitted by the literary associations, universities and State Governments, the inclusion of these persons in the Advisory Board may be considered by and large to be in conformity with the intention of the Akademi as clarified in its own statement quoted above. but these members are in conspicuous minority in most of the Advisory Boards, as may be seen from details shown in Appendix 20 to this Report. In the case of seventeen languages, it is one to three; in the case of two languages there are none; and in the case of three languages there are four to six. Therefore, in most cases a large majority of the Advisory Board members are nominated mainly on the basis of the suggestions made by its Convenor.

As mentioned earlier, the Convenor of each Advisory Board happens to be on the Executive Board of the Akademi; and since most of its other members are



not likely to know his language, in matters relating to that language his views are often likely to carry decisive weight in that forum. It is not surprising that the dominant part which the Convenor plays in selecting the majority of members in the Language Advisory Board often gives rise to fears about under concentration of power and self-perpetuation.

Also in actual practice contribution of Language Advisory Boards has not been insignificant.

Each board normally meets only once a year, and that too for a single day, sometimes spending not more than half a day on its business (Appendix 21 would illustrate this aspect). In this short spell it seeks to dispose of a large assortment of important issues on the agenda, such as the Akademi's publication and translation programmes, seminars and symposia, recognition of literary organizations, etc. Evidently there cannot be any detailed discussions and review.

In regard to an important aspect of the Akademi's work, namely the identification and short-listing of books for the akademi's literary awards, the concerned Language Advisory Board has no collective role to play, though its members are individually consulted in the preparation of panels of experts who are associated

with the process of evaluation, and in the initial screening of books.

On the one hand, the discretion vested in the Convenor to narrow down the choice of Advisory Board members is obviously too restrictive. On the other hand, widening the scope of consultation on an individual basis (as in the awards procedure) has the paradoxical result of bestowing the Akademi's Secretariat with the power to choose from a very large and diffused set of recommendations. The Report feels that what is required is a judicious combination of individual and common counsel, and that an unduly secretive approach is not a desirable thing.

The Haksar Committee report suggests that the method of forming the Language Advisory Boards would need amendment. It would be desirable to frame a specific set of rules in this regard. We see no objection to the Language Member of the Executive Board becoming ex officio the convenor of the Advisory Board, as at present. The members of the General Council identified with a particular language may also continue to be nominated as members of the Advisory Board for that language. But in the matter of selecting its other members not merely the Convenor but

all the other members of the General Council identified with the language may be consulted. Suggestions in this regard may also be invited initially from the Sahitya Akademis or equivalent institutions in the recognized literary associations. The composition of the Boards may be got approved by the General Council of the Akademi. It also recommends that these Language Advisory Boards be mentioned in the constitution of the Sahitya Akademi to give them a double and permanent part with their status and functions properly defined.

#### Literary Association

The Sahitya Akademi has accorded recognition to various literary associations in the country and these have an important part to play in its affairs. One member of the Akademi's General Council to represent each of the recognized languages is selected from panels of eminent literary persons furnished by these associations. suggestions for preparing the ground lists of deserving books for the Akademi's awards are invited from the associations. Their collaboration is sometimes sought in organizing seminars and literary meetings.

These associations ought to be a source of

strength to the Akademi in formulating and implementing its various programmes. But in reality the credentials of many of them are not clear; and in the matter of according recognition to such bodies, the Akademi has been facing problems which have still not been fully sorted out.

In 1985 the Akademi constituted a committee chaired by the eminent writer, Shri Vishnu Prabhakar, to formulate a fresh set of criteria for recognition and to review the status of the existing recognized associations. The Akademi promptly adopted the criteria recommended by the Committee. Among the norms are that the eligible literary association should be a registered society of at least ten years' standing; that it must concern itself with the literature of the region as a whole and that it should have a reliable source of income by way of Government grants or endowments, also have some publications of its own. New applicants are expected to submit their memoranda of association, annual reports and edited accounts through the concerned Language Advisory Board of the Akademi, and the Board's endorsement would be necessary for recognition. All recognized associations are to submit their annual reports to the Akademi for scrutiny.

The member of Literary Associations recognised by the Sahitya Akademi (till 1990) are shown in Appendix-22 of this text.

The list shows that in the case of three languages (Assamese, Oriya and Telugu) there is only one recognized association. Eight languages have two or three associations each and nine have four or five each. Hindi has eight recognised associations. English has none.

Also as one may notice that a large majority of the State Sahitya Akademis or equivalent institutions do not figure in the list of literary associations recognized by the Sahitya Akademi. Only those in Jammu & Kashmir, Kerala Manipur, Punjab and Rajasthan have gained recognition; and, as pointed out earlier, the last named is excluded from the Rajasthani section in the current list. Thus, the Sahitya Akademi does not have the benefit of associating most of its counterparts in the States and Union Territories in matters as its literary awards and the constitution of its General Council.

#### **Fellows of the Akademi**

The highest honour of the Sahitya Akademi, as

given its constitution, provides for the election of literary persons of outstanding merit as 'Fellows' of the Akademi, subject to not more than one at any given time. They are elected by the General Council. However, after their election, these fellows do not contribute to the Akademi in any way through their literature, works, literary or expertise or experience in knowing the problems and sensibilities of writers better etc. The Haksar Committee Report has recommended "to associate them with the Akademi's administration" (P.75). Although how these accomplished scholars would be sound administrators or in which branch or at which level of execution they are to be associated with was not clarified.

Further, even though the Akademi constitution provides for the election of up to five honorary fellows for personalities so far in twenty two years only one person, Dr. Leohold Senghor (French) has been made an Honorary Fellow.

Worst still is the case for Associate Fellows. This category provides for the election of fifty fellows, but till date not even a single Associate Fellow has been elected.

In any case, with the inclusion of a category of "Associate" Fellows, there seems to be a hierarchy even in conferring recognition to eminence (!) The Haksar Report has suggested well in deleting this category altogether.

#### **Regional Offices and Boards :**

The Sahitya Akademi has set up three regional offices: In Calcutta (bookings after publication and work programmes in Assamese, Bengali, Manipuri, Oriya, English and Tibetan); Madras (for Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu and English); and Bombay (for Gujarati, Marathi, Konkani, Sindhi, English and Hindi); set up in 1956, 1959 and 1972 respectively. These offices have been trying to coordinate activities of regional writers, and making the effort to sell the Akademi's publications. However, very few know of these offices and their activities and their impact is almost negligible.

Creating more offices on similar lines, as the Haksar report mentions, could only lead to more paraphenelia without any impact on the literary scene. So may be either investing strengthening their network or making them common cultural centres, which can be sponsored jointly by the three National Akademis in

collaboration with State Governments and their Akademis as well as the Zonal cultural centres, would be a better solution.

For promoting inter-regional studies and conferences the Sahitya Akademi has also constituted four Regional Boards (Eastern, Western, Northern and Southern), which have been organising occasional seminars and literary meets. The convenors of the Language Advisory Boards are also members of these Boards. But due to paucity of funds their activities too have been paralysed.

#### **Seminars and Grants**

The Akademi has been organising national (and international) seminars since 1961, apart from various other symposia, writers meets, literary workshops etc. The Akademi's annual 'Samratsar' lectures and occasional 'Meet the Author' programmes are organised in the capital.

But these activities are concentrated in New Delhi only and do not reach the majority of the audiences in the whole of India.



Also since 1976, the Akademi has been having a scheme of giving travel grants to writers to enable them to visit regions other than their own. But the number and amounts of these grants is so meagre that invariably they defeat their purpose of existence and the writers end up paying from their pockets.

#### **Language Development :**

The structuring of good literature rests on well developed language. India has a spectrum of languages developed in literature. Hence the Sahitya Akademi which the Haksar Committee Report calls "an institution dealing with literature", in its constitution imposes on itself such tasks as preparing basis vocabularies and dictionaries, developing scripts of various Indian languages and promoting the use of the Devanagri script.

Besides the fifteen languages enumerated in the Constitution of India, the Sahitya Akademi has a policy of according recognition to other Indian languages also. As mentioned earlier, it has so far recognized six of them, as well as English (Refer to Appendix-17).

Currently it faces demands for the recognition of some other languages like Avadhi, Bhojpuri, Khasi,

Ladakhi, and Magahi, In Himachal Pradesh, there have efforts to consolidate various dialects spoken in the hilly areas of the State into a single entity called the Pahari language, encouraged by the Himachal Academy for Art, Culture and Languages. However, certain "linguistic, social and literary" criterias have been adopted by the Sahitya Akademi in regard to the recognition of languages. For example, in order to "qualify" for recognition, a language should be used by a large number of people as a "vehicle of literary and cultural expression", among other things. The Haksar Committee Report (1990) (p.78, Paragraph 4.100). For this, the Akademi in 1985 constituted a Language Advisory Board which concerns itself with the publication of folk love collections, grammars, dictionaries etc.

Consequently, there are two more criterias for recognition stipulated by the Akademi which need more attention.

Firstly, the Akademi stipulates that a language must have a "Standardized form" and secondly it should have a "continuous literary tradition and active literary institutions". Now, interestingly it was the same year (1985) in which the Sahitya Akademi

constituted this Language Advisory Board in which the following incidence took place :

In 1985, Haryana Sahitya Akademi achieved a distinction of sorts, when it published a one ever of its kind "Haryanvi-Hindi Kosh". Two eminent Hindi scholars Dr. Hardev Bahri from Allahabad and late Pandit Sathanu Datt of Kurukshetra.

It was a collection of Hindi-Haryanvi words and their Hindi equivalents. Dr. Kaushik revealed different aspects of Haryanas "Sub language ..... it would be of great use to students and scholars".

Between 1985 and 1992 - the Government gave into the powerful Jat lobby's pressure, politics at instigation of some scholars who wanted to deprive Dr. Kaushik of a rightful claim and convened a Jat Sabha in Rohtak. This later was joint by few more Jat Sabha's. Their main objection was on the usage of the word 'Jat'. No scholar of Hindi or Haryanvi raised this objection. The vote concious Government (as the Jats constitute the major vote catchment area in Haryana) banned it on pretext that the literature on pages 285-286 and 296-297 constitutes an offence punishable under Section 153A of Indian Penal Code, 1860. At it

attempts to promote disharmony, ill-will, hatred between different committees !!

What kind of work, then, does a largely Government funded institution like the Sahitya Akademi propose to do when on one hand it lays down centralised policy objections for itself and its state affiliates and on the other hand these state appendixes are quite helpless when State Government politicians and other powerful lobbies start dictating their vested interests with little or no concern left for the very purpose for which such cultural institutions were founded or for their activities for which meagre state funds are spared. When such instances occur one wonders whether the Akademi's proclamation like giving recognition to such language (and attempting to work for their development) which "have a continuous literary tradition" (whatever even it means) really hold any significance at all or are mere rhetorical statements.

Rakshat Puri in an article in Hindustan Times titled 'Scrap the Akademis' makes an argument for the unnecessarily existence and purpose of the three National Akademis the SA, SNA & LKA, on the whole. Puri says that 'The Lalit Kala especially has invited considerable rielicule for the levels of its exhibition

and its curious selection for award giving'. Hence, as suggested into the Sahitya Akademi, the Lalit Kala Akademi and Sangeet Natak Akademi too may be transformed into extensive libraries, archives and studios providing material assistance and facilities for artists, musicians, scholars, playwrights, actors, directors etc. Here too the government could encourage and scoop incentives to private industries or groups which care to assist and institute awards.

Yes, there could be a whole amount of truth in what the above argument says but it should at the same tune be enumerated that in all this talk of liberal on democracy and to end aristocracy and value judgements in the production of art works, one should remember that the corporate world would such interest in a project or cause preferably, if not necessarily only then some amount of benefit in return - whether in the short run whether it is not so evidently seen in the long run, whether it is monetary or just the binding their name, prestige or image. One could say then that the Government too would do the same as an act of nothing more than charity to enhance its 'social welfare' image considering the amount allotted in each annual budget to cultural interest activities and organ on as compared to other higher priority sector of the

economy. Yet if we consider for a moment what alternatives one has in a city where the post state from its very inception has developed a habit to define, organise and control the welfare of the people, almost each aspect of citizen - civil - life. Thus to consider an alternative in private sponsorship of Art practice in the context of gradually diminishing state funds which in any case have been pledged to repay the IMF debt if not concentrate on more wanting areas of development would be a very predictable if not inevitable line of consideration, if not deliberation.

To conclude this chapter one can argue that the Sahitya Akademi has definitely made a sincere effort towards the propogation of its aims as mentioned in its constitution (See Appendix - 1). However, it does need to concentrate more on its state level affiliates enhancing their activities, not just of towns and cities but even districts and villages to take cognisance of talent with diverse levels of cognition and sensibilities. even at the central level there are a host of problems which are waiting and wanting thorough and immediate solutions, some of which have been recommended by the Haksar report. In any case, the time is right to translate many of the suggestions

of articulate artists and the report into reality for the Government today is envisaging the formulation of a National Culture Policy now. It is this important to keep the aspirations and expectations of writers, for whom the Akademi was established in the first place.

The argument that are trying to make is simply this. Comparative scales (in view of state institutionalisation of different spheres of the society) not only helps nations to benefit from the knowledge, experience, understanding, comprehension and expertise of one another but they also helping knowing the 'self' (weaknesses and strengths) better, by looking, comparing and learning by those of the 'other'. And may be this method of state institutionalisation which India borrowed from the west was suited for the mixed economy pattern that it adopted (and conducive to various mixed economy functions like those of the public and corporate sectors, industry, resource mobilisation and allocation, distribution and networking of 'goods and service', managing giant mineral enterprises, etc.); but if the state, after it established various art promotion bodies (like the Akademis) tended to apply the same organisational structure (of centralised control and decision-making, resource allocation and responsibility delegation,

hierarchy, etc.) for these institutions as well, then maybe this could be a major reason why these National Akademis and other such institutions) have not been able to achieve what they were set out to do [at least of their constitutions (Refer to Appendix - 1 of this text)], that is, critical art production through various Akademi activities and funds, specifically and evolution of a more literate and cultured civility, generally, (official discourse calls this the fostering of "Cultural Unity" of India). One could suggest then, that instead of having National Art Akademis with their bureaucratic branches in many states, an alternative, perhaps a more democratic one would be to demarcate different ART ZONES throughout the country based on common beliefs, practices, forms of congregation and celebration, dress and language, etc. these Art Zones could then have one Art Akademi each with branches spread out within the zone if need be. They could get the same state help and sponsorship of funding could be open to all patrons including the corporate world within defined parameters to avoid confrontation and exploitation on either side as the Haksar Committee Report has suggested. As artists are always influenced by the responses, pull and pressures of regional parties, practices and other production, these Art



Zones would be nearer to the pulse of all the art forms prevalent in their regions, recruited thereby from the grass roots of that region. Then may be many art forms which have been ignored by these studio Art Akademis like Tamasha and Nautankies or Street Theatre which could now get their due. And there may be any Art forms which have not been considered under Art Practice at all, like basket weaving. Folk and Miniature Paintings or Chola Brozes which then would hold enough attention, for at least being identified as 'Art'.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### In Conclusion

On adamant our wrongs we all engrave,  
But write our benefits upon the wave.

--- William King,  
'The Art of Love', 1917

This study started with the observation that the Government of India has had no explicit policy on Culture till now. But it has been formulating implicit official statements and proposals from time to time for the production of Art and Culture in the country which has reflected mainly two things. Firstly, that there is a certain perspective of the Government on matters of Art and Culture. And secondly, within this policy perspective the Government has framed certain objectives for the legislation of the above mentioned task. For these objectives to be fulfilled, it has executed certain 'Actions'. The attempt throughout this chaotic endeavour has been to study these Actions. One such Act of the Government saw the establishment of a vast institutional infrastructure for the assistance and promotion of certain kind of Art practice in the country. A study of some of such institutions in turn has been relevant in three ways:

Firstly, the potentialities of these implicitly stated objectives (their successes, deficiencies and failures) have all been reflected to some extent in many of the claims and proposals of the constitutions of these institutions. However an evaluation of these objectives has not been attempted though a critical reading of and the reasons for a, particular policy

orientation within which these objectives were set out has been inevitable.

Secondly, these institutions were established for the promotion and assistance of certain kinds of Art practice. This gave a fair idea of what the Government meant and saw as Art.

Thirdly, a study of the role and functioning of these institutions over the years, their aims and goals, their programmes and grants would probably give some idea about the hurdles of administering culture in a vast sub-continent like India. Hence this study attempted to concentrate on, (among the prominent Government funded institutions) the three National Akademis of Art situated in the capital, namely, the Sahitya Akademi, the Lalit Kala Akademi and the Sangeet Natak Akademi. The reason why these Akademis were chosen was because, firstly, they were not only one of the first to be established after 1947, thus reflecting the initial policy intentions of the Government but also because these were institutions of a national character, not just by virtue of their having a whole network of state Akademis but even in terms of the Government's priority for allocation of funds and other resources to them. More specifically, Chapter One

starts with relevance and importance of a redefinition of Culture in today's life in order to recognize and inculcate the creative capacity to progress, to differ from and collaborate with each other. It talks about the Indian Government's larger - than - life role in shaping the physical infrastructural environment which could render possible the growth of such potentialities. This brings one to the structural hurdles of administering such a diverse Culture of different regions, languages, histories and even economic disparities. To counter such difficulties official cultural discourse has attempted to subsume all contradictions within a unitary position or an 'integral view' of Indian culture like 'unity in diversity' or a 'composite culture' etc. (This view finds more elaboration in the Second Chapter). This has not only marginalised cultural discourse from mainstream national life by safely packing it in Government departments under the Ministry of Human Resource Development, but it has also (as a consequence of this) led to a loss of our own cultural identity or what this constitutes. One may observe that the Indian Government too may be responsible for this to some extent. On one hand the Government professed the inextricable 'authenticity', the uniqueness, the

richness of a Culture of a civilization which dates back as one of the earliest, on the other hand, as a consequence of this, Indian Culture came to possess museumatic value, the Culture of a past age which implied that modern Indian life had to develop and create a sort of Culture which would be nearer to the kind prevailing in western nations. Modern Indian Art practices had no place for art forms like handicraft production, weaving, pottery, nautanki performances, street or 'tamasha' forms of Theater etc. What symbolised Art of modern India was the kind of Art production that was indulged in at the state sponsored National Akademis of art and literature. The argument then further talks about firstly, the kind of art which was promoted in these Akademis, which was more individualistic, personalised as opposed to the Indian concept of 'commune' Art and secondly the need of bring the concept of the Community back into cultural discourse in order to bring marginalised Art practice into mainstream national life, and indigenise much of "affluent" Art for the masses, if nothing more.

Chapter two is a general commentary on the state of the prevailing cultural scene. It talks of some of the issues which need to be seen and probably seen with a renewed perspective.

The main claims of chapter two are: Art practice in general has been marginalised from main stream national life. This is mainly because of two reasons. First, those forms of Art practice were sponsored, propagated and supported by the state which were in any case produced by an urban minority - like those forms prevalent in the three National Akademis. And second, the other forms of Art production like folk or tribal paintings, literature, Theater of the villages practised by the majority of India, in any case remained unseen by the state, fought at a subsistence level to survive. Hence the forms of Art production that found state support did not effect the majority of India which resided in the villages and the forms of Art production which belonged to the villages got very little state support, or in many cases, none at all.

But there were other reasons why matters of Art and Culture got marginalised. The kind of Art activity supported by the state, was individualized, personalized, and that dimension of Art which was essentially participatory (and characteristically Indian) got relegated most of participatory Art activity was manifest in India's traditions and in a sense of community living and practice. Both these

concepts have been evolved over time. So until we attempt to revive these two conceptions, these two ways of living in society, starting with values inculcated by them in Indian, indigenous Art practice (values like cooperation, mutual complementarity in work and belief, tolerance, a sense of identity and belonging to the collectivity etc.), we cannot successfully hope to do two things. First, we would not be able to indigenise the kind of Art practice prevalent in the premier national institutions of Art promotion in the country, the Akademis, adapting them to native requirements and sensibilities and hence making these institutions truly accessible to the masses (an aspiration with which these Akademis were founded upon in the first place and for which the major chunk of state funds were allocated). And second we would not be able to grapple with the problem which has come up with the undermining of Indian National identity as a consequence of the use of parochial, casteist, chauvinistic and communal tendencies. For until the concept of the National permeates all regions in India alike, in spite of their differences, one cannot hope to revert this trend. For Art is integrally connected with the expression of identity of a people and the concept of Indian Art with a National Character (which was sought to be



perpetuated by the Akademis and which was to reach out to all the states) can only hope to successfully do so if these Akademis are able to take into their folds the recognition and support of many of the prevailing Art forms of the states and villages which they have not considered till now. For example, the tribal Art forms the Chotanagpur plateau in Bihar, the Tamasha of Gujrat and the Ektara street singers of Bengal or the Chitrakathi form of folk puppet theatre of Maharashtra etc. For indigenous Art production, like in these Art forms, has had a conscious recognition that an inculcation of aesthetic values manifest in our Art practice; celebration of life and traditions, mark an important stage of evolution of the inner individual and an indispensable vehicle for creating an atmosphere of harmony and peace for the outer individual. This view embodied in such concepts permeated the being of the artist and audience alike which led to Art being a strictly personal activity as well as an essentially participatory one. India today seems to have lost track of this second form of cultural production. Hence, then may be today there is a need to look at culture in a more rational way, a way which is able to keep pace with today's changed circumstances as well as draw confidence from what we have built in our past.

In order to make culture an essentially participatory activity and bring the concept of Community back into cultural discourse (as talked about in chapter one), there is a need to talk about renovating the concept of tradition to attempt to stop the collapse of the National and the reassertion of the Regional in the forms of communal passions.

Also because tradition may possess those cultural values like cooperation, tolerance etc. which are also manifest in Art practice and have all be perfected and refined overtime to be epistemologically connected to the great reservoir of wisdom and knowledge which forms the cognitive base of each nation. And for this there is a need to relate to the conceptual thinking of a vigorous body of tradition which has been the central repetitive noting of the Indian pattern of living and organization of each different state. There is a need to recognize this reality which is so diverse and only on the basis of which can we truly hope to a National character of a diverse subcontinent like India.

Chapter Three, then talks about the darker side of the Indian socio-cultural situation, its weak and soft spots, especially regarding the states habit of attempting peace meal solutions. More specifically, to

space out the dynamics of modern Indian policies, this chapter attempts to look at the functions for which the Indian state was born and exactly what it can or cannot do. It goes into the impact of these functions on the Indian people and the frame of mind with which they accepted the state. The process of creation of the Indian state was different from that of other countries. The sovereignty of the Indian State was two layered; that is, it enjoyed great ceremonial eminence, but in fact, had fairly delimited powers of interfering with the social segment's internal organisation, its classic relation with the society being in terms of tax and rent. This double image interestingly stayed after independence also. Another thing that stayed ironically was the externality of state's power to bring a series of basic changes. Hence the state has remained external in two sense. Not merely as coming from outside the interwoven processes and practices of society but also in its being fundamentally alien in its social conceptualization. For example certain 'ways' of the colonial power stayed even after independence -- ways of living, dress, congregation, ethics, values, social stratification and a new economic mode of accessibility to resources of the country. However independent Indian state could not

occupy its state of eminence at the cost of its traditional marginality. It had to be socially involved in society in order to be able to introduce its modern policies and yet maintain its externality because of the advantageous overpowering capacity of this position. In other words, the acceptance of modernity or any policy legislature for the same came to be associated in a historically ineradicable connection with unfamiliarity and subjection. Social transformation in any sphere proposed by structural transformations whether as policy prescriptives for Art practice or legal reform, came to be viewed as a new way of conceiving the political world which had links with Anglicized western European tradition and came to the Indian masses in the form of official legal doctrines through the affluent English educated elite. Hence all Governments moves to either establish Art promotion institution or economic reforms (to give an example), were seen as coercive, alien and external which usually gave rise to two typical attitudes towards them.

One was of apathy and the other was of hostility. It is important to talk about this for the success or failure of any policy proposal, Government action or institution, depended upon public response towards it in the long run. For example, even though these

Akademis entertained only certain Art practices, the Government still channelised large, amounts of state funds through them to reach the people. Now with this kind of legacy that state policy had in the country, then even these limited forms of Art practice would not be able to do justice to their potentialities. Then what in effect would happen, is that the Government of a poor country like India could be spending increasingly on the maintenance of the prevalent infrastructure of cultural institutions as well as on establishment of new ones, with little purpose being solved.

But there was another reason which led to this trend. Like the colonial rulers, independent India's policy makers too failed to grasp that the cultural space of Indian society, just like the organisation of traditional Indian society itself, was hierarchiacal, divided between high and subaltern cultures, masked together in a web of cultural complementarity in belief, practice and production, bounded on all sides by subtle barriers and codes of confidentiality. Neither were they able to perceive that these so presumed lower order ideas (mainly identified with those of districts and villages), discourses, modes of

art practice, cultural production, symbols of social living, rituals etc. were not badly done versions of high culture characteristic of princely states and urban towns), not the lack of absence of higher (urban) discourses in the majority of India (in the villages, art practice of villages for instance) but a very different one whose rules, codes, emphasis, ironies - had a place of their own. And may be then the very first task which Indian policy makers should have embarked upon for the promotion of art practice in India was left unachieved at the very outset when they failed to see that just as the feelings, pain and joy of the art practice of urban culture was not gathered by that of the rural (folk, tribal etc), the intricacies, skills, inflexions of the lower were also unavailable to higher culture. It insulated out the cultural instruction coming from the top. Hence any policy proposal on art and culture did not comprehend the multi layered variations and sensitivities of Indian Art production. So the National Akademis only drew upon that kind of art production which was urban and could now be associated with the new westernised elite English speaking class of Indians. Their forms of art practice could now be seen as 'modern' and could be represented through a set of new institutions (like

the Akademis) which were operable and intelligible only if they worked through these new 'modern' discourses of the elites or through the new alphabet of social reasoning which had to be carried forth by the urbanities into lower, less enlightened orders of society, prevalent for example in the kind of art production of the villages. But it is time today that any policy perspective of the government on matters of art and culture, to change, be more accessible and open to a variety of art sensibilities and representations.

This Chapter, apart from talking about the deficiencies in the perception of a policy on art and culture, also goes into some of the structural hurdles of implementation of specific art promotional programmes in a centralized internal structure of administration, the misconstrual of policies at the point that matters most, the final point of implementation which is very low down in the bureaucracy. The centralization of political authority in all spheres of institutional arrangements has tended to propagate irresponsible power, nepotism, corruption.

Chapter Four, specifically focuses on an effort made by the Government of India, perhaps for the first time, on its intention of drafting an explicitly

"National Policy on Culture" by the legislation of an "Approach Paper" which talked about "specific objectives" of the Government for the creation of a National Culture Policy. Hence this chapter is about the Indian Government's policy orientation on the threshold of such a proposed formulation. The argument is that in spite of the fact that cultural policy issues have been integral and important to the country, the Indian Government till date has been quite indifferent to the existence and importance of a culture Policy (this however does not adhere to a view that formulating a policy on a specific area is an inevitable solution of the promotion and progress of the same, nor a guarantee, that specific programmes designed within policy guidelines are manifest with assured success in implementation, not overlooking the possibility of deficiencies in the policy itself). Like cultural policy for other areas, cultural policy for the arts raises both constructive and instrumental policy issues. Constitutive policy issues arise from art's capacity to create and inculcate languages for meaning and beauty that shape a nation's world view and identity apart from other things. Yet an explicit cultural policy for the arts operates without a clear policy mandate and lacks coherent policy guidance under



the Department of Culture in the Ministry of Human Resource Development. Neither the cabinet nor the Parliament have found means or created the occasions to formulate or endorse cultural policy generally. Policy then has emerged ad-hoc and piecemeal through administrative actions that reflect, (for most part) the views and preferences of administrative officials or those dependent on them. For example, the three National Akademis were administrative creations. The three National Review Committee on the role and functioning of the Akademis (Bhabha in 1964 Khosla in 1974 and Haksar in 1990) in spite of their recommendations and assessments have had little impact on official doctrine and practise, knowledgeable practitioners of the arts have had a very nominal say in culture policy proposals or programmes and less evident in organisational roles. The nominally autonomous Akademis have remained under official tutelage and control with a system of government nomination of their key decision-making posts and official staffing of their secretariats and executive bodies. Indian artistic and intellectual activity is multiple in style and form. There is a need for a culture policy which attempts to propagate an intimate knowledge of India's great and little traditions with an attempt to utilise

available resources in ways that strengthen India's shared if not common future and afford opportunities for these multiple paths preserving what is old and valued but dying as well as what is new, less understood and essential for national identity and confidence. Performing, visual and literacy art can create this confidence and may even shape national identity. Hence there is an urgent need today for any government policy perspective on art and culture to take into account all such above mentioned problems and trends in the field, on one hand, and on the other hand; there is also a need for the Indian artistic community of practitioners to develop forms and channels of countervailing pressure and power that can effectively represent their common interests or else the government may continue to pursue a policy for the arts in its accustomed parantastic, patrimonial, patronising manner.

This chapter further attempts to analyse some aspects of the Approach Paper which is divided into three distinct sections on a specific orientation, specific objectives and plan of action. The general proposition has been to relate "Culture" to the type of the people and as a part of the states "Development" endeavour. It also admits to a deficiency in its

previous policy orientation divorcing culture from "Development" and its not being commensurate with the "broad social needs" and "intrinsic values" to improve the quality of life. Although the paper does acknowledge the role and importance of this much neglected dimension of cultural activity in national life and the need to readjust its significance, it also clearly marks out the area of public intervention in culture i.e. "The Role of the State in Culture which has to be readjusted".

Part two of the Approach Paper entitled "Objectives" talked about an attempt to deliberate a blue print for areas which need attention and public support by individuals, agencies and the communities at all levels such as Panchayats, local bodies, etc. It also suggested better coordination of infrastructural facilities to provide multi points for promotion, funds, etc.

Although part three talked about the states definite responsibility for the purpose, yet to avoid "direct state intervention" it proposed the establishment of another statutory body called the "Bhartiya Sanskriti Parishad".

However, even though the Government is making an effort, the task of policymaking in our country faces a multiplicity of problems. Apart from other structural bodies like dearth of funds, facilities, opportunities to a vast majority of deserving talent, the problem of the influence of artists on policies of patronage which could only be (not in a healthy democratic and procedural way) but depending upon their access to positions of political power and authoritative decision makers, there is also the issue of what the state sees as "Culture of the People", i.e. Popular Culture. There have been mainly two shifts in the state's view of Popular Culture. Before, say two years back (1990-92) the state tried to define and disseminate a certain kind of image of "Culture of the people and culture by the people" which it called Popular. Therefore it was obliged to disseminate culture for the people by giving direction to culture of the people, i.e. popular Culture. This Popular Culture the state saw in opposition to Akademi Culture whose representations and texts were authorised by the elites. The emphasis, especially since 1985 has been on "Sponsoring operations" according to bureaucratic procedures for regional performing arts and performances by folk, tribal, village (etc.) professional artists. For

example, this new orientation ushered in a distinctive forces on, the much neglected local representation at the National level Art and culture show - the state's organisation of a relay of utsav, tribal and folk art and theatre, establishment of Zonal Cultural Centres for the same, etc. Now this was quite a welcome move in regions which did not have state Akademis (see Appendix) but even in such regions many of the functions of these government departments got duplicated with the newly established Zonal Centres. So the government, because it viewed popular culture as opposed to Akademi culture, sought to spend increasingly on building more and more institutions with adequately staffed bureaucrats (for one art form as opposed to the other) without integrating efforts for the promotion of different art forms (whether Akademi or folk) so these policy shifts which focused on the art forms of rural areas led more to a wastage of funds, money, time and efforts rather than anything else.

Today we see a substantial expansion in the meaning of popular to accommodate a very different kind of invasion in the socialisation process of the citizen, namely, the invasion ushered in by the

satellite electronic media. Today the government sees harlequin romances, melodramas, commercial television and cinema, etc. as Popular. This may not only have discredited the democratic authenticity of other (skilled) cultural objects and practises but also led to a comprehensive neglect of the art forms of the Akademis. The endeavour then is to build a case for the art and craft as also being of the people, i.e. popular and not something exclusive and inaccessible. Even though present class lives in culture are more complex today, Akademi art practise should not only inculcate other art production forms (talked of earlier) but also be bring them into manistream national conciousness and light.

For this probably a study of the role and aims of the Akademis seemed to be appropriate.

Hence Chapter Five is a review of the Haksar Committee Report (1990) in which one of the most prominent documents to study the role and functioning, the performance of the three National Akademis in recent times. This Chapter has been divided into three parts. Part one is a general introduction about the relevance of the report and some of its readings. It picks up the talk of decentralisation of authority and

delegation of responsibility by the National Akademis to their state level affiliates by the report; the contradictions and uneasiness of the report in its own statements and approaches; the general impression that a reader would get that the text probably needs another part to concretise its suggestions and enunciate a pragmatic work plan to make its recommendations a reality; the general inaccessibility of the document, etc. Part two of the chapter talked about some of the common issues identified by the report. On impact and interaction of the three Akademis on National life in general, the report admitted that their presence had not been adequately felt in different regions and they had remained essentially "Delhi oriented". However, this may be due to the insignificance of state affiliates and it forthcomingly suggests that close interaction and coordination between them. However, the details of how this is to be done are left unsaid again. Also one can see (Appendix-5) the majority of states do not have separate agencies to look after art activities. On basis of such vague recommendations it becomes a little difficult to foresee any such measure let alone reasserting the Khosla Committee reports recommendation of making state Akademis, autonomous. On allocation of grants by the National Akademis to the

states, it says they have been inadequate but talks of constraints of resources. The report recommends indirect grant allocation procedures by the Government, i.e. the government must concern itself with only major grants for creating and maintaining institutions, very special occasions like special endowments, centenaries, etc. While leaving other kind of grants offered to individuals or institutions to the Akademi.

The General Councils of the Akademi were to meet more regularly and have more state representatives, whereas the chairpersons were not only to be persons of "high eminence" in their respective fields but also be "sound administrators" possessing leadership qualities as well, inspite of the fact that the report talks of the need to introduce structural changes in the internal organisational functioning of the Akademi, especially for the post of the chairperson, making it one of "full authority", on a full time basis, it falls back into a typical performance of preferring the system of "appointment" by the Government rather than election to this most where even the artists could have had some say. It talks of the creation of infrastructural facilities as "not being adequate" and also the sharing of the expenses for the establishment of such facilities with the corporate sector within the



"framework of planned development" envisaged by the Government, of course. A new thrust to culture policy orientation saw zonal cultural centres (established by the seventh five year plan) getting funds and additional grants far beyond those envisaged initially, thus not only creating an "unhelpful contrast with other public funded cultural institutions in the states" but also working at cross purposes with them. Hence the report suggests two things. First that a part of the zonal centres fund should be kept aside for building more infrastructural facilities and second the state Akademis should take the responsibility of the organisation of tribal and folk performances. Hence the report overlooks that the mode of access of "Sangeet Natak" and "Lalit Kala" Akademis to tribal and folk forms is limited both conceptually as well as practically. \* Other drawbacks in the report's recommendations on zonal centres are : a duplication of efforts, money and resources on the task of documentation already being carried out by state Akademis, a cry of excess funds without going into their modes of precise channelisations or suggesting steps for defective procedures; concern about

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\* Refer to page 22 of this text

politicisation of official positions of these institutions, yet they suggest the chairman appointed by the Governor of the State; concern about the increasing staff strength of the Akademis on one side and the proposals to set up more cultural institutions (obviously with their staffs) on the other; the proposal of reducing disparities in the salaries of the functionaries and yet not proposing ways of either doing so or the means of disposing excess staff; the issue of licensing of performances; Government and Parliament scrutiny of financial and other records of the Akademis, etc. The Chapter also addresses the question of institutional autonomy of these institutions in light of strong Governmental ties in terms of grants, funds, organisation of events, etc. It talks of the creation of a National Endowment fund for the Akademis to which both the Government and private corporations can contribute. It has also talked about Indian artists being hopelessly in need of financial support what with limited state funds and the market with (more or less) self-regulating demand - supply mechanisms. This is especially the case with folk performers and painters which have managed to survive barely at a subsistence level. It is they who need state support. State support is also essential

for non-commercial ventures experimenting with new techniques and forms of presentation especially as lots of amiable art does badly. At first, its rewards to the patron are not immediate and may never come. Consequently the idea of a "Culture Fund" was suggested both by the Khosla Report (1972) and the Haksar. The difficulty in sustaining the autonomy may be due to their centralised administrative structures in the capital and a lot of political maneuvering for some of the decision-making posts. However if the President is "elected" instead of being nominated and artists get a chance to be more actively involved in policy decisions, among other things, it may help. Also there is continuous talk about the creation of "Specialists" in the field of art in the report. How it proposes that the Government should do that, one is left to wonder. For the furtherst, it can attempt is to give support to form in creativity. But within the form one has to leave ample space for individualised innovation; techniques of perfections of skills, etc. The Chapter then talks a little about the space for innovation and genius, especially in relation to Indian arts and the Akademis (and not just the report's) failure to recognise this. Hence much work is needed in reconstructing the model of National Akademis in terms

of the needs of the artists and people, rather than the state.

In Chapter Six, an attempt has been made to review the recommendations of the Haksar Committee Report in the light of the present role and functioning of the Sangeet Natak Akademi, and the Lalit Kala Akademi.

Briefly, Chapter Six talks about the particular orientation with which the Indian elites started on their path of national development and the peculiar context in which the concept of institutions of art promotion like the Akademis was imported into India. This Chapter has been mainly an attempt to emphasise on two things : Firstly, there was an amazing diversity of art practise prevalent in India before it got colonised, and even after it attained independence. This diversity sustained and nurtured art production at all levels of society, some of which flourished through voluntary efforts of the community over time and others crying for official sanction and assistance. However after independence very few structural changes were brought about in the already existing institutions to sensitise them to indigenous needs and requirements. The three National Akademis come into sharp focus here because they were inaugurated and projected as the

country's premier art promotion bodies after 1947. Hence part two of this Chapter talks of the creation of the National Akademi, the purpose for which they were envisaged, their role and functioning over the years, the need for indigenisation, their prevailing structural hurdles, programmes, their inefficiencies and achievements with special reference to the Sangeet Natak and Lalit Kala Akademi. Some of the functions of both these Akademi are taken up systematically to highlight inherent problems, inadequacies in functioning, management as well as in recommendations of the Haksar report. Functions like : Awards and fellowships, research and documentation, organisation of events, dissemination of material and information, publications, proliferation of festivals with regard to Sangeet Natak Akademi. And : organisation of exhibitions, the triennials, acquisition of art works, regional centres, art organisation, incentives to artists, etc. with regard to the Lalit Kala Akademi. Hence the Chapter claims that both the establishment of the art Akademi as well as the purpose for which they were established were actions which were to be seen within a larger attempt of nation - building, the modern way of organisation of civil society and its multiplicity of activities (including that of art

production) by the state. Hence the three essential tasks of the Akademis of Dance, Drama and Music had to be undertaken. First, Research, documentation, cataloguing and dissemination of material and information of various performing art forms prevalent in the country. Second : to coordinate performing art activities by organisation of largely Akademi funded events like competition, seminars, festivals, awards, etc. Third : an attempt to revitalise an interest in the arts by Government organised festivals and events.

On the other hand, the Akademi of plastic and visual arts, sought to aim wide but its programmes emphasis was mainly in two spheres i.e. of publication of available information, dissemination of material and of the organisation of events, exhibitions, workshops, seminars, etc.

Chapter Seven talks about the Sahitya Akademi in detail. It starts with the relevance of literature as an Art form, the legacy in which the Sahitya Akademi was founded (as being slightly different from that of the other two Akademis), the three essential programmes of the Akademi - namely, translations, publications and an attempt to popularise the reading of literary works. It also takes up the issue of the convention of

distributing literary awards, the dissatisfaction amongst the literate community on the selection procedure for the awards and the issue of election of the President. Some recommendations of the Haksar report in this regard, sumblings of discontentment amongst writers and some views expressed, the general deterioration of standards of the Akademi with regard to intial expectations and some reasons for it, the vital task of translations and the problems of executing this, the functioning of the Sahitya Library and the Language Advisory Boards at a decentralised level, the role and impact of literary associations and the programme for language development, the policy for fellows of the Akademi, regional offices of the Akademi, the issue of allocation Grants by the Akademi to individuals, institutions and activities, the efforts made towards language development, etc. A general reading of the study of the Sahitya Akademi then woud argue that the Sahitya Akademi has definitely made a sincere effort towards the propogation of its aims as embroidered in its constitution (See Appendix-I). However, it does need to concentrate more on its state level affiliates, enhancing their spectrum of activities which are not just limited to towns and cities, but even go down to the district level to take

cognisance of talented writers with diverse levels of cognition and sensibilities. Even at the central level there are a host of problems which are now wanting and waiting urgent solutions. Some of the Haksar report recommendations in this regard have been forthcoming and have been voiced consequently by many articulate writers thereafter. This would probably be the best time to translate them into reality while also keeping in view the aspirations and expectations of the writers, for whom the Akademi was established in the first place.

Hence, the main claim of the argument on the three National Akademis has been - if we attempt to skillfully apply modern criteria of better organisation, institutionalisation, administration, etc. to art forms in general then due to the comparative scales involved one comes into sharper relief with the west. But comparative scales of this sort help nations to benefit from the knowledge, experience, understanding and comprehension of one another. However, they may not be so beneficial when the Indian state tended to apply the same organisational structure of centralised control and decision making, resource allocation and responsibility delegation, hierarchy etc. for art promotion bodies



also. This may be a reason why strict centralised control of the Akademis in their manner of functioning has been a hurdle in many of the things they set out to achieve. Then may be a better suggestion could be complete decentralisation in the working criterias mentioned above or the formation of some sort of art zones throughout the country based on common belief, practises, forms of congregation, celebrations, dress, language etc. These zones then could have one art Akademi each with its branches spread out throughout the zone. It could open to sponsorship by both the state and the corporate world, thus also attempting to be more accessable to the majority of prevalent local talent and their Art forms. Only then could one probably envisage the Akademis to have reached into pulse of India and achieved most of its proclaimed objectives for which a major portion of state funds, facilities and resources are enhanced.

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**MAIN OBJECTIVES OF NATIONAL AKADEMIS & NATIONAL SCHOOL OF DRAMA**  
(extracts from their Constitutions)

**SAHITYA AKADEMI**

to promote co-operation among men of letters for the development of literature in Indian languages;

to encourage or to arrange translations of literary works from one Indian language into others and also from non-Indian into Indian languages and vice-versa;

to publish or to assist associations and individuals in publishing literary works, including bibliographies, dictionaries, encyclopaedias, basic vocabularies etc., in the various Indian languages;

to sponsor or to hold literary conferences, seminars and exhibitions on all-India or a regional basis;

to award prizes and distinctions and give recognition to individual writers for outstanding work;

to promote research in Indian languages and literature;

to promote the teachings and study of regional languages and literature in areas beyond their own;

to encourage propagation and study of literature among the masses;

(a) to improve and develop the various scripts in which the languages of the country are written;

(b) to promote the use of Devanagari script and to encourage publication in that script of select books in any Indian language;

(c) to publish, if found necessary, standard books of one Indian language in the scripts of other languages;

to promote cultural exchanges with other countries and to establish relations with international organizations in the field of letters.

**LALIT KALA AKADEMI**

to encourage and promote study and research in the fields of creative arts such as painting, sculpture, graphics, etc.;

to encourage and coordinate the activities of the regional art organisations and State Lalit Kala Akademis;

to promote cooperation among artists and art associations and development of such associations;

to encourage, where necessary, the establishment of regional art Centres;

to encourage the exchange of ideas between various schools of art by organising conferences, seminars, exhibitions on an all India basis, etc.;

to publish and to promote publication of literature on art including monographs, journals, etc.;

to establish and maintain a Library, catering to the needs of various organisations and covering world art;

to give recognition and to otherwise assist approved art associations;

to foster cultural contacts within the country and also with other countries, through art exhibitions exchange of personnel and art objects, etc.;

to award scholarships and prizes to deserving artists;

to accord recognition to artists for outstanding achievements;

to promote study, research and survey of folk, tribal and traditional art and crafts techniques, preserve and project their art forms and to organise regional surveys of and to encourage surviving indigenous craftsmen, painters and sculptors.

#### **SANGEET NATAK AKADEMI**

to co-ordinate the activities of regional or State Academics of music, dance and drama;

to promote research in the fields of Indian music, dance and drama and for this purpose, to establish a library and museum, etc.;

to co-ordinate with such similar Academics as there may be and other institutions and associations for the furtherance of its objects and for the enrichment of Indian culture as a whole;

to encourage the exchange of ideas and enrichment of techniques between the different regions in regard to the arts of music, dance and drama;

to encourage the establishment of theatre centres, on the basis of regional languages, and co-operation among different theatre centres;

to encourage the setting up of institutions providing training in the art of theatre, including instructions in actor's training, study of stage-craft and production of plays;

to encourage and assist production of new plays by awarding prizes and distinctions;

to publish literature on Indian music, dance and drama including reference works such as an illustrated dictionary or handbook of technical terms;

to give recognition to and otherwise assist meritorious, theatrical organisations;

to encourage the development of amateur dramatic activity, children's theatre, the open-air theatre and the rural theatre in its various forms;

to revive and preserve folk music, folk dance and folk drama in different regions of the country and to encourage the development of community music, matrilial music and other types of music;

to sponsor music, dance and drama festivals, seminars, conferences on an all-India basis and to encourage such regional festivals;

to award prizes and distinctions and to give recognition to individual artistes for outstanding achievement in the fields of music, dance and drama;

to take suitable steps for the maintenance of proper and adequate standards of education in music, dance and drama and with that object to organise research in the teaching of the said subjects;

to foster cultural contacts between the different regions of the country and also with other countries in the fields of music, dance and drama.



**STATE AKADEMIS AND EQUIVALENT/ALLIED INSTITUTIONS  
IN THE STATES/UNION TERRITORIES**

**(A) STATES**

Andhara Pradesh	Telugu University (perf. & visual arts; language & literature) Telugu Akademi (mainly text books)
Arunachal Pradesh	Nil
Assam	Nil
Bihar	Sangeet Natak Akademi Lalit Kala Akademi Hindi Rashtrabhasha Parishad Bangla Akademi Bhojpuri Akademi Magahi Akademi Maithili Akademi Urdu Akademi
Goa	Kala Akademi (perf. & visual arts) Konkani Akademi
Gujarat	Sangit Nritya Natya Akademi Lalit Kala Akademi Sahitya Akademi Sindhi Akademi Urdu Akademi
Haryana	Sahitya Akademi Urdu Akademi
Himachal Pradesh	Akademi of Arts, Culture and Languages (perf. & visual arts; language & literature)
Jammu & Kashmir	Akademi of Arts, Culture and Languages (perf. & visual arts; language & literature)
Karnataka	Sangeet Natak Akademi Lalit Kala Akademi Sahitya Akademi

Kerala	Sangeetha Nataka Akademi Lalitha Kala Akademi Sahitya Akademi Kerala Kalamandalam (perf. arts) Inst. of Folklore & Folk Arts State Inst. of Languages State Inst. of Encyclopaedic Publications State Inst. of Children's literature
Madhya Pradesh	Bharat Bhavan (perf. & visual arts) Ustad Allauddin Khan Sangeet Akademi Kala Parishad Sahitya Parishad Adivasi Lok Kala Parishad Kalidas Akademi Tulsi Akademi Sanskrit Akademi Sindhi Sahitya Akademi Urdu Akademi
Maharashtra	Nil
Manipur	State Kala Akademi (perf. & visual arts; language & literature)
Meghalaya	State Institute of Arts (perf. arts)
Mizoram	Nil
Nagaland	Nil
Orissa	Sangeet Natak Akademi Lalit Kala Akademi Sahitya Akademi Urdu Akademi
Punjab	Punjab Art Council (Punjab Kala Parishad) Sangeet Natak Akademi Lalit Kala Akademi Sahitya Akademi
Rajasthan	Sangeet Natak Akademi Lalit Kala Akademi Sahitya Akademi Rajasthani Bhasa Sahitya Evam Sanskriti Akademi
Sikkim	Nil
Tamil Nadu	Byal Isai Nataka Manram (perf. arts) Cvia Nunkalai Kuzhu (visual arts) Tamil Valarchi Kazhagam (language & lit.)

Tripura	Tripura Folk Cultural Institute
Uttar Pradesh	Sangeet Natak Akademi Lalit Kala Akademi Hindi Samsthan Bhartendu Natya Akademi
West Bengal	State Akademi of Dance, Drama, Music & visual Arts (Rabindra Bharati University) Music Akademi Natya Akademi Bangla Akademi

(B) UNION TERRITORIES

Anadaman & Nicobar Islands	Nil
Chandigarh	Govt. College of Arts Sahitya Akademi Sangeet Natak Akademi
Delhi	Sahitya Kala Parishad (perf. arts) Hindi Akademi Pubjabi Akademi Sanskrit Akademi Urdu Akademi
Dadar & Nagar Haveli	Nil
Daman & Diu	Nil
Lakshadweep	Sahitya Kala Akademi
Pondicherry	Bharathiar Palkalaikoodam Institute of Linguistics & Culture

Source : State Governments & Union Territory Administrations.

## ZONAL CULTURAL CENTRES

**NORTH ZONE (1985-86)**

Patiala

Haryana (A)  
Himachal Pradesh  
Jammu & Kashmir  
Punjab  
Rajasthan (B)  
Chandigarh

**NORTH CENTRAL ZONE (1985-86)**

Allahabad

Bihar (C)  
Haryana (A)  
Madhya Pradesh (D)  
Rajasthan (B)  
Uttar Pradesh  
Delhi

**EAST ZONE (1985-86)**

Calcutta

Assam (E)  
Bihar (C)  
Manipur  
Orissa  
Sikkim  
Tripura  
West Bengal  
Andaman & Nicobar Islands (F)

**NORTH EAST ZONE (1986-87)**

Dimapur

Arunachal Pradesh  
Assam (E)  
Meghalaya  
Mizoram  
Nagaland

**WEST ZONE (1985-86)**

Udaipur

Goa  
Gujarat  
Maharashtra (G)  
Rajasthan (B)  
Daman & Diu

**SOUTH ZONE (1985-86)**

Thanjavur

Andhra Pradesh (H)  
Karnataka (F)  
Kerala  
Tamil Nadu  
Andaman & Nicobar Islands (F)  
Lakshadweep  
Pondicherry

**SOUTH CENTRAL ZONE (1986-87)**

Nagpur

Andhra Pradesh (H)  
Karnataka (F)  
Madhya Pradesh (D)  
Maharashtra (G)

Note : [Figure in brackets indicates year of establishment;  
letter in brackets indicates participation in more  
than one Centre]

Source : Deptt. of Culture, Govt. of India - "ZCC Events" 1988-89

## APPENDIX - 4

(a) EXPENDITURE INCURRED BY ZONAL CULTURAL CENTRES  
(Rs. Lakhs)

Centre	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	Total
North Zone Cultural Centre, Patiala	11.70	81.65	52.88	84.74	88.29 (Tentative)	319.26
West Zone Cultural Centre, Udaipur	--	85.98	51.76	132.30	57.38	327.42
Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre, Calcutta	10.01	3.75	25.49	47.67	NA	86.92
South Zone Cultural Centre, Thanjavur	--	130.12	85.03	80.76	NA	295.91
North East Zone Cultural Centre, Nagaland	--	35.54	14.26	104.69	177.69 (upto Jan.90)	332.18
North Central Zone Cultural Centre, Allahabad	--	33.13	91.80	99.04	78.08 (upto Dec.89)	302.05
South Central Zonal Cultural Centre, Nagpur	--	62.40	89.75	67.89	57.89	277.93

(b) EXPENDITURE ON CAPITAL ASSETS (INCLUDED IN (a) ABOVE)  
(Rs. lakhs)

	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	Total
North Zone Cultural Centre, Patiala	3.36	6.53	1.24	6.10	6.10 (Tentative)	23.33
West Zone Cultural Centre, Udaipur	--	18.38	14.63	7.60	3.39 (upto Dec.89)	44.00
Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre, Calcutta	--	--	0.48	0.66	--	1.14
South Zone Cultural Centre, Thanjavur	--	5.50	2.11	0.12	NA	7.73
North-East Zone Cultural Centre, Dimapur	--	1.83	3.30	25.81	105.57 (upto Jan.90)	136.51
North Central Zone Cultural Centre, Allahabad	--	1.43	46.17	9.22	11.98 (upto Dec.89)	68.80
South Central Zonal Cultural Centre, Nagpur	--	NA	NA	--	NA	24.05*

\*Total for 1986-87 to 1988-89

Source: Details furnished by various Zonal Cultural Centres, assembled

**ADMINISTRATIVE SET UP FOR LOOKING AFTER  
ACTIVITIES UNDER ART AND CULTURE**

**A. Names of states where a separate Department of Culture exists:**

Andhra Pradesh

Assam

Haryana

Himachal Pradesh

Madhya Pradesh

Meghalaya

Nagaland

Orissa

Punjab

Rajasthan

Sikkim

Tamilnadu

Uttar Pradesh

**B. States/Union Territories where activities under 'Art and Culture' are being looked after by a composite Department :-**

Arunachal Pradesh - There is no separate Department of Culture. social Cultural Affairs is a combined Department under one Director. Archives, Archaeology and Museums are being looked after by the Department of Research.

Goa - Activities under art and culture are being looked after by the Deptt. of Education. There is no separate Dte. of culture. However, an independent Dte. for Archives, Archaeology and Museums and Libraries are dealt with under the General Education Sector.

- Gujarat - There is no separate and independent Department for Cultural affairs. The four Directorates, one each for Museums, Libraries, Archives and Archaeology are part of the Deptt. of Education. Other activities relating to art and culture are looked after by Dte. of Youth Services and Cultural Activities under the same department.
- Jammu & Kashmir - There is no separate Deptt. of culture. The work is looked after by the Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (an autonomous body).
- Kerala - Cultural affairs are looked after by the Minister for Fisheries and Cooperation, Museums and Zoos by the Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs.
- Maharashtra - There is a composite Deptt. fo Social Welfare, Cultural Affairs, Sports & Tourism. There is a Directorate of Cultural Affairs.
- Manipur - There is a composite Department of Social Welfare, Art and Culture.
- Mizoram - There is a Composite Department of Education and Human Resources.
- West Bengal - There is a composite Department of Information and Cultural Affairs.
- Andaman & Nicobar Island - There is no separate Departments/Directorate of Culture.
- Chandigarh - Cultural Affairs are handled by Public Relations Department.
- Daman & Diu - Cultural activities are being looked after by Director of Education.
- Delhi - There is a composite Department of Education and Culture.
- Lakshadweep - Social Welfare and Culture Wing looks after Art and cultural activities.
- Pondicherry - Department of Education looks after cultural matters.

Sources : Agenda for conference of Ministers and Secretaries of culture (State & UTs), New Delhi - July, 1989.

THE OBJECTIVES OF BAL BHAVAN

- To be a creative resource centre for schools, educational institutions and children
- To offer guidance and learning facilities to schools to develop leadership and creativity among students through special training courses, workshops, demonstrations and seminars
- To inculcate in children a scientific temper and a spirit to challenge, to experiment, to innovate and to create;
- To develop new creative teaching methods and educational kits in art, science and museum techniques;
- To make available to the nation a prototype comprehensive children's institution for free learning experience;
- To develop a mass movement involving community action to act as an effective non-formal learning-by-doing system;
- To initiate massive greening projects by children and environmental awareness programmes with a bid to conserve, preserve and nurture environment and



ecological balance all round;

- To help implement, to a possible extent, the national educational policy; and
- To start science corners and astronomical units in all States through Bal Bhavans.

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Source : The Bal Bhavan, New Delhi

## STAFF STRENGTH OF NATIONAL AKADEMIS AND SCHOOL OF DRAMA

(In numbers)

	1972	1977	1982	1985	1989
Sangeet Natak Akademi	59	63	93	113	124
Lalit Kala Akademi	63*	84*	115*	185*	213*
Sahitya Akademi	80**	97	117	135	186
National School of Drama	29***	22***	87***	--	138* plus 18 artists in Reper- tory Company

\* includes vacancies

\*\* As in 1973-74

\*\*\* These exclude artists of Repertory Company

Source : National Akademis &amp; School of Drama

## PROPORTION OF PAY AND ALLOWANCES TO THE TOTAL EXPENDITURE

(Rs. lakhs)

	Year	Total expenditure	Pay and allowance	Percentage to the total expenditure
Sangeet Natak Akademi	1984-85	101.65	15.41	15
	1988-89	191.75	31.20	16
Lalit Kala Akademi	1984-85	82.50	22.44	27
	1988-89	178.11	43.40	24
Sahitya Akademi	1984-85	62.68	33.08	53
	1988-89	169.34	54.96	32
National School of Drama	1984-85	64.54	17.50	27
	1988-89	115.07	40.89	35

Source : National Akademis/National School of Drama, assembled at the sahitya Akademi Library, New Delhi.

## PAY SCALES - DISPARITIES

Post	Sangeet Natak Akademi	Lalit Kala Akademi	Sahitya Akademi	National School of Drama
1. Secretary	Rs. 4500-150-5700	Rs. 3700-125-4700-150-5000	Rs. 4500-150-5700-200-7300 (Personal scale) against the pre-revised old pay scale of Rs. 3000 100-3500-125-5000	----
2. Deputy Secy.	----	Rs. 3000-100-3500-125-4500	Rs. 3000-100-3500-125-5000	----
3. Addl. Secy.	----	Rs. 3700-125-4700-150-5000	----	----
4. Asstt. Secy.	Rs. 3000-100-3500-125-4500	----	----	----
5. Regional Secy.	Director-JNMDA/ Kathak Kendra Rs. 3000-100-3500-125-4500	Rs. 3000-100-3500-125-4500	Rs. 3000-100-3500-125-5000	----
6. Fin. & Accounts Officer	Rs. 3000-100-3500-125-4500	DS (Accounts) Rs. 3000-100-3500-125-4500	DS (Accounts) Rs. 3000-100-3500-125-4500	----
7. Accounts Officer	Rs. 2375-75-3200-EB-100-3500	Rs. 2000-60-2300-EB-75-3200	----	Rs. 2375-75-3200-EB-100-3500
8. Programme Officer	Rs. 2000-60-2300-EB-75-3200-100-3500	Rs. 2000-60-2300-EB-75-3200-100-3500	Rs. 2200-75-2800-EB-100-4000	----
9. Asstt. Programme Officer	----	Rs. 1640-60-2600-EB-2900	----	----
10. Asstt. Editor	Rs. 2000-60-2300-EB-75-3200-100-3500	Rs. 2000-60-2300-EB-75-3200-100-3500	Rs. 2200-75-2600-EB-100-4000	----
11. Librarian	Rs. 2000-60-2300-EB-75-3200-100-3500	Rs. 2000-60-2300-EB-75-3200-100-3500	Rs. 3000-100-3500-125-5000	Rs. 2200-75-2800-EB-100-4000
12. Asstt. Librarian	Rs. 1640-60-2600-EB-75-2900	----	Rs. 2200-75-2800-EB-100-4000	Rs. 1350-30-1440-40-1800-EB-50-2200
13. Editor	Rs. 3000-100-3500-125-4500	Rs. 3700-125-4700-150-5000	Rs. 3000-100-3500-125-5000	----

## (Asstt.Secy. (Pub))

Post	Sangeet Natak Akademi	Lalit Kala Akademi	Sahitya Akademi	National School of Drama
14. Publication Officer	----	----	Rs. 2200-75-2800-EB-100-4000	----
15. Photo Officer	Rs. 3000-100-3500-125-4500 (Tech. Officer Filming)	Rs. 2000-60-2300-EB-75-3200-100-3500	----	----
16. Photographer	Rs. 1640-60-2600-EB-75-2900	----	----	Rs. 2000-60-2300-EB--75-3200
17. Accountant	----	----	Rs. 1640-60-2600-EB-75-2900 (Sr. Accountant)	----
18. Assistnat (Estt./Accounts)	Rs. 1400-40-1800-50-2300-EB-60-2600	Rs. 1400-40-1800-EB-50-2300	Rs. 1400-40-1600-50-2300-EB-60-2600	Rs. 1400-40-1800-EB-50-2300
19. PA to Secy.	No Separate post. Stenographer is posted Rs. 1400-40-1600-50-2300-EB-60-2600	Rs. 1400-40-1800-EB-50-2300	Rs. 2000-60-2300-EB-75-3200	----
20. PS to Chairman	Rs. 2000-60-2300-EB-75-3200-100-3500	Rs. 2000-60-2300-EB-75-3200	----	----
21. Tech. Asstt.	Rs. 1400-40-1800-EB-50-2300	----	Rs. 1400-40-1800-EB-50-2300	----
22. Library Asstt.	----	----	Rs. 1200-30-1560-EB-40-2040	----
23. Sales Manager	----	----	Rs. 2000-60-2300-EB-75-3200-100-3500	----
24. Library Attendant	Rs. 800-15-1010-EB-20-1150	----	Rs. 950-20-1150-EB-25-1400	Rs. 800-15-1010-EB-20-1150
25. Attendant	Rs. 750-12-870-EB-14-940	Rs. 800-15-1010-EB-20-1150	750-12-870-EB-14-940 (Peon)	Rs. 750-12-870-EB-14-940
26. Gestetner Operator	Rs. 950-20-1150-EB-25-1400	Rs. 800-15-1010-EB-20-1150	Rs. 950-20-1150-EB-25-1400	Rs. 950-20-1150-EB-25-1400
27. Telex Operator	Rs. 1200-30-1560-EB-40-2040	Rs. 950-20-1150-EB-25-1560 plus Rs. 40 as Spl. Pay.	----	----

Source : National Akademi/National School of Drama

**ART ORGANISATIONS  
RECOGNIZED BY LALIT KALA AKADEMI**

Andhra Pradesh	Andhra Pradesh Council of Artists, Hyderabad Ankala Art Academy, West Godavari Bharatha Kala Parishad, Hyderabad Chitra Kala Parishad, Visakhapatnam Chitra Kala Samsad, Machilipatnam Hyderabad Art Society, Hyderabad Kala Peetham, Guntur Lalit Kala Parishad, Visakhapatnam Lalit Kala Samiti, Medak Navrang Chitrakala Niketan, Guntur The Andhra Academy of Arts, Vijayawada
Assam	Gauhati Artists' Guild, Gauhati
Bihar	Shilpa Kala Parishad, Patna
Delhi	All India Fine Arts & Crafts, New Delhi Delhi Silpi Chakra, New Delhi Group '8', New Delhi Handicapped Welfare Federation, New Delhi Panchamrit, Delhi
Haryana	The creators, Ambala Cantt.
Karnataka	Ideal Fine Art Society, Gulbarga Karnataka Chittrakala Parishath, Bangalore
Kerala	Kerala Chitra Kala Parishad, Trichur
Madhya Pradesh	Lalit Kala Kendra, Gwalior Mahakoshal Kala Parishad, Raipur Nutan Kala Sangam, Raipur Rhythm Art Society, Bhopal
Maharashtra	Bhartiya Kala Prasarini Sabha, Pune Nasik Kala Niketan, Nasik The Artists Centre, Bombay The Art Society of India, Bombay The Bombay Art Society, Bombay Vidhrba Art Society, Nagpur

Manipur	Art Society, Imphal
Orissa	Ganjam District Drawing Masters' Association, Ganjam Working Artists Association, Bhubaneswar
Punjab	Indian Academy of Fine Arts, Amritsar
Rajasthan	Aaj, Udaipur Kalavritt, Jaipur Jodhpur Kalakar Parishad, Jodhpur Takhman - 28, Udaipur Tulika Kalakar Parishad, Udaipur
Tamil Nadu	Association of Young Painters & Sculptors, Madras Artists Handicrafts Association, Madras Madras Art Club, Madras North Arcot Artists Association, Vellore Progressive Painters Association, Madras South Indian Society of Painters, Madras United Painters Association, Tiruchirappalli
Uttar Pradesh	Shilpi Artists Organisation, Kanpur U.P. Artists Association, Lucknow
West Bengal	Academy of Fine Arts, Calcutta Canvas Artists Circle, Calcutta Chitanya Kala Bijnan Kendra, Hooghly Contrivance, Calcutta Indian Society of Oriental Art, Calcutta Painters' Orchestra, Calcutta Society of Contemporary Artists, Calcutta Society of Working Artists, Calcutta The Calcutta Painters, Calcutta West Bengal Artists Federation, 24 Parganas

Source : Lalit Kala Akademi

No. 18012(23)/65-WI  
Government of India  
Ministry of Works and Housing  
(Nirman Aur Awas Mantralaya)  
(Works Division)

New Delhi, Dated the 5th June, 1972

MEMORANDUM

Subject : Provision of works of art in the estimates for all public buildings.

The undersigned is directed to say that it was suggested at the meeting of the Committee for selection of works of Art for public buildings held on the 2nd February, 1972 thatt 2% of the cost of the project should be provided for executing works of art in estimates for all the public buildings as against 1% of the Building Cost which is being provided at present.

In this connection, it is stated that earlier the Cabinet, while considering the question of the quantum of provision for decoration of public buildings, expressed the view that the case of each building should be considered on its merits and the expenditure to be incurred on sculpture, mural, decorations, paintings, etc. need not be limited to a fixed percentage.



It has, therefore, been decided that the Architect while furnishing the initial drawings, would indicate the amount (upto 2% of the building cost) which would be necessary for the art work consistent with the nature of the building, the area available for the art work and the type of work which is to come up. This percentage is not to be adhered to rigidly but it can vary according to the requirements of the individual buildings, upto the ceiling of 2% of the cost of the buildings.

It is enjoined on all concerned that provision for work of art by way of paintings, sculpture, etc. should invariably be made in the estimates for all public buildings (including AIR buildings, P & T buildings, Terminal buildings at Airports, etc.) as indicated by the Architect.

Sd/- S Rangaswamy  
Under-Secretary to the Govt. of India

To : Engineer-in-Chief  
(Shri O. Muthachen),  
Central P.W.D.  
New Delhi

Copy forwarded to :

1. All Chief Engineer, CPWD (by name)

2. Chief Architect, CPWD, New Delhi (Sh. H. Rahman).  
He may kindly bring these instructions to the notice of all the Senior Architects
3. Section Officer W.2
4. Min. of Finance (Works), with reference to their U.C. No.1215/JS(WIH)/72, dated 24.5.1972

Copy also forwarded to : All Ministries/Depts. of Govt. of India

Source : The Haksar Committee Report, July, 1990

## EXPENDITURE ON ART &amp; CULTURE (GOVERNMENT OF INDIA)

(Rs. in crores)

Year	*Total exp. of the Central Government	**Expenditure on		Proportion of exp. and Culture	
		Education	Art & Culture	to exp.on Education (Percent)	to Total Govt.exp. (percent)
1985-86	49619	540.16	50.35	9.32	0.10
1986-87	59688	650.40	44.98	6.92	0.08
1987-88	65068	1205.25	108.94	9.04	0.17
1988-89	74906	1604.15 (RE)	134.59 (RE)	8.39	0.18
1989-90	87696 (RE)	1578.42 (BE)	121.50 (BE)	7.70	0.14

Sources : \* Budget at a glance published annually by the Ministry of Finance.

\*\* Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Culture.

## STATEWISE EXPENDITURE ON ART &amp; CULTURE AND ITS PROPORTION TO THE TOTAL EXPENDITURE

(Rs. in crores)

Name of the State	1987-88			1988-89			1989-90		
	Exp. on art and Culture	Total exp. of State Govt.	Proportion of exp. on 'Art & Culture to total exp. of State Govt.	Exp. on art and Culture	Total exp. of State Govt.	Proportion of Exp. on 'Art & Culture to total exp. of State Govt.	Exp. on art and Culture	Total exp. of State Govt.	Proportion of exp. on 'Art & Culture to total exp. of State Govt.
Andhra Pradesh	7.05	3441	0.20	11.69	4344	0.27	11.90	4658	0.26
Arunachal Pradesh	1.58	246	0.64	2.01	214	0.94	1.79	230	0.78
Assam	4.76	1325	0.36	5.56	1411	0.39	6.16	1779	0.35
Bihar	1.93	2933	0.07	1.92	3181	0.06	3.05	3757	0.08
Goa	1.23	168	0.73	2.23	232	0.96	3.05	238	1.28
Gujarat	3.61	3093	0.12	3.84	3374	0.11	4.48	3500	0.13
Haryana	0.68	1287	0.05	0.95	1513	0.06	1.03	1623	0.06
Himachal Pradesh	1.80	609	0.30	1.97	739	0.27	1.94	757	0.26
Jammu & Kashmir	2.36	861	0.27	2.16	966	0.22	2.30	977	0.24
Karnatka	10.37	2036	0.49	9.07	2375	0.38	10.84	2836	0.38
Kerala	4.99	1781	0.28	5.81	2028	0.29	6.29	2266	0.28
Madhya Pradesh	5.03	3053	0.16	6.55	3503	0.15	5.63	3679	0.15
Maha-rashtra	8.06	5504	0.15	13.00	6626	0.19	9.76	7080	0.14
Manipur	1.17	215	0.54	1.46	278	0.53	1.44	262	0.55

Meghalaya 0.50    190    0.26    1.00    249    0.40    1.19    277    0.43									
Name of the State	1987-88			1988-89			1989-90		
	Exp. on art and Cul- ture	Total exp. of State Govt.	Propor- tion of exp. on 'Art & Cul- ture to total exp. of State Govt.	Exp. on art and Cul- ture	Total exp. of State Govt.	Propor- tion of Exp. on 'Art & Cul- ture to total exp. of State Govt.	Exp. on art and Cul- ture	Total exp. of State Govt.	Propor- tion of exp. on 'Art & Cul- ture to total exp. of State Govt.
Mizoram	0.68	246	0.28	0.78	250	0.31	1.12	234	0.48
Nagaland	1.53	328	0.47	1.70	344	0.49	1.62	360	0.45
Orissa	2.68	1408	0.19	3.90	1693	0.23	4.51	2003	0.23
Punjab	1.94	1634	0.12	1.97	1991	0.10	2.83	2042	0.14
Rajashtan	3.83	2539	0.15	4.40	2591	0.17	5.89	2600	0.23
Sikkim	0.69	98	0.70	0.70	117	0.60	1.00	114	0.88
Tamil Nadu	8.67	3375	0.26	9.44	3650	0.26	11.03	4134	0.27
Tripura	0.50	294	0.17	0.66	385	0.17	0.77	424	0.18
Uttar Pradesh	6.58	5080	0.13	8.33	5931	0.14	9.12	8642	0.11
West Bengal	2.99	3027	0.10	3.90	3528	0.11	4.44	3932	0.11

Source : Finance Commission - State Budgets.

DETAILS OF EXPENDITURE OF NATIONAL AKADEMIS AND SCHOOL OF DRAMA  
(Rs. lakhs)

	Year	Pay & allowances	Contingent expenditure	Other expenditure	Total
Sangeet Natak Akademi	1984-85	15.41	4.22	82.02	101.65
	1985-86	19.23	4.50	101.05	124.78
	1986-87	22.79	4.99	130.61	158.39
	1987-88	27.85	4.98	132.66	165.49
	1988-89	31.20	6.36	154.19	191.75
Lalit Kala Akademi	1984-85	22.44	3.30	56.76	82.50
	1985-86	25.83	3.77	150.95	180.55
	1986-87	34.05	5.57	89.21	128.83
	1987-88	42.78	5.39	80.19	128.36
	1988-89	43.40	6.99	127.72	178.11
Sahitya Akademi	1984-85	33.08	5.76	23.84	62.68
	1985-86	35.41	8.87	40.27	84.55
	1986-87	43.69	9.62	54.55	107.86
	1987-88	51.25	14.61	65.98	131.84
	1988-89	54.96	19.42	94.96	169.34
National School of Drama	1984-85	17.50	12.75	34.29	64.54
	1985-86	19.21	5.15	42.13	66.49
	1986-87	22.67	9.30	42.92	74.89
	1987-88	34.42	37.02	33.13	104.57
	1988-89	40.89	31.30	42.88	115.07

Source : National Akademis and National School of Drama

FINANCE COMMITTEES OF AKADEMIS

Sangeet Natak Akademi :

- Financial Adviser (Chairman)
- One nominee of Government of India, from among its nominees on General Council
- Two representatives of General Council, elected by it from among its members
- One representative of Executive Board, elected by it from among its members.

Lalit Kala Akademi :

- Financial Adviser (Chairman)
- One nominee of Government of India, not necessarily from among the members of General Council
- Two representatives of General Council
- One nominee of Executive Board Sahitya Akademi :
- Financial Adviser
- One nominee of Government of India, not necessarily from among the members of General Council
- Two representatives of General Council
- One nominee of Executive Board, not necessarily from among members of General Council
- (Finance Committee elects one of its members as Chairman

(Source : Constitutions of Akademis)

**LANGUAGES RECOGNIZED BY SAHITYA AKADEMI**

Languages enumerated in the Eighth Schedule  
of the Constitution of India :

Assamese  
Bengali  
Gujaratai  
Hindi  
Kannada  
Kashmiri  
Malayalam  
Marathi  
Oriya  
Punjabi  
Sanskrit  
Sindhi  
Tamil  
Telugu  
Urdu

Other languages recognized by the Sahitya Akademi :

Dogri  
English  
Konkani  
Manipuri  
Maithili  
Nepali  
Rajasthani



## LITERARY AWARDS

[Annual prizes, unless otherwise indicated :  
list not exhaustive]

## NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Awarded by :	Awards	Money value (Rs.)
Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi	Sahitya Akademi Award in 22 languages	25,000 each
Bharatiya Jnanpith, New Delhi	Jnanpith Award, Murti Devi Award	1,00,000 51,000

## STATE &amp; UNION TERRITORIES

Awarded By:	Awards	Money value (Rs.)	
Andhra Pradesh	Telugu University	13 awards 8 Endowment Awards	3,000 each 1,116 each
Assam	Government	Srimanta Sankardeva Award	1,00,000
Delhi	Hindi Academy	Shalaka Purashkar Sahityakar Samman (several) Sahityak Kriti Purashkar	51,000 21,000 each 11,101
	Urdu Academy	Bahadurshah Zafar Award Award for Urdu prose, poetry, criticism, research & journalism	20,000 10,000 each
	Punjabi Academy	Waris Shah Award 5 other awards for Punjabi prose, poetry, drama, fiction & journalism	11,000 5,100
Gujarat	Government	Sahityakar Sanman 3 Ved Pandit Sanman Badheka Suvarna Chandrak	11,000 10,000 each 18 gms.

		(biennial)	gold
	Sindhi Akademi	Sahityakar Sanman	11,000
	Urdu Akademi	Sahityakar Sanman	11,000
Haryana	Sahitya Akademi	Sur Award (Hindi)	5,100 each
		Maharishi Ved Vyas Award (Sanskrit)	
		Pt. Lakhmi Chand Award (Haryanvi)	
		Bhai Santokh Singh Award (Punjabi)	
		Balmukand Gupt Award (Hindi journalism)	
	Urdu Akademi	National Halli award	30,000
		S.M.H. Burney Award	5,100
		Khwaja Ahmed Abbas Award	4,000
Himachal Pradesh	Government	Chanderdhar Sharma Guleri Award (Hindi)	10,000
		Pahari Gandhi Baba	
		Kanshi Ram Award (Pahari)	10,000
		Sanskrit & Urdu Awards	10,000 each
	Himachal Academy of Arts, Cult.& Languages	21 Himachali Sahityakar Sanman	3,100 each
Kerala	Government	Award for best children's literature	5,000
Madhya Pradesh	Government	Kabir Sanman Award	1,00,000
		Maithilisharan Gupta Award	1,00,000
		Iqbal Sanman Award	1,00,000
		Shikhar Sanman	21,000
	Sahitya Parishad	9 Awards	11,000 each
		11 State Awards	7,000 each
	M.P.Kala Parishad	Raza Award (poetry)	5,000
	Sanskrit Akademi	Kalidasa Award	20,000
		Bhoja Award	10,000
		Rajashekhhar Award	10,000
		Vyasa Award	5,000

		Navodita Pratibha Award	5,000
	Urdu Akademi	Meer Taqi Meer Award	11,000
		Hakim Syed Qamurul Hasan Award	11,000
		5 other awards:	5,000
		Moh. Ali Taj	each
		Mohd. Yousuf Qaiser	
		Nawab Siddiqui Hasan Khan	
		Siraj Meer Khan Sehar	
		Suha Mujaddadi	
	Meghalaya Government	Awards for prose, poetry & drama (Khasi & Garo languages)	5,000 each
	Orissa	Sahitya Akademi	Sahitya Akademi Award (annual)
		Sarala Award Committee	Sarala Award
	Punjab	Sahitya Akademi	Sahitya Akademi Awards 2,500
	Pondicherry	Government	Awards for Tamil prose & poetry 5,000 each
	Rajasthan	Sahitya Akademi	Meera Award 11,000
			10 other awards 500 to 5,000
		Rajasthani Bhasha, Sahitya Evam Sanskriti Akademi	Suryamal Bhiman Shikhar Award 11,000
			2 other awards for prose poetry 5,000 each
		Urdu Akademi	One award 5,000
			4 other awards 2,000 each
	Tamil Nadu	Government	Thiruvalluvar Award 10,000
			Bharatidasan Award 10,000
			Thiru Vi.Ka. Award 10,000 & gold medal
	West Bengal	Governemnt	Rabindra Award 15,000
			Bankim Award each
			Vidya Sagar Award

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[Source : State Governments & U T Administrations]

## BOOKS PUBLISHED BY SAHITYA AKADEMI

[1-1-1990]  
Language-wise Publications

	Books published  [progressive total]	Manuscripts in press or preparation
Assamese	61	6
Bengali	89	13
Dogri	11	8
English	224	7
Gujarati	81	11
Hindi	258	56
Kannada	140	21
Kashmiri	17	12
Konkani	17	6
Maithili	35	13
Malayalam	127	6
Manipuri	5	5
Marathi	90	13
Nepali	13	22
Oriya	37	33
Punjabi	74	17
Rajasthani	8	5
Sanskrit	17	14
Sindhi	54	15
Tamil	149	19
Telugu	146	12
Urdu	93	33
Pali, Tibetan & dictionaries	6	2
Total	1752	349

Source : Sahitya Akademi

## NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF EACH LANGUAGE ADVISORY BOARD

There are 10 members in each of the 22 Language Advisory Boards. The member of the General Council who is elected by the Council to represent each language in the Executive Board is ex officio the Convenor of the Board. All other members of the General Council who can be identified with a particular language are invariably members of the Language Advisory Board concerned.

The number of such members (other than the Convenor) in each language, for 1988-93, is as follows :-

Dogri	... none
Maithili	
Kashmiri	... one member each
Konkani	
Rajasthani	
Sindhi	
Assamese	... two members each
Manipuri	
Marathi	
Nepali	
Oriya	
Sanskrit	
Tamil	
Urdu	
Gujarati	... three members each
Kannada	
Malayalam	
Punjabi	
Telugu	
Bengali	... four members each
English	
Hindi	... six members

The remaining members of each Advisory Board are selected by the Executive Board from a list of fifteen names furnished by each Convenor (which includes the above).

Source : Sahitya Akademi

**FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS OF LANGUAGE ADVISORY BOARDS**  
In 3 years : 1987-89

Language	1987-89		1988-89	
	Date of meeting	Place	Date of meeting	Place
Assamese	--	--	August 26	Calcutta
Bengali	November 24	Calcutta	August 26	Calcutta
Dogri	September 2	Srinagar	September 22	New Delhi
English	--	--	October 22	New Delhi
Gujarati	April 30	Bombay	August 6	Bombay
Hindi	April 29	New Delhi	May 13	New Delhi
Kannada	--	--	September 18	Bangalore
Kashmiri	September 2	Srinagar	December 23	New Delhi
Konkani	--	--	November 17	Bombay
Maithili	November 23	Calcutta	September 23	New Delhi
Malayalam	August 14	Trivandrum	October 28	Madras
Manipuri	November 24	Calcutta	October 4	Calcutta
Marathi	April 30	Bombay	August 5	Bombay
Nepali	November 23	Calcutta	November 24	Calcutta
Oriya	November 24	Calcutta	October 4	Calcutta
Punjabi	--	--	May 27	New Delhi
Rajasthani	November 9	New Delhi	September 23	New Delhi
Sanskrit	July 23	Pondicherry	July 22	Bangalore
Sindhi	September 6	Adipur	November 17	Bombay
Tamil	July 25	Madurai	October 28	Madras
Telugu	--	--	December 16	Madras
Urdu	--	--	May 26	New Delhi

Source : Annual Report of Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi

**LITERARY ASSOCIATIONS RECOGNIZED  
BY THE SAHITYA AKADEMI**

(1990)

Assamese	Assam Sahitya Sabha, Jorhat
Bengali	Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, Calcutta Nikhil Bharat Banga Bhasa aPrasar Samiti, Calcutta Nikhil Bharat Banga Sahitya Sammelan, New Delhi Rabindra Bharti Society, Calcutta
Dogri	Banadralta Sahitya Mandal, Udhampur Dogri Himachal Sanskriti Sangam, New Delhi Dogra Mandal, Jammu Dogri Research Institute, Jammu Dogri Sanstha, Jammu
English	Nil
Gujarati	Gujarati Sahitya Sabha, Ahmedabad Gujarat Vidya Sabha, Ahmedabad Narmad Sahitya Sabha, Surat Pramanand Sahitya Sabha, Baroda
Hindi	Hindi Sahitya Mandal, Jammu Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Allahabad Madhya Bharat Hindi Sahitya Samiti, Indore Madhya Pradesh Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Bhopal The Milan, Jabalpur Rajasthan Sahitya Akademi, Udaipur Rashtra Bhasa Hindi Prachar Samity, Sridungargarh Visvesvaranand Vedic Research Instt., Hoshiarpur
Kannada	Kannada Sahitya Parishad, Bangalore Karnatak Vidyavardhak Sangh, Dharwar
Kashmiri	J & K Academy of Art, Culture & Language, Jammu Kashmir Cultural Organisation, Srinagar
Konkani	Konkani Bhasa Mandal, Goa Konkani Bhasa Mandal, Mangalore Konkani Bhasa Prachar Sabha, Cochin
Maithili	All India Maithili Sahitya Samiti, Allahabad Vaidehi Samiti, Darbhanga, Bihar
Malayalam	Kerala Sahitya Akademi, Trichur Samastha Kerala Sahitya Parishad, Ernakulam

Manipuri	Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, Imphal Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, Silchar Manipuri State Kala Akademi, Imphal Naharol Sahitya Premee Samiti, Imphal
Marathi	Maharashtra Sahitya Parishad, Poona Maharashtra Sahitya Sabha, Indore Marathwada Sahitya Parishad, Aurangabad Mumbai Marathi Granth Sangrahalaya, Bombay Mumbai Marathi Sahitya Sangh, Bombay Vidarbha Sahitya Sangh, Nagpur
Nepali	Nepali Sahitya Adyayan Samiti, Kalimpong Nepali Sahitya Parishad, Guwahati Nepali Sahitya Parishad, Shillong Nepali Sahitya Prachar Samiti, Siliguri Nepali Sahitya Sammelan, Darjeeling
Oriya	Prajatantra Prachar Samity, Cuttak
Punjabi	Kendri Punjabi Lokhak Sabha, Chandigarh Punjabi Sahit Forum, New Delhi Punjabi Sahit Sabha, New Delhi Punjabi Sahit Sameekhya Board, Jalandhar Punjabi Sahitya Akademi, Ludhiana
Rajasthani	Bharatiya Vidya Mandir Shodh Pratisthan, Bikaner Rajasthan Bhasa Prashar Sabha, Jaipur Rajasthan Sahitya Samiti, Bisavn Sahitya Sansthan, Udaipur Vagardh Pradesh Sahitya Parishad, Dungarpur
Sanskrit	Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona Kuppuswami Sastri Research Institute, Madras Sanskrita Sahitya Parishad, Trichi Svadhyaaya Mandal, Balsar, Gujarat
Sindhi	Akhil Bharat Sindhi Bole & Sahit Sabha, Bombay Sindhi Sahit Mandal, Bombay
Tamil	Bharati Tamil Sangam, Calcutta Bombay Tamil Sangam, Bombay Delhi Tamil Sangam, New Delhi
Telugu	Telugu Bhasa Samity, Hyderabad
Urdu	Anjuman Taraqqi Urdu Hind, New Delhi Idara-e-Adbiyat-e-Urdu, Hyderabad

Source : Sahitya Akademi