WALL LIFE AT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY: A CULTURAL PSYCHOBIOGRAPHICAL EXPLORATION

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

APARNA VYAS

ZAKIR HUSAIN CENTRE FOR EDUCATIONAL STUDIES
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
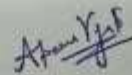**JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY**
NEW DELHI-110067
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DECLARATION

I, Aparna Vyas declare that the thesis entitled "**Wall Life at Jawaharlal Nehru University: A Cultural Psychobiographical Exploration**" is submitted in partial fulfillment for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree of this or any other University and is my original work.

Aparna Vyas

CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiners for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in this university.

Prof. Saumen Chattopadhyay
(Chairperson)

Prof. Saumen Chattopadhyay
Chairperson
Zakir Husain Centre for Educational Studies
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067

Prof. Minati Panda
(Supervisor)
PROFESSOR
Zakir Husain Centre for
Educational Studies
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067

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Abstract

After the linguistic, cultural, spatial and affective turns in social science discourses, the interest of social scientists has been garnered by the biographical turn. Biographical turn can be described as an emergence of biographical research as an accepted critical scholarly method of investigation since the 1980s. Recent advances in the field of psychobiography can be seen as a response to this transition. Furthering the response a step ahead, the present research problematizes the approaches used to study psychobiography specifically from a theoretical viewpoint. Commonly defined as a study of individual lives, psychobiography has been largely rooted in pursuit of mapping the greatness of 'great men' from a psychoanalytic perspective. While it has contributed a lot in shaping the 'I' paradigm' in creativity research, it has remained unfairly unaffected from the theoretical advancements in the area of creativity, specifically distributed theory of creativity.

The present research attempts to address the above mentioned gap from a cultural psychological perspective and argues that conceptualized as a study of ruptures and transitions and informed by the cultural psychology of creativity as a theoretical choice, psychobiography offers the possibilities to explore the institutions, societies and cultures from a biographical standpoint. In the view of the said objective, the present research seeks to explore the ruptures and transitions on the landscape of poster art at Jawaharlal Nehru University.

The methods used for data collection were direct observation, interviews and collection of posters made till 2019. Poster making sessions of specific student political groups were directly observed in a non-participatory manner. Biographical narrative method was utilized for interviews where participants were requested to share their experiences in the university space.

Posters were collected from various archives maintained by students and groups; and from P. C. Joshi Memorial Archive. All the posters pasted after 2016 were clicked by the researcher directly.

The research explores the transitional processes at four levels. At first level, , it presents systematic readings of selected posters centered on the approach of critical visuality. It unpacks the multi-dimensional presence of the discourses of marginalization specifically of gender and caste.

At second level, it shows how the participation in co-creating the art transforms the group of participants into a community of practice engaged in cooperative and conflicted relationships and constantly negotiating the discourses and pushing the presence of alternative versions of social realities at the center.

At third level, it maps the architectural space of the university as transitioned into a bridge between the public and private space. It focuses on the strategies employed to permeate the boundaries of public and personal spaces of students' lives. These boundaries between the public and private are further studied through the analysis of the narratives of stakeholders- former students; current students affiliated to the students' political organizations; current students' affiliated to the student political organizations and directly involved into the process of postering; students not affiliated to any political organization and not involved in the postering; artists, not the university students and hired by these students' political organizations. The analysis of narratives brought out the differences at the nodal locations of the art in the experiential landscape of students. These nodal points indicate the presence of transitional spaces where the distinctions between the public and private get blurred.

At fourth level, it studies the (in)famous incident of 9th February 2016 as a rupture in the experiential life of the university and shows how an organized process of postering transformed into a collective catharsis registering the major shift towards graffiti and other modes of expression.

The research, not only, attempts to push the boundaries of psycho-biographical research using a cultural psychological lens, but also, emphasizes the pedagogical possibilities offered by such shared art based practices which lay down the emotional motivational plane for the practice of shared identities and foster the feeling of belongingness to a community. Here, ideas and concepts do not remain self-contained within the walls of classrooms but are negotiated in the context of everyday social reality, thereby, enabling transformative experiences towards a better understanding of oneself and constructive movements 'from local to global spaces'.

List of Abbreviations

ABVP: Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad

AIDSO: All India Democratic Students Organisation

AISA: All India Students Association

AISF: All India Students Federation

BAPSA: Birsa Ambedkar Phule Students's Association

BASO: Bhagat Singh Ambedkar Students Organisation

DSF: Democratic Students Federation

FM: Fraternity Movement

MSF: Muslim Students Federation

NSUI: National Students' Union of India

SFI: Students Federation of India

SIO: Students Islamic Organisation

UDSF: United Dalit Students' Forum

SSS: School of Social Sciences

SLS- School of Life Sciences

SLLCS- School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies

SIS- School of International Studies

SES- School of Environmental Sceiences

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Chapter I - Introduction and Review of Literature

"It's equally true that there's no single, complete and definitive story of any campus; its social life and secret history, in this case, also its contagious politics. There are many JNU's and it depends on which one you went to. It is like a story with many versions: everybody has a version of his or her own" (Ghosh, 2016, P.2).

1.1 Study at a glance

The present research takes a departure from the traditional psychobiographical framework centering on and around an individual life history penned and analysed usually on the lines of 'great man' approach with relatively limited theoretical choices guiding the exploration. The objective of the present study is to explore the visual culture at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi from the cultural psychobiographical standpoint. The study is neither limited to examining the life of an individual 'creator' nor of a specific painting or of a specific ideological position depicted in the wall art. It is rather about the co-creation of art, ideologies and identities. It conceptualises creative expressions i.e. poster art as a collective process. It deals with the collective process of acting on and negotiating the differences across social, material and temporal planes. This study therefore seeks to explore the practice of "postering"- a term used in the study to denote the process involved in the co-creation of poster art. It attempts to analyse and interpret the reified meanings of marginalised discourses and delineate the limitations leading to the invisibilization of 'other' discourses. It examines the technologies that mediate the permeation of these discourses into the psychological spaces of the participants and elaborates on the identities in practice accentuating the trajectories of negotiating these identities. It also maps out the major rupture in the experiential life of the university and the transitional processes

followed in the wall life of the campus. In totality, the present research endeavours to unveil the making of the dialogic walls of JNU, a process that infuses 'life' to the walls which start speaking, reacting, resisting, and communicating a set of ideologies on the socio-political landscape of the university.--

1.2 Statement of the Problem

There are many strategies to understand, analyse and explore a work of art. Based on the work of Eldridge (2003) these are – a work of art can be seen as a participant in the zeitgeist of its creation. It can be analysed in the light of the creator's biography. It can be looked at as fulfilling intentions that were not mulled over at the time of its creation. It can be appreciated as being recreated every time it is used, performed and modified. It can also be utilised as a cultural-historical artefact. Each of these strategies employed in sync with the objective of exploration can help divulging certain less explored territories of various forms of art. Yet, each of these in the course of fathoming the depth of art can be marred with certain limitations defeating the very purposes of investigations.

In the field of psychology, this problem translates to the assumed disconnection and boundaries among the product, person, process and press. One dimensional, unidirectional and reductionist inquiries are appropriate to the extent where *"the circumscription of attention is dictated by the need for detailed information"*(Murray, 1938, p.4). But, it comes at the expense of totality which is further manifested into the narrow conceptualization of art and creativity.

Vygotsky (2004) provides a resolution of this rather disconnected formulation of imagination, art and creativity underscoring the process of how a product becomes an active part of reality and reifies the identity of the creator continuously. His approach has been expanded into how

different aspects of a single process of creation forms a unitary whole proposed in cultural psychology. In this approach to creativity the very product becomes the part of the action and the creator becomes an actor operating in the totality mediated by artefacts, affordances and audience.

The approach promises an in-depth understanding of art, specifically of resistance art as well as offers affordances to rethink the conceptualization of psychobiographical approach largely centred on individual trajectories. It enables to reimagine the psychobiographical inquiries as explorations of ruptures followed by the processes of transitions addressing the discontinuities spawned by these shifts. Thereby, it opens up the routes to push the boundaries of the field and includes the exploration of psychobiographical trajectories of societies, cultures, institutions and so on.

Problematising the limited scope offered by the current state of conceptualisation of psychobiographical field, the present research undertakes an exploration of art co-created on the socio-political plane of a central university in India. The unique autonomous character of the student council operating in the university and mediating and facilitating the negotiations around the poster art co-created and sustained on the walls of the university offers a rather fertile ground to address the stated disciplinary problem. Although the visual landscape of the university is relatively much broader including various styles and forms of art, the major focus of the study is postering where almost all the student political organisations of diverse ideologies come together to negotiate the modes of transforming the campus into a more dialogical space. This leads us to a number of questions centred on the postering. How is it conceptualised in the socio-political context of the university? How can it be explored materially, socially and temporally focusing on the various sites of co-creation? where and how is it produced, displayed and consumed? Are

there any transitions in the life of art itself bringing a major shift in its unique character? If yes, how can these shifts be analysed?

The present research attempts to trace the routes providing possibilities to explore these questions by utilising the conceptual machinery of the communities of practice by Wenger (1998) at the background of the cultural psychological approach to creativity- distributed creativity (Glaveanu, 2014).

To sum up, drawing on the cultural psychology of creativity and conceptualising psychobiography as a study of ruptures and transitions, the present study seeks to explore the visual culture of JNU. In the quest of a *Koan,* the study looks beyond the 'great man' approach and decades of dominance of psychoanalytic theory in psychobiographical studies. The term cultural psychobiography refers to the utilisation of cultural psychological framework to guide a psychobiographical exploration of the wall life of campus that is known for its culture of protest and dissent.

1.3 Review of Literature

The review of literature is organised in various sections emphasising the historical advancements in the field of creativity and psychobiographical research. The first section draws on the narratives of fragmentation and integration in the evolution of research on creativity The second section presents how the integration based reading of creativity literature leads us to the conceptualisation of psychobiography as an outgrowth of the converging points between psychology of personality and psychoanalysis. This section further elaborates on the recent advancements in the fields of personality psychology and psychoanalysis in the context of psychobiographical research. The third section presents the cultural psychological approach

emphasising the distributed view on creativity. The fourth section elaborates on materiality as an added dimension to the cultural psychology of creativity. The next section, based on the points discussed, maps the trajectory from psychobiography to cultural psychobiography, thus carving the path to the introduction of the conceptual machinery used in the study, communities of practice.

1.3.1 Narratives of Fragmentation and Differentiation in Psychology: Implications for Creativity Research

The evolutionary course of the discipline of psychology has been marked by the paths of different research traditions and establishment of various sub-disciplines. It draws attention to a number of variations in philosophical underpinnings, subject matter, methodologies across different sub-disciplines. In the words of Runyan (2005),

> We are all faced with the competing questions of psychology, back through the history of discipline. Is psychology about the study of sensation and perception? Reaction times? Memory? The structural elements of consciousness? The unconscious? Learning? Behaviour? Social-psychological processes? Personality? Developmental Processes and change? Cognition? Psychopathology? Therapy and change? Neuroscience? And/or is psychology about the study of persons and lives?"(Runyan, 2005, p.19)

It invites us to the ground of arguments leading to counter-arguments, movements followed by counter-movements and finally leads us towards the ongoing crisis in the field of psychology.

The assumption of a disunited and fragmentary status of psychology is at the core of the notion of crisis. The narrative of fragmentation has been the focus of many researchers. (Strenberg & Grigorenko 2001, Strenberg 2005, Yuverich 2008, Gaj,2016). Pointing out the disunity in the discipline, Sternberg and Grirorenko(2001) lists some of the 'bad habits' of researchers. These are exclusive reliance on single methodology, identification of scholars in terms of different sub-disciplines rather than the psychological phenomena under study, adherence to a single underlying paradigm while studying a psychological phenomenon. Taking the disintegration argument forward, Yuverich (2008) proposes one of the most convincing accounts of fragmentation. He believes that the crisis in psychology is permanent in nature and three circumstances make this sense of permanence look less severe. These are the clear-cut divisions among psychologists regarding methodological issues, perception of the state of crisis as perfectly normal and perception of the state in a more positive tone as facilitating the growth of the discipline. He further emphasizes on the disjointed character of psychology, lack of universally shared theory, unsystematic character of psychological knowledge, lack of universal criteria for verification and authenticity of knowledge etc. (Ibid, p.7). These symptoms are based on three kinds of "ruptures"- vertical, horizontal and diagonal. "Horizontal ruptures "denote the disunited status of different schools of psychology namely structuralism, behaviourism, psychoanalysis. Even when many psychologists adopt an eclectic approach, they are unable to eliminate this "horizontal cleavage" in psychological knowledge. "Vertical ruptures" come from paradigmatic orientation of the discipline that is "multi-paradigmal" characterized by "the coexistence of various paradigms and hence fundamentally different concepts of the psyche, approaches to its study, methods of knowledge reproduction, criteria of its verification, etc"(Ibid,

p.10). "Diagonal ruptures" arise from division between academic and practical psychology based on the "divergence of corresponding communities"(Ibid, p.12).

Following the above arguments regarding the fragmented nature of psychological knowledge, if fragmentation based reading of creativity literature is to be relied on, the disunited nature of development of psychology of creativity becomes obvious. According to the paradigmatic review of creativity research tradition, the evolution of the area follows the line of 'He', 'I' and 'We' paradigms (Glaveanu, 2010). All the three paradigms are based on different methodological grounds and underlying theoretical orientations. 'He' paradigm takes into account the biological basis of genius and the great man approach. 'I' paradigm focusing on the creative person approach is inclined majorly towards psychometric inquiries in creativity. Creativity is conceptualized as a measurable trait in laboratory settings. 'We' paradigm emphasizes the individual- society interactions. Moreover, while social psychology of creativity (Amabile, 2012;1996) relies on quantitative methodology, the systemic approaches and cultural-psychological approaches take the individual- society relationship beyond the binary of external and internal through qualitative explorations.

Further, being more specific regarding the methodological fragmentation in creativity research, findings of an empirical review done by Haiying Long (2014) brings out the pattern of utilization of different research methodologies and methods in creativity studies. These studies are published in five leading creativity journals, namely, *Creativity Research Journal, Journal of Creative Behaviour, Gifted Child Quarterly, Thinking Skills and Creativity, Psychology of the Aesthetics, Creativity and the Arts.* Findings indicate that Creativity research has been predominantly quantitative. Psychometrics and experiments have been the most desired methodologies (83% of the studies). Case study followed by grounded theory has been the most

preferred qualitative methodology (13% of the studies). Mixed method studies (4% of the studies) were found to be rooted, again, in quantitative methodology.

But, in fact, this view representing the state of fragmentation in psychology as a discipline in general and creativity research in particular does not lead us anywhere because of the problematic underlying assumptions of an idealized state of discipline (a cumulative, objective and fact seeking science) and of eternal longing to discover a grand narrative (encompassing and embracing all the conflicting methodological, theoretical and conceptual conflicts) (Zittoun, 2012).

Addressing the limitations of the approach of fragmentation, another narrative has been recently proposed. It is the narrative of differentiation based on branching complexity thesis (Zittoun, 2012). It raises the question, 'are we actually in crisis?' Not at all, if differentiation is to be believed. This second narrative emphasizes the *branching complexity hypothesis*, social embeddedness of all the disciplinary texts, role of local scientific networks and above all the role of natural boundaries giving sub-disciplines a distinctive identity. These natural boundaries separating different methodological and theoretical traditions transform into traditions over time and traditions provide with specific frames and means for further explorations.

A differentiation based reading of creativity literature enables us to see how these different paradigms of creativity research tradition originated at the specific point of time, in a specific context addressing the specific questions. It is because of this differentiation that creativity could come out of the pre-psychological conceptions of the notion of divinity and gained genetic inheritance. The differential levels of analysis led to the establishment of an individual as a unit of analysis as opposed to the conception of lone genius. It is again a different level of precision

and aim of exploring mutual constitution of individual and culture that led to the emergence of systemic and cultural theories of creativity.

Fragmentation based reading leads to unrealistic quests of a grand narrative of creativity but differentiation based reading helps addressing the limitations of the area of creativity. It is a widely acknowledged fact that there is a methodological imbalance in the psychological inquiries of creativity as obvious from the study of Long (2014). The disrupted status of "epistemic triangle" of creativity research cannot be denied. Psychology's long term obsession with statistical inquiries and "misguided aversion for conceptual inquiries" (Machado, Lorenco & Silva, 2000) that is at the root of this disruption cannot be avoided. This branching complexity thesis also acknowledges that sub-disciplinary boundaries also become obstacles at the time of in group interactions and especially when the legitimacy of a group is challenged.

There are limitations. But limitations need to be identified and subsequently, addressed. Points of convergence are required to be sought and explored further. Sternberg & Grigorenko (2001) called these converging points "converging operations". Zittoun (2012) calls them "nodal concepts" stressing the significance of collaborative research. Whatever terminology may be used, these inquiries are boundary crossing in nature.

Evolution of psychobiography, specifically in the context of creativity research, can be interpreted as an outgrowth of this boundary crossing approach, where two converging pathways, personality psychology and psychoanalysis resulted in the conceptualization of psychobiographical inquiries.

1.3.2 Psychobiography as a Convergence of Two Pathways in Creativity Research- Personality Psychology and Psychoanalysis

The major point of convergence between personality psychology and psychoanalysis is that both sub-disciplines are still rooted in the 'I' paradigm of creativity research tradition. Focus on the creative person is the basic tenet of both sub-disciplinary inquiries. Although paths are different, both attempt to look at creativity as relating to the psychology of the person. Personality psychology does the task by narrowing down on the traits specific to creative personality; psychoanalysis explores the realm of the unconscious in the quest of the roots of creativity. But, recently both sub-disciplines are in the phase of potential transitions. Personality psychology is in the face of the pressing need to study the 'individual in totality' and thereby, producing the psychobiographical accounts of individuals. Schultz (2005) beautifully describes the context of such revival of individual in personality psychology saying- "After all, if psychology ought to strive for anything, if it hoped one sunny day to step away from its labs, one-way mirrors, instruments, and apparatuses into the uncontrolled world of life, then saying something vital about people- not single-file nameless mobs, but actual individuals with a history-should be the job one" (p.3).

On a different line, psychoanalysis has started looking at culture, as reflected in the "object relations" tradition in the creativity research, and thereby, gaining much enriched understanding of creativity. This prospective transition in psychoanalysis has come to be called a socio-cultural turn leading to the joint explorations in the field of cultural-psychology and psychoanalysis.

1.3.3.Personality Psychology and Revival of Individual in its Totality: A Shift towards Psychobiography

"The outstanding characteristic of a man is his individuality"(Allport,1937,p.3). Allport, who first elaborated the term personality in *Personality: A Psychological Interpretation* (1937) advocated for the uniqueness of the individual and qualitative exploration of individuality. Though he talked about both *morphogenic* and *dimensional* traits as the focus of psychological studies, he laid more emphasis on the inquiries relying on *morphogenic* or idiographic approaches (1962). But American psychology that was too obsessed (and still are) with nomothetic inquiries was chiefly committed to psychometric explorations of individuals. Even today, creativity studies focusing on the 'creative personality' are dominated by inquiries into traits guided by nomothetic approach. Barron and Harrington (1981) in the Annual Review of Psychology summarized the specific traits reflecting creativity as reported in studies. As per them, creative individuals have a relatively broad area of interests and preference for complexity. Sense of independence, intuition and autonomy are important for them. These individuals highly value aesthetic aspects of experience and are high in the level of energy and self-confidence. Most importantly, they have a sense of self as being 'creative'. All the traits summarised by the researchers have been categorized by Runco (2004) under the person oriented approach proposed by Rhodes (1961/1987). But Runco (2004) also added intrinsic motivation as one of the important hallmarks of creative personality explored in research. Tardif & Sternberg (1988) also identified "relatively high intelligence, originality, articulateness and verbal fluency, and a good imagination" as the hallmarks of creative personality.

The scenario dominated by nomothetic approaches led Carlson (1971) to put forth the question "Where is person in personality research?" In the quest for an answer, she reviewed and analyzed the samples, research procedures and social-psychological context of 226 empirical studies published in two major personality journals, *Journal of personality* and *Journal of personality*

and Social Psychology. She finally came up with the answer that indicated major flaws in research traditions. These were the prevalence of the nomothetic approach and abandonment of the individual as a whole.

As a matter of fact, this was the state of an area of psychological research that was called as an antidote to the fragmented discipline like psychology featured with the prevalence of warring factions, of middle level theorising and of overspecialization (Maddi,1993). An assumption regarding the integrative and reconstructive nature rather than a segmented and analytic approach of the personality theorization was made by Hall, Lindzey and Campbell in the famous textbook *Psychology of Personality* (1998). The view actually leads us to "romantic conception of the personality theorist as an individual who will put together the jigsaw puzzle provided by the discrete findings of separate studies." (P.7)

The studies of individual lives as a whole were always marginalized in the wider array of research areas in Psychology. But after the 1980s a number of case studies were published that focused on relatively new methodologies. These studies as listed by Runco (2004) are- "Piaget (Gruber 1999); John Cheever (Rothenberg 1990), Paul Klee, Pablo Picasso, and Lautrec (Pariser 1991); Dorothy Richardson(Wallace 1991); RabindranathTagore (Raina 1997); Shakespeare (Simonton 1999); Anne Sexton (Sanguinetti & Kavaler-Adler 1999); George Bernard Shaw (Tahir 1999); Beethoven (Hershman & Lieb 1998); William James (Osowski 1989); Einstein(Miller & Sawyers 1989); Piaget (Gruber 1999); Sylvia Plath (Lester 1999, Runco 1998b); the Wright brothers (Jakab 1999); the Bront¨e sisters (VanTassel-Baska 1999); Lewis Carroll (Morrison 1999); Paul Cezanne (Machotka 1999); Charles Darwin (Gruber 1981b, Keegan 1999); Georgia O'Keefe (Zausner 1999); VirginiaWoolf (Ippolito 1999); WilliamWordsworth (Jeffrey 1999)".

In this case study trend of creativity research, the notion of the revival of the individual in its totality is rather implicit. But this totality of the individual flourished more in the works of Runyan, Elms and Schultz in the 1980s. The significant part is that the psychobiography is at the foundation of this revival. Taking psychobiographical research as a criterion, Runyan (2005) adds historical-interpretive psychology as the third discipline to scientific psychology, correlational and experimental being the first two proposed by Lee Cronback (1957). Psychobioraphical understanding into the lives of individuals as proposed by Runyan (2005) is based on the encounters that the study of the lives has had with psychoanalysis, personality psychology and historical science.

This recent trend that is visible in personality research is the revival of the study of individual lives emphasising the whole person approach. It is reflected in the active growth of literature on the interpretive study of individual lives emerging as a significant tradition in personality psychology. The study of individuals in its totality is rooted, as stated above, in psychobiographical research. Reconstructing the growth of inquiries representing this revival, Runyan(2005) lays down certain significant events. These are- a special issue devoted to the studies in psychobiography and life narratives by Journal of personality in 1988, publication of Uncovering lives: An Uneasy Alliance of Biography and Psychology by Elms in 1994, resurrection of Murray's concepts by Demorest during 1994, publication of an empirical case study of B. F. Skinner by Demorest and Siegel and an essay on Allport by David Winter in during 1996, Study on the relationship between fame and self-consciousness focusing on the lives of Kurt Cobain, Cole Porter and John Cheever by Schaller in 1997, another special issue devoted to the case analysis of David Morgan in Journal of Personality during 1997. (Runyan,

2005) The trend continued and grew rapidly during 1999 to 2003 as obvious from the annotated bibliography of psychobiographical research-

- 1999- 26 articles, 23 books.

- 2000- 46 articles, 15 dissertations and 4 books.

- 2001- 67 articles, 15 dissertations, 20 book chapters.

- 2002- 24 articles, 20 books and book chapters, 4 dissertations.

- 2003-35 articles, 3 books and 5 dissertations. (Schultz, 2005)

The specific pattern that was observed by Schultz (2005) in this listing is that most of these psychobiographical articles come from journals that have psychoanalytic orientation. It takes us to the converging point of psychoanalysis and personality psychology.

1.3.4 Psychoanlaysis: A Sociocultural Turn

On the plane of psychobiography, explorations of personality meet the psychoanalytic theoretical tools. Psychoanalysis has been called a theoretical and methodological foundation of psychobiography (Kovary, 2011) In fact, the first psychobiography was written by Sigmund Freud (1910/1957) titled *'Leonardo Da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood'*. It was criticized on many grounds including its dependence on a single cue in order to reject pathography and idealisation and conclusions drawn from inadequate data. (Elms, 1988). At that point of time several other psychoanalytic psychobiographies were also written such as on Shakespeare by Jones (1910), Richard Wagner by Graf (1911), Giovanni Segantini (1912/1935), Amenhotep IV by Abraham (1912/1935), Martin Luther by Smith (1913) and Socrates by Karpas 1915. (Runyan,2005).

Till date, psychoanalytic theories have been popular choices among researchers involved in psychobiographical research. But recently, Anderson (2003) has talked about the preference of current researchers of recent psychoanalytic theories like Winnicott, Otto Kernberg and Heinz Kohut over Freud and Erickson. But at the same time Schultz (2005) warns against the pathological turn in psychobiographical research tradition that did not diminish even with the wider array of psychoanalytic approaches that can be utilised. Quoting him,

> …in recent years many researchers seem to be adopting what I would call a diagnostic bent, reducing the art of Plath, van Gough, Dickinson, and others to assorted, usually mood-based mental illness. I find it a dangerous turn…. We don't get a good sense of a fluid dynamics of a life ,its strengths and weaknesses, its infinite subtlety and grace, from one- sided pathographic "disease" sniffling. Even so, the return to pathography is real. One hopes the stay is a short one, only a detour on a far more scenic journey, the most insipid vista of the entire trip."
>
> (Schultz, 2005)

Detecting the psychoanalytic bent in psychobiography Carlson (1988) called for the engagement in psychobiographical research by adopting more sophisticated theoretical tools. She (1988) proposed an "invisible collaboration" approach. She analysed Erlich's study of Nathaniel Hawthorne and Kapp's two volume biography of Eleanor Marx in terms of Tomkin's *Script theory*. The study resulted in the exploration of *nuclear script* and *commitment script*. (Carlson, 1988)

Recently, attempts have been made to bring a socio-cultural turn in psychoanalysis and also, to build a psychoanalytically informed cultural psychology. Two such recent attempts are by Roger

Frie (2014) and Sergio Salvatore & Tania Zittoun (2011). Frie (2014) focuses on psychoanalysis and anthropology and lays down the possibilities of synthesis between the two in the form of "Psychoanalytic Anthropology". He builds on the theoretical foundation of "Cultural-psychoanalysis" developed by Eric Fromm and Henry Stack Sullivan and demonstrates the significance of integrationist approach of the two for the "sociocultural turn in contemporary psychoanalytic theory and practice". The other attempt is about making the two sub-disciplinary boundaries more permeable and attempting a synthesis between psychoanalysis and cultural psychology. The motive behind this synthesis is explained by Valsiner (2011), "Psychology over the last century has shown great ambivalence in its relation to psychoanalysis- borrowing unashamedly from it, while denigrating it so as it cannot enter psychological science as equal partners"(p. viii). Zittoun and Salvatore (2011) have proposed the amalgamation based on a shared epistemological stance between the two. In the words of Zittoun & Salvatore (2011), the stance is "the idea of centrality of sense-making in human activity, which demands attention to semiotic processes- the processes by which signs (or symbols) are both constructing and constituted by cultural phenomena and psychological processes" (p.xiii).

Kakar (2011) also talks in the same vein when he differentiates between cultural differences and "much deeper cultural layers of the self as irreducible part of subjectivity" (p.83). He goes on stressing the role of culture in psychoanalysis saying,

> "Culture is not something that is a 'later' accretion to the psyche (in contrast to the notion of 'earlier layers') or a matter of 'surface', in contrast to some imagined 'depths'. The culture in which an infant grows up, modern neuroscience tells us, constitutes the software of the brain, much of it already in place by the end of childhood."(Kakar, 2011, p.93)

What is more interesting, many psychoanalytic concepts have been adopted and elaborated on by cultural-psychologists to develop a cultural- psychology of creativity. Among these, the concept of symbolic resources by Zittoun and transitional space by Winnicott are prominent.

As obvious from the discussion, both the sub-disciplines, psychology of personality and psychoanalysis, are primarily guided by person centric approach especially in the area of creativity. Even when the object of art has been looked at, parallels have been drawn between specificities of the object of art by deconstructing objects and personality of the creator (as Machotka's work Painting and Our Inner world: Psychology of Image Making, 2012). Social and cultural influences have been analysed but always secondary to the inner world and image of the creator.

The reason can be the disunited nature of the four Ps (Person, product, process, press) of creativity. Even when relationships have been observed among these, most of the time the analysis is reduced to simplistic parallelism. Does creativity reside in the individual? Is it a matter of context? Is it about the interaction between the two? Is it about a single insight suddenly welled up in consciousness? Is it about the multiplicity of insights? Is it about originality or novelty? If yes, in relation to what? - Questions like these remained partially addressed due to the isolated engagement with these four aspects. This segregated nature of different aspects in creativity led to the emergence of cultural-psychology of creativity.

1.3.5 Cultural-Psychology of Creativity

Based on advantages offered by the systemic view of creativity Glaveanu (2010) emphasises the development of the cultural psychology of creativity. The cultural psychological framework challenges the dichotomy of self and culture and focuses upon the dialectical relationship

between the two. Creativity emerges from this continuous interaction. The framework is based upon the work of Russian Psychologist Lev Vygotsky who started his work on creativity in his dissertation 'Psychology of art' (1971) and then developed his theory of creative imagination in two papers "Creativity and imagination in Childhood" (2004) and "Creativity and Imagination in adolescence". Dealing with the concept of creative imagination Vygotsky (2004) talks about combinatorial or creative activity which is an extension of the reproductive activity of the brain which "combines and reworks the elements of this past experience and uses them to generate new propositions and behavior"(p.9). It is this ability to combine elements to produce a structure. To combine old in new ways is the basis of creativity. This creative activity makes the human being oriented towards the future and he gets involved in the creation of future altering the present. Creative imagination is the basis of all cultural life and is the basic component of all creations i.e. artistic, scientific, technical, literary etc. Therefore, he describes creativity as a rule, not an exception. Products of imagination follow a circular path. The elements for their construction are taken out from reality and then are subjected to the processes of dissociation and association and are attached to the emotional tones. After they are reworked upon, they acquire material form and return to the reality but as an active force with the potential to change the reality. Emphasising the role of context Vygotsky (2004) associates creativity with the human need to adapt to the environment and creation is always based on the lack of adaptation which leads to needs, motives and desires.

Building on these theoretical underpinnings, Glaveanu (2010) proposes a richer understanding of creativity based on the works of Winnicott (1971), Gruber and T. Zittoun (2007) exploring the where, how and when aspects of creative imagination. Winnicott (1971) talks about the potential or transitional space or inter-subjective plane and proposes that creativity emerges from the

relationship between self and other. 'How' aspect of creativity is explained by the research of Gruber (1998) who talks about the notions of dialogue and dialogicality. The notion of "symbolic resources" (Zittoun, 2007) reveals 'when' creativity emerges. The main thesis of this conception is that whenever people find themselves facing a discontinuity, a break or rupture of their taken-for-granted ordinary experience (of their inner self, of the relations with others or the environment), they engage in processes specific to "transitions" and resort to symbolic resources to elaborate meaning and externalise the outcome.

The approach that cultural psychology of creativity adheres to regarding the position on imagination is that of expansion. As per Zittoun & Cerchia (2013), a deficitary understanding of imagination espoused by Piget and Pelaprat & Cole regards imagination as a gap filling process while the developmental view of imagination adheres to the expansive view of the same. In the former the gap has been addressed as a problem. Such understanding implies that "for some reasons due to human limitation (biological and developmental, etc.), our modes of understanding and acting in the world have deficits and that imagination can offer some reparation and completion." (p.3)

In the expansive view, imagination is seen as an expansion of human experience. Theorists espousing the developmental view regard the gap as a sort of disjunction opening the doors of new explorations and alternatives. Expansive view acknowledges that it enables human beings to go beyond the existing reality. Deficit model is based on the human knowledge's capacity to understand, predict and master reality while expansive views espouses an intrinsic value to imagination and focuses on the capacities of knowing and experimenting rather than mastering the reality.

As per Zittoun(2013) expansive view of imagination relies on the capacity of distancing, distancing due to the internalised semiotic means. Imagination is as complex a mental process as any other thinking process. People get engaged in imaginary loops which give them the expanded view of reality. These imaginary loops need to be nurtured through social and cultural elements. And thus imagination can be one fundamental way of bringing newness and change in thinking.

The socio-cultural turn emphasises not the novelty and usefulness but the process of acting on the differences. These differences are set on the social, semiotic and temporal plane. As Glaveanu & Gillespie (2014) writes, "Different states of creation at different points in time drive the creative process in its uncertain path towards being finalised. These tensions, between objects and their meaning, between the perspectives of self and other, and between the present and the future are all core topics of research in cultural psychology"(p.2).

The approach used to develop cultural-psychology of creativity rests on the distributed nature of the creative action. There is no single actor or creator. Creation is always co-creation. As opposed to the disconnected approach of product, process, person and press, cultural-psychology opens the doors of creating the integrative whole of actor, affordance, artefact, audience and action. It not only emphasises the expansive nature of imagination but also takes the evaluative aspect into account. Any act of creation can be studied along the dimensions of social, material and temporal distribution. Differences between self and other, between object and sign and between past, present and future are the ones that should be acted on. This very approach explains all the forms of creative actions ranging between both extreme ends of the creativity-mundane forms of creativity to the exceptional forms of creativity.

The uniqueness of this unitary approach to creativity also lies in the fact that creativity gained its materiality on the plane of distribution. More elaborated account of this 'surplus' is essential for placing the present research as an exploration of a specific form of art.

1.3.6 Materiality as an added dimension to creativity

Reflecting on art and psychoanalysis, Goldstein (2013) talks about the a 'new twist' in the discourse on art saying, "Although art and painting certainly involve emotion and the deciphering of a meaning, they also promote a discourse inherent in art that reformulates a question: what is it that lies beyond the figurable and sayable that uncovers the creative potential of aesthetic experience? In a new twist, this discourse also gives a certain degree of autonomy to the object of art, which is, in a way, a subject" (p.xix).This line of psychoanalytic research imparts certain autonomy to an object of art, subsequently, transforming into the subject. But the nature of autonomy is explained well in the cultural-psychological discourse.

As per the recent advancements of cultural psychology of creativity, materiality has been added as one of the crucial dimensions. Reflecting on the participation of non-human elements in the creation and problem of conceptualising their role, Glaveanu and Zittoun (2014) brings out that objects are marked by the intentionality of the makers and users. These can act as agents but always in relation to people. Objects gain intentionality only through the intentions and actions of their makers and users. Cultural psychology of creativity that emphasises the distributive nature of creativity provides us with the tools to incorporate objects of arts as significant part of the process of creation as the makers and creators are.

The present research takes into account the crucial role of the dimension of materiality and draws on the approach of co-creation taking into consideration the social, temporal and material

dimensions simultaneously in making a departure from psychobiography (Psychoanalytic) to cultural-psychobiography.

1.4 From Psychobiography to Cultural Psychobiography

Termed as "return of the repressed" in psychology by Schultz (2005), psychobiography represents the revival of the individual in personality psychology as apparent from the section of review. It focuses on the life of a single individual and seeks for the multidimensional exploration of that life. The search is all about-

> "One seeking mind, armed with theory and research, directed at the details of another- that is psychobiography. When one stops to consider this is where psychobiography came from. All the great names- from Freud to Skinner – made zero apologies for adopting the individual as a primary unit of analysis. Psychobiography is, then, Psychology's return of the repressed. It puts the person back where she should be in personality: front and center, the most moving target imaginable.(Schultz, 2005; p.3)

General steps followed in structuring a psychobiographical narrative laid down by Schultz (2005) starts with a *koan*, a specific paradoxical and elusive phrase or episode requiring a deeper level of understanding the subject. "Elucidation of mystery" or developing a psychological clarity into *koan* is the primary aim of psychobiographical research. *Koan* does not emerge easily with the surface level understanding of the data. It requires in depth engagement with the evidence on the subject. It is followed by the search for the most teasing incongruent elements. These incongruences determine the theoretical choice in structuring psychobiography. A *koan* can be interpreted in a variety of ways. An example of this diversity is the bunch of alternative

explanations given to the *koan* "why did van Gough cut his ear?" explored by a number of researchers. These are aggressive impulses aroused by frustration at his brother's engagement and failure to establish a working relationship with Paul Ganguin offered by, tendency towards self-mutilation arising at the feeling of homo-sexual impulses, influence of bullfights on him, emulation of the crimes regarding self-mutilation published in local newspapers just before some months he cut his ear, his sympathy and identification with prostitutes; etc. (Runyan, 2005).

This example also makes clear the distinction between biography and psychobiography. Unlike a biography that looks into the whole life events of the subject, a psychobiography is comparatively modest in aim as it looks at the selective events of the subject in order to make psychological exploration. Besides, a biographer's empathy is the foundation of psychobiography as it can lead to the unconscious transference of a biographer's own emotional journey with the subject to the subject of psychobiography (Kakar, 2014). This is the precaution taken care of by Kakar (2014) while delving deeper into the inner life of Rabindranath Tagore.

Recently, there have been many experiments in psychobiographical research such as multiple case psychobiography by Isaacson (2005) and the emphasis on widened theoretical choice. Still, individual as a subject and psychoanalysis as theoretical orientation to explore the subject are majorly utilised approaches limiting the horizon of the field. Even, psychobiographies of Osho (Childhood of a Spiritually Incorrect Guru- Osho, 2011), Ramkrishna (Ramakrishna and the Mystical Experience, 2011) and Tagore (Young Tagore: Making of a Genius, 2014) written by Kakar, although, take culture into account, follow the trajectory of the 'great man' approach.

Here is the point of departure taken in the present research. It proposes an extension of psychobiographical research by placing the individual in context. It takes into account the actors

engaged in the art making and applies the co-creation approach to explore and analyse the 'life' of an art object- here transformed into a subject in the process of co-creation. The approach utilised has been termed as cultural psychobiographical as it uses cultural psychology of creativity as a larger theoretical background of the present study.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

At the backdrop of the cultural psychological approach of co-creation, the present research utilises the concepts and principles of communities of practice and collective catharsis developed by Wenger (1998) and Fanon (1967)

Communities of practice shedding light on the participatory character of learning is based on a few premises. It conceptualises the individual as a social being and knowledge as competence in a valued enterprise. It defines knowing as a process of participation in such enterprises leading to active engagement with the world and participation as a process of participating activity in social communities and negotiating identities in relation to these communities.

The collective learning, as theory suggests, translates into practices which manifest the activity of pursuing these enterprises and the formation of social relations. Practices are created over time by sustaining the pursuit of a joint enterprise and shared repertoire. These are the processes through which we experience the world and meaningfully engage with it. The meanings exist neither in the individual nor in the world. It exists "in the dynamic relation of living in the world" (p. 54).

Meanings are negotiated through the interaction of the two processes- participation and reification. While participation refers, as mentioned earlier, to the active engagement and

forming relations -the action and relation, reification is defined as 'the process of giving form to our experience by producing objects that congeal this experience into "thingness"(p.58). The mutual constitution of the participation and reification lies in the fact that both address and repair potential misalignments in each other. The distribution of the work of negotiating the meanings between the two determines the communicative ability of an artefact. Thus, both the processes manifest an interplay and are not classificatory categories.

Wenger (1998) points out this interplay as following,

> In this interplay, our experience and our world shape each other through a reciprocal relation that goes to the very essence of who we are. The world as we shape it, and our experience as the world shapes it, are like the mountain and the river. They shape each other, but they have their own shape. They are reflections of each other, but they have their own existence, in their own realms.....The river only carves and the mountain only guides, yet in their interaction, the carving becomes the guiding and the guiding becomes the carving (p. 71)

He delineates three dimensions of practice in relation to its association with communities are mutual engagement, a joint enterprise and a shared repertoire. A community becomes coherent through the mutual engagement of the participants who sustain the communities through 'community maintenance', Mutual engagement results in the formation of mutual relationships that are not essentially based on cooperation and friendships only, but on disagreements, tensions and conflicts too. Yet another source of cohesion in a community is the negotiation of a joint enterprise. A joint enterprise is not something which all the participants believe in without any disagreements and conflicts but the one which is collectively negotiated amidst all the tensions,

conflicts and disagreements. These negotiations result in the relations of mutual accountability among the participants. The third characteristic of practice which contributes to maintaining coherence in the community is shared repertoire. This refers to the resources created over a period of time through the negotiation of joint enterprise. These include, "routines, words tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions or concepts that the community has produced or adopted in the course of its existence, and which have become part of its practice. The repertoire combines both reificative and participative aspects" (p.83).

The participants interact, work together, agree or disagree with each other, negotiate meanings, and learn from each other. This is how the communities of practice evolve and reproduce their memberships. But, these communities of practice do not work in isolation from the rest of the world. Apart from the internal configuration, participants get also involved in its relation with the rest of the world. Thereby, communities of practice become the sources of boundary as well as the platforms for creating external connections. These connections can be two types as delineated by the theory. Boundary objects are the forms of reifications around which different communities of practice can maintain their connections. Yet another type of connections are those maintained by brokering. Brokers are the people who introduce the elements of one practice into another. Practice can become the source of boundary as the participants after the long term engagement with one another develop their idiosyncratic ways of interactions. Having a much detailed knowledge about the workings of the community and the development of shared repertoire can make the entry of the outsiders difficult thereby, solidifying the boundaries.

The theory also defines identity as a negotiated experience of self through participation and reification. Experiences of participation reify the individuals involved as participants. Participants do not merely take the label of being a 'participant' in a community of practice, but

they also attach their personal meanings to the 'being in practice' thereby negotiating the given label through engagement in practice. The work of and on identity never ends and going through the various forms of participation, participants form trajectories within and also across communities of practice. These trajectories can be peripheral, inbound, insider, boundary and outbound. Peripheral trajectories are about partial participation, either by choice or by necessity. Inbound trajectories refer to the identities invested in future participation. It relates with the identity trajectory of the newcomers joining the communities with the hope of full participation in future. Insider trajectories imply the never ending work of identity even after attaining the status of full participation. Boundary trajectories link the various communities of practice and involve sustaining the identity beyond the boundaries. The outbound trajectories lead participants out of the communities or practice and involve finding new ways of forming relationships and negotiating a different position with respect to the community.

Irrespective of the trajectories, the identity in the theoretical universe of the communities of practice can be called a nexus of multi membership which "does not merge the specific trajectories we form in our various communities of practice into one,; but neither does it decompose our identity into distinct trajectories in each community. In a nexus, multiple trajectories become part of one another, whether they clash or reinforce each other.They are, at the same time, one and multiple" (Ibid, 1998, p.159).

Yet another concept used to map the transitional process is collective catharsis. As Fanon (1967) points out,

> If we want to answer correctly, we have to fall back on the idea of *collective catharsis.* In every society, in every collectivity, exists—must exist—a channel, an outlet through

which the forces accumulated in the form of aggression can be released. This is the purpose of games in children's institutions, of psychodramas in group therapy, and, in a more general way, of illustrated magazines for children—each type of society, of course, requiring its own specific kind of catharsis. (Fanon, 1967, p.112)

Analyzed in the context of postering, the process of collective catharsis assumes the existence of the 'pent-up' feelings of anger, emergence of these 'pent-up' feelings rooted in the collective injustice, role of collective memory in sustaining the feelings of anger and search for a common outlet by the very people at the receiving end of collective injustice.

While catharsis, an established concept in psychology as purgation or purification or release of emotions at an individual level, can be intentional or unintentional both, collective catharsis is essentially intentional and cultural in essence. As an intentional act it should be embedded in a distinct context and should be a subject to perceptual inputs from the environment (Pettit 1993).

Thus, the present research utilizes the concepts and principles of the communities of practice to underscore the specificities and complexities of the process of postering as a shared history of participation and negotiations.

Chapter II- Methodology

The present chapter introduces the major decisions involved at the time of conceptualization and during the course of the research. The chapter has eight sections. The first section briefly presents the rationale of the study followed by the second section which sets the focus of the study and provides the background of the field. The third section presents the questions mapped out at the beginning of the study to carve a path into a rather less explored area. The fourth section states the objective and research questions formulated after the preliminary interviews with the selected participants. The next section points out the specificities of the data collection process including the sampling and methods of data collection followed by sixth section which discusses methods used to analyze the data. The seventh presents the reflexivity statement delineating the obstacles, dilemmas and their resolutions during the course of the research. The eighth section lists out the ethical considerations that were taken care of during the course of research.

2.1 Rationale of the Study

As discussed in detail in the section of literature review, the present research narrows down its focus on the cultural psychobiographical exploration. From a theoretical perspective, the research builds on the limited scope of psycobiographical research which has largely centered on individual life histories from psychoanalytic perspective. It utilizes the cultural psychology of creativity as a theoretical prism and deploys the principles of communities of practice to explore the 'tradition' of co-creation of political art at one of Indian Universities, Jawaharlal Nehru University. Jawaharlal Nehru University is a Central University located in the capital of the country and is also known for its vibrant culture of debates and dialogues. It has recently been

under the scanner of media at the aftermath of 9th February 2016. Many studies have been conducted on the vibrant students' politics of the university but the tradition of political art and graffiti sustained for years by the students has been least explored theoretically. The present study sets the focus on the visual landscape of the university at the backdrop of its socio-political milieu.

2.2 Setting the Focus: A Brief Background of the Field

The present study sets the focus on the visual culture, specifically the poster art of Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. The university was established in 1969 in the memory of the first prime minister of independent India, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. Introducing the university, a committee paper in An Anthology by the Silver Memoir Committee explains the impetus behind the idea of the university. Partly due to the,

> …unprecedented decline in the functioning of the universities in India- mostly because of lack of political commitment to contain the corruption in higher education….and partly under the inspiration of the academic philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru, combined with the successful experiment of the Australian National University, the impetus for a national university in India was strengthened. (Committee Paper, 1996, p.3).

As per the First Schedule of JNU Act , the university shall undertake to advance the study of the principles of national integration, social justice, secularism, democratic way of life, international understanding, and scientific approach to the problems of the city (Khanna & Wadhwa, 1989). With the vision of fostering the composite culture of India, it proposed to establish the departments promoting the exploration, study and advancement of the cultures, arts and languages of the country. It further set out the objective of making teachers and students, the

community of the university, sensitive and aware to the social needs of the country and emphasized the need of special measures to facilitate the students and teachers all over the country to join the university. Broadening the objectives, it also embraced and incorporated the need to study the languages, literature and art of the foreign countries with an objective of developing an international understanding and a global perspective. For this, it made provisions for the participation of the teachers and students from other countries in the academic life of the university (Khanna & Wadhwa, 1989).

The university is known for its vibrant political landscape which is further enriched by its *dhaba* culture, wall art, *parchas* and pamphlets circulated by the student political organizations and public meetings transforming the messes of the hostels into dialogic evenings. It is also etched in the collective memory of the academia, in particular, and the country, in general, due to the autonomous character of the student union organizing protests and agitations on a number of local, national and international issues. Many studies have mapped the political landscape of the university through the exploration of identity based student activism in the campus (Pathania 2011) and also the rich *parcha* and pamphlet discourse of the campus (Martelli &Parkar, 2018).

The university has gone through many phases leaving the marks on the life of the university. As per another committee paper (1996), there are four major phases that left indelible imprints on the character of the university. These occurred in 1975, 1977, 1983 and 1990. The first episode of agitation, in 1975, which started in response to the rejection of the demand regarding the set-up of a statutory body addressing the examination related grievances of students and access to the good quality food at a fixed rate of Rs 100 per month, was unsuccessful but peaceful. It set the standards of a non-violent and democratic form of student protest. The second episode of agitation, in the aftermath of the internal emergency in the country, resulted in the *sine die* from

3rd November 1977 to 28th November 1977 after the discontinuation of agitation on 27 November. This was followed by the third episode of student agitation during 1983 which resulted in the arrest of 370 students of the university for 14 days and all the residents including foreign nationals and residents of married hostel were ordered to vacate the hostels. Around 15 students were rusticated from the university during this phase of agitation. Though, ".. the community life remained sour as the image of JNU stood soiled for a long time to follow"(Committee Paper, 1996, p. 179), the promising part of the episode was the evolution of human solidarity into a bred-in-the-bone friendships between the subordinate staff, common men and women in the city and the students (Batabayal, 2014).

> Many students who had nowhere to go during those fateful days when the hostels were closed down, got shelter in the houses of the security guards, peons, and other people in JNU campus. In fact, the drivers of the DTC buses also came in to help the students during the crisis. One beautiful story of the humane bonding at JNU was narrated to me by an old student who had stayed with the family of a chowkidar. (Batabayal, 2014, p. 403).

The fourth phase was marked by a churning process for students' movement. Student agitations during 1990s resulted in the agreement to the demands like reviewing the admission policy every four years, permitting the admissions in winter semester or the following year for candidates unable to produce mark-sheets at the beginning of the academic section for which they are selected and most importantly, allowing public meetings in the girls' hostel (Committee Paper, 1996). The paper further reports the novel methods of protest adopted during these agitations. These included planting saplings and singing revolutionary songs.But these were soon followed by the *dharna* and hunger strike.

The students' council President, Amit Sen Gupta, recollects the memories of those times during the interview,

> Out of all the boys and girls who went to jail, 20-30 of us did not belong to any political organization, we stayed back and did a lot of wall writing. At the time when campus was shut there was a lot of vilification of JNU as usual, like that some beer bottles were found in girls' hostels. Those days it was very innocuous also. A lot of vilification campaigns of JNU and Indira Gandhi was the prime minister and she ordered a lathi charge in JNU and before that there was a *gherao* of vice chancellor and those are different issues and I can explain those to you later. Right now let me tell you about the wall writing.
>
> Because the campus was shut we used to go all over the city and write on the walls. And I still remember we wrote some couplet which I remember-
>
> Unhi ka shehar, Vahi munsif vahi judge, humein yakin tha ki zulm hamara hi hoga.
>
> Kis kiske haath mein dekho lahu apna, tamam shehar ne pehn rakhe hain dastaane.
>
> Then there was one we wrote on the wall of JNU and then the cops came around 12 o'clock and arrested some of us……We wrote on a wall, on a couple of walls we took a ladder and wrote in big letters so that everybody could see
>
> "Jab paida hua Agvani to Shaitan ne kaha lo main bhi sahibe aulad ho gya" (20 September 2020, 9 pm).

It was during this period that he specifically talked about the posters co-created for the walls of JNU, Although, he obviously does not claim that poster culture was introduced by his union.

I cannot claim that art came with my union. But yes, we experimented a lot with ideas as the union was a solidarity union inspired by the Gdansk movement of the Polish shipyard workers led by the left in Poland…..Posters were very important, specifically posters with quotes. We brought those thinkers who JNU did not know earlier as well……I remember we pasted one poster on Jean Paul Satre which was related to the historical dilemma and that we have to constantly think about the crossroads. (20 September 2020, 9 PM).

The Student Union of the university which has been at the center of coordinating and sustaining the practice of postering (to be discussed in the chapter IV) has a unique autonomous character independent of any interventions by the university authorities. The JNUSU has a constitution which was approved in September 1971 after a long discussion and debate regarding the structure of the organization. One of the most unique features of the union is that the elections are conducted by students themselves without any intervention of the administration.. It enlivens the campus with debates and door to door campaigns. Election commission is also constituted with the students of the campus which issues the guidelines for the student elections.

Elaborating on the unique character, structure and function of the JNUSU, Rohit (2003) wrote on the occasion of the completion of three decades of the existence of the union, "Neither has the JNUSU got reduced to an inward looking union that indulges in mere 'campusism'; nor does it indulge in hollow rhetoric on national and international issues. The perspective of JNUSU is to fight for the legitimate rights of the JNU students and contribute to progressive and democratic causes not only within our country but anywhere in the world (Rohit, 2003).

2.3 Entering the Field- Questions that started the exploration

Since the wall life was rather unexplored theoretically, although there was an abundance of popular articles written on the subject, certain basic questions were formulated that aided the preliminary conversational interviews. These questions aimed at exploring the origin, evolution and underlying motives of wall art at the campus. These were-

1. How was the wall art of JNU conceptualized? How did it emerge in the socio-political space of JNU? How does socio-political space account for its distinctive character?

2. Is wall art a product of the ruptures created in the dialogical plane in Jawaharlal Nehru University? How do these ruptures manifest themselves in the wall life of JNU?

3. Does the emergence of wall art represent orchestration of forces of origin and trends of evolution?

4. What motivates creation of the wall posters? Do political motives take precedence over other motives?

5. How do employment of different terminologies and metaphors manifest different motives and ideological positions?

6. What social, political and psychological conditions explain recent preference for graffiti over posters in JNU? What are the other visuals created and utilized in students' protests?

7. How does the imagination of wall art draw on varied affordances and artefacts? How does the unitary whole of actors, actions, artefacts, affordances and audience result in the creation of wall art?

8. How does the meaning of the paintings on the wall get reconstructed and reinterpreted by the students?

9. How does the emotional-motivational plane of the institutional identity of JNU get laid down in the process of infusing 'life' in the walls and what kind of cathartic role it plays both for the artists and the University community?

Preliminary interviews guided by these questions led to the formulation of the objective and research questions for the study.

2.4 Restating the thesis

2.4.1 Objective

The objective of the research is to explore the postering culture at Jawaharlal Nehru University from a cultural psycho-biographical perspective.

2.4.2 Research Questions

1. Are there any dominant discursive construction/constructions across the organizations? How can the posters of different organizations be analyzed emphasizing these discursive constructions?

2. Is the process of postering merely a composite of multiple steps/stages/phases as it came across in the preliminary set of interviews or is it more layered and complex? In any of the cases, how does it manifest itself in practice across different student political organizations?

3. What are the major rupture/ruptures in the wall life/ process of postering in the university? What kinds of transitional processes are followed by these rupture/ruptures?

4. How does wall life become the part of private spaces of stakeholders? What possibilities of being and becoming do these inter-subjective spaces offer?

2.5 Methods of Data Collection

After the preliminary interviews (conversational), based on the themes observed the further paths of study were laid down. There were three levels of data collection. The first was the collection of the visuals, posters created by different political organizations across the years. P.C Joshi Memorial Archive at B.R.Ambedkar Library, Jawaharlal Nehru University was contacted for that. Members of different student political organizations and individuals having their own personal archive were also contacted seeking access to their collections. Posters pasted from the year 2016 to 2018 were directly clicked to maintain an archive for the research. The second level pertained to the direct observation of the postering. Here various meetings held for the purpose of poster making and the practice of postering across organizations was directly observed. The third level of data collection was partially structured interviews. The approach used to conduct interviews was biographical narrative analysis.

All the three levels underwent changes during the course of fieldwork. The first level was met with these difficulties-

1. Determination of the date of the visual since no proper record has been kept for the posters. Most of the posters can be obtained from the personal archive of the activists who have clicked it at a certain point of time that they don't even remember.

2. Visuals of the P.C. Joshi Archive- although dated as per year cannot be said of a specific date as same visuals appear in different folders organized.

3. Determination of the artist of a specific work- Specially by big student organizations like AISA and SFI

In the second mode that was video recording (as proposed in the beginning of the study), I had to shift to observation due to the privacy issues raised in one of the all-organizational meeting where a heated argument took place regarding the dissemination of the information about the meeting. Moreover, during the observation, poster making activity turned out to be more rigorous that continued day and night and many times, two groups made posters at the same time at different spaces of the university. These limitations researchers turned to observe the sessions selectively based on the pre-decided activity of the group.

Most importantly, only four groups went on making posters for the year of 2017. These included BAPSA, DSF, SFI and Collective.

Coming to the partially structured interviews, different sets of questions were prepared for the members of different student organizations, students having no belongingness to these organizations, artists and alumni. Total 70 participants (30 from various student organizations and 20 having no affiliation to any of the political organizations and 20 alumni of the university). Earlier the word 'activist' was decided to be used for the first category but the diverse meanings of activist and activism arising in various interview interactions, the category was referred to as members. Later on two different categories were added to the four mentioned above. Members of the election commission of JNU were contacted as the fifth category of the people. Sixth category was of people who have worked on the student politics specifically of JNU.

It was observed in the interviews conducted as part of the pilot of the study that almost all the participants talked about a wall poster as one of their very first memories at the university. Based

on the data collected in the interviews, the beginning point of the main interviews was to keep on the first encounter with the wall art at JNU. But since the participants shared other experiences simultaneously, the first question was centered on their life experiences in JNU. The purpose was to find how participants vary at locating the wall art in their general experiences in the university.

Later on in the first two interviews, it was observed that participants tend to cover most of the themes while sharing their journey in JNU. Going with the path as the study evolved, a biographical narrative approach was adopted to explore the thematic zone of wall art experiences.

In all the interviews, done as the third phase of the study, each participant was presented with a single question about their journey of JNU and general experiences in the university. It was left on them wherever they wanted to start and whatever they wanted to share. The purpose was to locate the point in the narrative where the experiences on wall art emerge. This point was made the basis of the further sessions with the same participant. Each interview explored a specific theme and was prepared as per the specific participant. These points were analyzed with reference to the specific narrative in which they emerged and then synthesized to write a narrative on wall art.

2.6 Methods utilized to analyze the data

At the first step, all the collected posters were sorted into three categories- as per their organizational affiliation, as per the issues that they deal with and as per the site of consumption i.e. space affiliation. Posters that were included in all the three categories were selected. It was

followed by the preliminary reading of the posters centered on the composition schemes. The major guiding principles used in the preliminary reading were

1. Inclusion and exclusion of the details- communicative and manipulative purpose of the makers

2. What is there- relating to the description of the image

3. How is it there- Style of the images that includes

4. Why is it there- Relating to the message of the picture- how the issues are integrated in posters.

5. Interdependence between text and visual

6. Demand or offer (determined with the orientation of the gaze)

7. Angle in the picture- (frontal or oblique)

8. Composition of the picture-

    i.   Zone (Left/right, Centre/top, bottom/margin)

    ii.   Salience (foregrounding/ back-grounding)

    iii.   Framing

9. Modes of Inscription

10. Visual metaphor

Based on the preliminary reading of the posters, discourses of marginalization were selected for further analysis and the focus was narrowed down to the discourses of gender and caste as reified on the walls of the institution. The analysis was guided by the following questions-

1- What are the major discursive objects constructed through a specific poster?

2- What are the major ways through which these objects are constructed?

3- What is/are the specific discursive contexts in which these objects are deployed?

4- How is the specific discursive object positioned against the whole construction?

5- What are action possibilities inherent in the discursive object? Do these possibilities open more ventures or interpretations or close down the same or restrict the interpretations to a specific level?

6- What are the major ways of seeing and being in the world that these constructions enable?

Guided by these questions, major themes were drawn from the reified discourses of caste and gender and the first chapter presents a detailed discussion of the themes.

To analyze the process of postering the lens of community of practice (as mentioned in the section theoretical framework in chapter 1) was used. A few themes that were underlined to study the process were-

1. Levels of participation

2. Levels of mutual engagement- Relationships of conflict and cooperation, belongingness vs. membership

3. Shared Repertoire

4. Joint Enterprise

5. Brokering

6. Boundary objects/ practices

7. Identity as negotiated experience

8. Identity trajectories

9. Identity as a nexus of multi memberships

For analyzing the dialogic space of the campus discourse analysis- institutions and ways of seeing as interpreted by Gillian Rose (2001) was utilized. The major themes explored here were-

1. Technologies of Display

2. Technologies of Layout

3. Textual Technologies

4. Tactile Technologies

5. Technologies Behind the Display

The biographical narratives collected were analyzed utilizing the method of critical narrative analysis (Souto-Manning, 2012) to explore how the institutional discourses permeate everyday meanings and the multiple possibilities of being and becoming offered by these discourses. The major themes used as a prism to analyze the narratives were-

1. Linearity/non linearity of the narratives

2. Orientation of the narratives- the questions pertaining to agency of the narrator

3. Negotiation of identity- self/institutions/groups

4. Positioning of the narrator

5. Turning points in the narratives- nodal points leading to the mention and discussion of posters

2.7   Reflexivity Statement: Obstacles, dilemmas and Resolution

Coming from a socially privileged section, I joined the university in 2013 and registered in a course of integrated M.Phil. and PhD. Training in JNU, in the classroom and outside the classroom, has played a crucial role in becoming reflective about my social location- privileges

and disadvantages both. After three years of exposure to the dialogic space of JNU, like many, I also had to face many challenges as a JNUite after February 2016. I have lived through the shifts in dialogues, imposition of restrictions by the administration, defamation of JNU women in media and constant pressure to leave the university after 2016. The identity of being a JNUite was became the most salient aspect of my personality since then. The idea to work on the walls of JNU that was in my mind since I joined the university, turned into a decision during this phase only- at the aftermath of 9th February 2016.

As a 'regular reader' of the walls I was introduced to the socio-political space of this campus through the poster art. But the transition from a 'regular reader' to researcher was not smooth and during the course of this research I constantly worked to negotiate my position as a researcher. The trajectory of these negotiations regarding the position of researcher remained at the peripheries of the practice that I was studying, thereby, enabling me to be a participant and a non-participant at the same time. As a participant, I was positioned as a person, who is a student of the university and at the same time is a researcher seeking to explore the practice itself. This peripheral trajectory was a major force which made the process of 'distancing' possible for me to reflect on my own experiences and emotional reactions during this journey.

Being a student of and the researcher at the university has always been the center of challenge for me as I had to constantly negotiate my identity between an insider and an outsider of the field. The very concept of 'coming back from the field' never existed during the course of research. Most importantly, it entailed the major challenge of maintaining a specific rapport with people across organizations. People usually tend to perceive a person in the light of opinions that one shares on social media platforms and this, in turn, puts limits on the way and kind of the responses one gets from them. My social and social media life was restricted and enriched (I

started observing more rather than commenting, participating and posting) at the same time. Another issue related to the positioning was the degree of rapport and contact with the respondent. It has to be of optimum level since over and under familiarity both hampered the process of interaction. For example, a very good friend never went beyond sharing his opinions so all I could rest on a few transitions that he took while sharing his opinions and my own insights derived from personal conversations with him at different occasions.

There were also variations that I had to introduce while asking the central question on people's experiences in the university. These variations were in the use of language and gestures. A few people get blocked once you start with a very formal statement so conversational style was maintained throughout with minimal interference in their narrative. Mostly I resorted to repeating the same sentences as used by the participants in order to avoid any conceptual presuppositions of the researcher. For example- I tried to use the word 'experience' in the same way it was used by the participants, specifically the domain of experience like familial, institutional, educational, gender based, caste based, religion based etc.

The categories of 'activist' 'common student' were another source of dilemma for me as a researcher as earlier, I categorized the sample of students as activists, common students and alumni. Multiple versions of and overlap in all these categories were found in the narratives of research participants which then broadly re-categorized into artists, participants- affiliated to students' political organizations, sympathizers of any political organizations and not involved with any of the organization active on campus; and alumni.

Towards the end of the data collection, as a student who joined the university in 2013 and based on the preliminary analysis of the data, I could interpret 2016 as a point of transitions in my own

and in many lives who I interacted with during the course of this research. I could read the major discourses on caste and gender due to the constant interactions with my fellow travelers, the students of the university and due to the exposure to the discourses marginalized from the mainstream.

Even till the end of this research, I never, intentionally, followed the course of becoming an insider and affecting the practice under study in any way and my trajectory remained peripheral having access to the spaces of practice and yet, walking on the road of being a non-participant. It is also true that, though a very small contribution to the practice, but the present research also became the part of the joint enterprise co-created by the participants of this research and the practice they have maintained and enriched for years on the visual landscape of the university.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

For the study, ethical approval from the Institutional Ethics Review Board of Jawaharlal Nehru University was sought and successfully obtained. There are certain ethical concerns that were specially taken care of and these are the following-

1. Informed consent was taken from all the participants including the office bearers of political organizations and office bearers of Jawaharlal Nehru University Student Union 2017-18.
2. Archival material was collected from different sources with due permission from the individuals and organizations.
3. No information regarding procedures and aims of the research was withheld from the participants.

4. Information sheets for participants included the contact information of the researcher, in case they had any query or faced difficulties by being a part of this research.

5. Interviews were scheduled on days and time convenient to the participants

6. Interviews were time bound causing minimum interference in academic activities. The time limit, dignity and the privacy of the subjects was maintained throughout the period of study.

7. Although participants were fully informed before the study began and their consent was obtained, any participant who wished to discontinue was allowed to do so without repercussions. Another participant with a relatively similar profile, specifically regarding political sensibilities, was approached then as part of the alternative plan.

8. The proposed study had a very low risk as the procedures were not stressful for the participants.

9. Also, to avoid any interference in their functioning and privacy, permission was taken from student political organizations and JNUSU to allow the researcher to observe only those meetings and sessions directly or indirectly related to the wall posters.

Chapter III - Reified Discourses of Marginalization: An Analysis of the Wall Posters

Artefacts as an outcome of the process of co-creation unite the sites of production and consumption or display. While the contexts of production and constraints associated play a crucial role, the major site is of the consumption of public art where the meaning of the artefact is renegotiated and reinterpreted. Although, the intentionality is transferred to the artefact in process of co-creation, artefacts are also interpreted by the audience based on their own social locations, training, opinions and influences. The present chapter presents an analysis of the major reified discourses, as constructed in posters and the possibilities of meanings they offer, thereby, creating a dialogic space out of the red brick structure of the campus.

The chapter has two sections. The first section works as a window to the walls of JNU and introduces the visuals co-created and put up on the landscape of the institution. It first discusses the major questions encountered while analyzing the discourses of marginalization and then, presents the composition based reading of a few posters that have been used to discuss the major reifications of the meanings of gender and caste on the walls of JNU. It describes the posters addressing what, how and why aspects of the composition. The second section presents the major themes delineated and analyzed through the questions concerned with discursive constructions of gender, caste and their intersections.

3.1 Wall art at Jawharlal Nehru University: A glimpse into the world of visuals

The preliminary reading of the posters led the path to the discourses of marginalization. The questions concerned with the reified discourses of marginalization broadly fell into two

categories- construction of discourses marginalized from the public space (for example discussions and debates on AFSPA) and construction of marginalized and oft-negated aspects of main-stream discourses (A poster by SFI, where a menstruating woman is sitting on the head of a 'pundit'). But, it is worth mentioning that both of these categories were not exhaustive or exclusive and there were posters that addressed the main-stream discourses emphasizing marginalized sides leading to the construction of more sidelined discourses. Women's position on 'rape culture' is one such poster that weaves both the constructions really well. Rapes and sexual exploitation cases continue to find space across various media sources but the positioning of women vis-à-vis the experiential accounts of physical and mental trauma is often negated. The poster here with the 'shadowed' identity of women aptly captions the experience of vulnerability and constructs the agency of rather 'invisiblized' women.

Figure 1

Like the poster discussed above, visuals put up on the walls of the university reify a number of discourses which, in turn, enrich the oral culture of the university. Discussions around these visuals are quite common in the canteens of different schools and the staircases of school buildings. The following section presents a composition based reading of the selected posters addressing the discursive constructions of marginalization.

Figure 2

There are three sections of the Figure 2 that captures the attention. First section has women and children without clothes. The second section registers the presence of armed forces (all men) equipped with all the arms and ammunitions pointing guns at women and children. The text captioning the entire scene and anchoring it in the context of brutalities associated with AFSPA

forms the third section of the poster. There is yet another, also subtle, section that is often missed in the first glance by most of the spectators. It is about the child leaned forward to pick up a stone and a woman gazing back at the armed personnel.
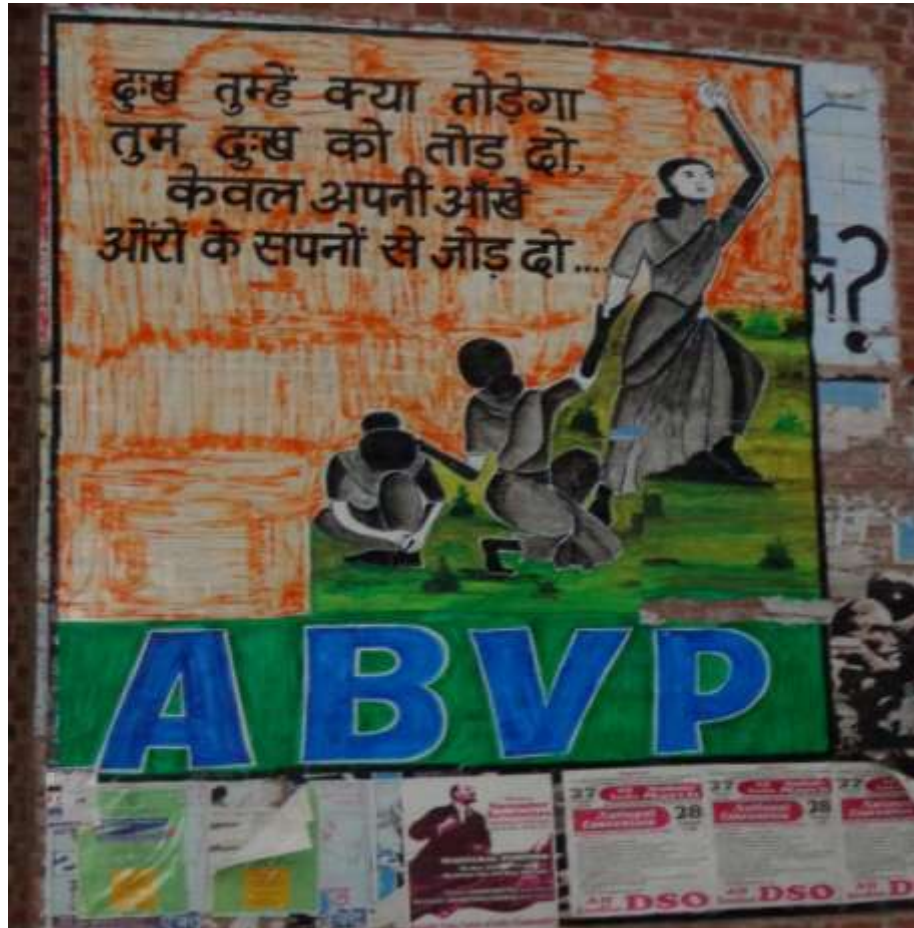
Figure 3

The figure 3 has three major sections- first, a woman gazing upwards, second, two women with hidden faces, one of the two is trying to stand holding the hand of the one who is standing straight and leaning another hand on the third woman who is sitting dejected as if unaware of her surroundings and third, the caption that anchor the whole scene constructed in the poster. The fourth often ignored section is the colour scheme used which is the combination of saffron, green, blue with a few strokes of white here and there.

Figure 4

The wall occupies two posters here for the maximum utilization of allotted space and the sharp edges of the space. Both the posters here have three sections each- first, the portrait of women (In first, famous social activist Irom Sharmila returning the gaze to the audience, second two women one of those seemingly unconscious and another one gazing back at the audience through darkened pupils). The second section is the space taken by the text which lays the context for visuals utilized in each poster. In the first poster, verse by Irom Sharmila anchors the meaning of the poster and in the second poster, a poem dedicated to the freedom of womanhood by Kishwar Naheed fixing the meaning of an abstract and rather incomplete painting of women. The third section is the positioning of posters in relation to each other. The poster with the portrait of Irom Sharmila is given a higher space than the second one.

Figure 5

The Figure put up in the canteen of SSS II is composed of three sections. First section composes the story behind the scene portrayed with black color denoting a dark reality of capitalist world ruled by men. Second section comprises the caricatures of women busy in service of men and third forms the captions written all over the poster to convey the intended meaning. The fourth, yet often ignored section is the circularity of the narrative visualized in poster. A man, 'tired and dejected' enters in the frame, is taken care of by a woman and is ready to go back to contribute to the capitalistic society. The patriarchy depicted in the second section facilitates the machinery of the capitalist world painted in the first section. Most importantly, the angle of the poster sets the focus on often neglected aspect of 'what happens inside the home' and the capitalist world, a rather mainstream discourse is receded to the background, thereby, lending a circularity to the narrative.

Figure 6

The figure 6 is composed of three sections. First section is of the visuals of resisting and sari clad three women gazing in opposite directions. The second section is the text captioning the visuals and anchoring the women drawn with broken lines and strokes. The third section of the poster is the red background making the narrative of resistance 'Break the shackles of patriarchy' rather more nuanced. Yet another aspect that needs to be noted is the torches carried by the women stressing the narrative of dissent even more. Although, the text and the visuals, both, communicate resistance even when looked at independently, the interdependence of the two surfaces as one analyze the visuals and text as a whole. Here, the text written in yellow serving the background of the poster sets the context and tone of resistance foregrounding the visuals of the women.

Figure 7

The poster in the canteen of SSS-I is composed of two sections the visuals and the text. Both the sections complement each other in communicating the message intended in the poster. The section one comprises the visuals of three women/girls with half of their faces covered painted in bluish-grey shades. Two of them- first and third are gazing back at the onlooker and the second one is looking slightly downwards as if in a state of shock. The text anchors the visuals to further the dialogue on the 'appropriateness of a woman's clothes. It is worth noting that color scheme of the visuals is in sharp contrast of the caption. Visuals are painted in rather grim and dark hues of blue and black which gets darker as one looks at the poster upwards connoting the grim reality where women's subjectivities are always silenced and receded in the background. It is set against the satirical pink background of the text emphasizing the questions that a woman asks from the society as a collective which 'others' the women altogether.

Figure 8

The poster on the wall of SSS III is composed of two sections- the visual and the text. It shows a full length portrait of a lady who has shackles in feet. The caption is in Hindi and anchors the portrait with a narrative of a woman who destroys the 'seemingly complete and happy domestic world which exists at the cost of her existence and still unaffected by her absence'. There are three most striking aspects of the poster. First, the lady in shackles is pointing against the status quo. Secondly, bold and emphasized sections of the text- *Zindagi,* as the beginning of the discourse, *baar baar varti hai use* as the point just before the transition*, Jeevan* & *shaant* as the point of transition and finally, *Prachand Veg* as the beginning of resistance. The third is the light yellow background foregrounding the text which anchors the visual.

Figure 9

The figure 9 presents the poster put up on the wall of SSS-I. The poster is one of the most misinterpreted ones among the students. Many students read a 'rape narrative' in the poster during the interactions for the present research. It may partly be because of the location of the poster where is displayed. It is displayed in the parking lot of SSS-I where students rarely sit and deliberate on the messages constructed in the posters. The memory of the poster, whoever reports it in the narrative is relatively faded one. The poster has four sections- first the visual of a couple kissing each other, second the civilian people and army personnel at the distance, third an army man in the foreground, and the text which anchors the whole narrative unfolding in the poster. Most importantly the personnel have their faces turned away from the couple. Equipped with all the arms and ammunitions, they are 'shying away' or 'feeling scared' from a basic expression of love.

Figure 10

The wall here presents two posters- one of the two is partly covered though with *parchas* and pamphlets. The first poster has visuals of women from varied fields of life and these visuals are anchored by the slogan that the time has come for them to break their shackles that bind them within boundaries and contribute in the public life directly. The second poster is rather much complex has invited much of the criticism from different quarters although it encapsulates a relatively stronger and often marginalized issue regarding the rights of menstruating women. Here a woman is metaphorically depicted as an octopus sitting on the head of a priest. The whole poster has been painted in white and black so that the impact of red color symbolizing menstrual blood can be accentuated.

Figure 11

The poster is composed of two sections- the visual and the text. The portraits of 'three famous women' two gazing back at the audience and one saluting with a smile on her face. Diverse life stories of these women have been woven in a thread of quest and struggle of freedom and equality. The portraits and text both are set against the white background giving the sense of 'incompleteness' and 'ongoing' struggle for equality. The poster was set up in an area behind central library that was under construction till the poster was replaced/ removed next year. Such posters, in most cases, do not become the center of discussion, but, are noticed by the students of the university.

Figure 12

The figure 12 presents a poster by BAPSA put up at one of the prominent spaces in SSS II. The poster is clearly composed of two sections. The first section comprises the portrait of Birsa Munda and the second section presents the Hindi text quoted from Anuj. The text engulfs the visual into a narrative of oppression against a marginalized group resulting in the resistance against injustice. The protagonist has a bow and arrow in his hand and he is gazing in the direction of target. The poster uses saffron color in the background, an artistic strategy of the organization, and depicts the tribal resistance constructing the narrative of the struggle for *'Jal, Jangal, Zameen'*.

Figure 13

The poster here represents an amalgamation of text and visual into a coherent narrative. The dog depicted here invokes a narrative from *Mahabharata* where *Eklavya* shot a dog with arrows to avoid distraction in his archery practice. Here each arrow represents one anti-caste text while the awestruck dog symbolizes Brahmanism. The 'shocking' gaze of the dog is directed towards the person shooting him. The narrative is presented against a minimalist yellow background to direct the focus toward the meaning. The poster is a reproduction of a famous work by Shyam Sundar who has also been given due credit for the art. It is also marked by signature of the artist who created it, a practice rarely seen in JNU poster art and recently introduced by BAPSA in posters co-created during 2017.
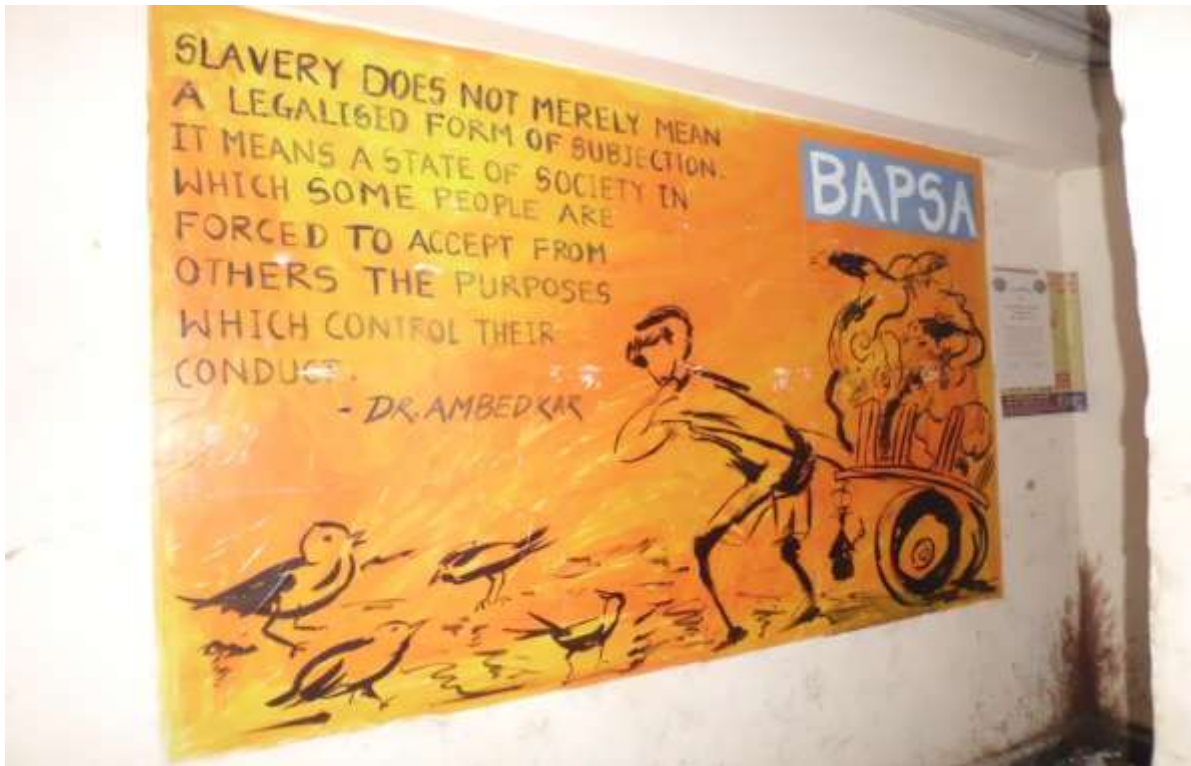
Figure 14

The figure 14 presents yet another poster co-created by BAPSA. Like many other posters made by the organization, it is also set against a saffron color background. The visuals in the posters are just painted with a few black strokes.

The poster has three sections. First section is the saffron background setting the context of narrative depicted in the poster. Second is the text emphasizing the meaning of slavery as written by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. The third section is the visual of a lean boy manually dragging a trash cart and a few crows. Such narratives actually appear in many of the Dalit men's autobiographies where the protagonists against their will are forced to carry forward the 'work sanctioned to serve so called upper castes of the society.' Om Prakash Valmiki draws a somewhat similar sketch of his childhood when he was forced to drag the trash cart against his will.

Figure 15

The poster here documents yet another caste narrative anchored by the poem of Shashikant Hingonekar invoking a mythological character, *Eklavya*, of *Mahabharata* who is usually portrayed as an 'obedient disciple' sacrificing his thumb to give '*guru dakshina'* to *Dronacharya* who never accepted him as a disciple.

The poster has two major sections, the text and the visual representing past and present respectively. The visual, 'a Dalit man dragging a cart with human organs' constructs the ongoing caste based atrocities at present and connects it with the past narrative underlying in the text. The visual painted with black encapsulates the invisiblization of the lives of Dalits and denial of the atrocities they are subjected to everyday in a caste ridden society.

Figure 16

The figure 16 presents the poster placed near the walls of SSS II- one of the prominent spaces for the posters. It invokes character from *Ramyana* and *Mahabharata* and sets the context of dialogue for the caste based discrimination. It uses the characters of Shambhuk, Eklavya and Drona to fix the context. There are two clear sections in the poster. The visuals presented are of a man with a pitcher tied around his neck and a dead body hanging from the branches of the tree having leaves painted with red strokes. The text, as mentioned above, invokes the mythological narratives to emphasize that the same conditions still persist in the society. Many students also interpret the visuals with an image of priest wearing *Janeu* and holding a pitcher in hand.

Figure 17

Figure 17 presents one of the prominent posters which was created and pasted in the aftermath of Rohit Vemula's suicide and events that followed. The composition scheme of the poster has three clear sections- the visuals, the text and the background. The visuals are anchored by the text used in the posters. The poster imagines a conversation between the hanging dead body and a policeman who seeks to confirm his identity as a Dalit. This not only hints at the insensitivity with which the issue had been dealt and is dealt even today, but also highlights how justice becomes inaccessible to people belonging to the marginalized sections of the society. The issue is directly raised in the caption followed by the visual of the policeman where the organization demands to protect the identity and dignity of the deceased.

Figure 18

The figure 18 is composed of three sections. The first is the visual of human eating monster with a saffron *tilak* on forehead and a *Janeu* across the shoulder. The second section is the text (*Ghazal* by Faiz Ahemd Faiz) in white which symbolically questions the monster for all devastation he has done. The third section comprises the text in yellow which documents facts pertaining to the torture Dalits, Muslims and Adivasi are subjected to in the name of justice. It further invokes the collective memory of Babri masjid demolition, Gujrat massacre, and Dhule, Muzaffarnagar, Dadri as well. Here, the second section comprising the text written in white anchors the first section and clarifies the utilization of the visual. The third section captions the other two sections of the poster and sets the context for the poster by delineating the facts. The poster displayed on one of the prominent spaces of the only market of the institution does grab the attention of the spectators.

Figure 19

The figure 19 has two sections again. The major section of the poster is the visual articulation of the body of a Dalit woman as the site of caste based atrocities. The angle of the poster foregrounds the dead body of a Dalit woman and places the people with covered faces and bodies at the background. The other visuals present in the poster are a distant home, smoke coming out of one of the homes and a halter hanging from the tree. The second section comprises the text anchoring the visuals and presents the facts of Dalit massacres at different places across the country. The woman's dead body is clad in just a *saree* without an upper cloth, a significant indicator of her belonging to the lower strata of society. The narrative unfolds here in the darkness of night which can easily hide criminal offence committed against Dalits and people committing the crimes can maintain an anonymous identity.

Figure 20

The poster co-created by BAPSA here is composed of three sections. First, visuals are drawn and painted all over the poster and can be categorized into three sub-sections further. The first subsection is the portrait of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar along with a girl symbolizing Hindu Code Bill. The second subsection is the portrait of a priest with saffron *dhoti* and *tilak* carrying an axe to attack on Dr Ambedkar. The third subsection comprises the visual of a woman and a little girl set at the upper portion of the poster carrying a bucket of trash to be thrown on the priest and thereby saving Dr Ambedkar and the little girl accompanying him. Importantly, the captions do not anchor rather coordinate different visual sections of the poster. Third, the different colors schemes for different sections of visuals serve the apt background to for the different points of narrative portrayed here.
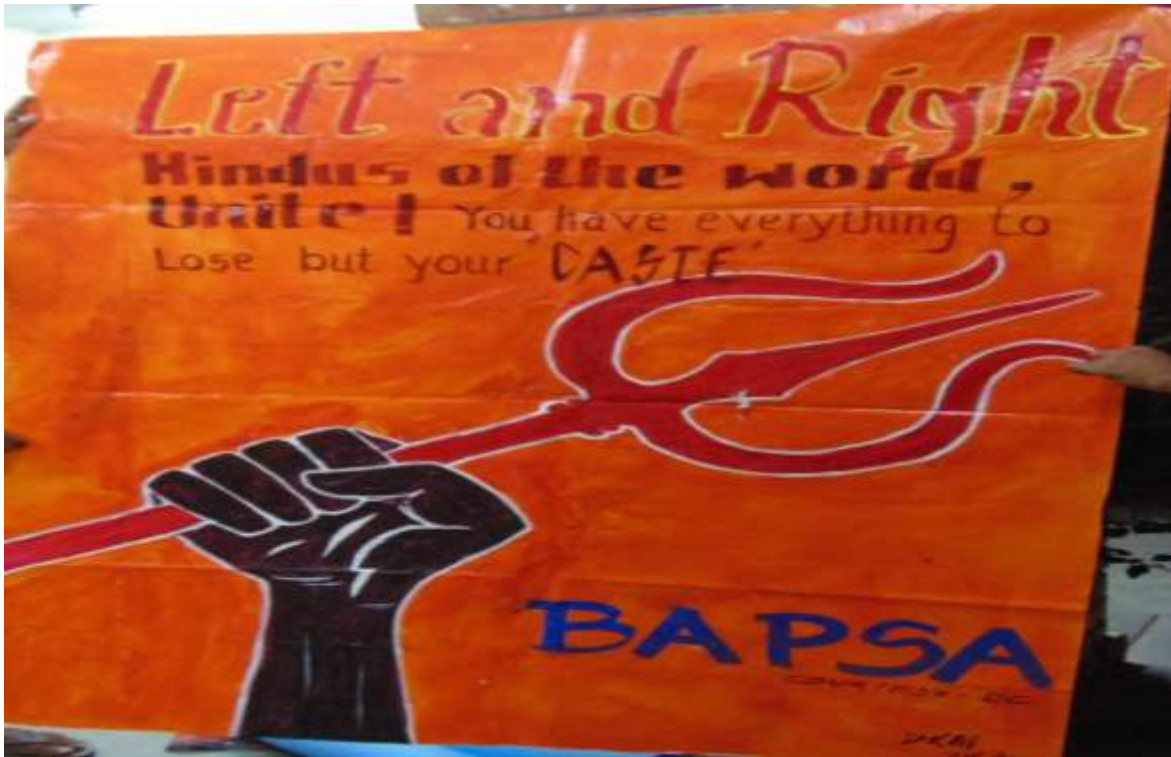
Figure 21

The poster is composed of three sections- the caption, the visual and the background. Background deserves to be called a separate section here as it adds to the meaning of narrative constructed in the poster and message communicated through it. It is one of the posters where the interdependence of text and the visual is highlighted throughout. The visual, a hand holding a *trishul* anchors the text in the beginning and then, in turn, text anchors the visual. The background of saffron color symbolic of caste based distinctions / identity of a Hindu has been utilized by the anti-caste organization to subvert the narrative circulated in mainstream media. It directly addresses the majority of the country. This is also one of the few posters of the organization which not only give due credit to the original creator of the image but also credits the artist who painted the poster.

As mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, the frame of the present analysis is discourses of marginalization with a specific focus on the visual articulation of gender, caste and their intersections. These are the discourses in which all the organizations engaged in the poster making participate invariably. The analysis attempts to map the variations in the visual articulations of these invariable discourses. It is organized in three themes which are further divided into subthemes. Each of these subthemes, as a cultural model, discusses specific versions of being facilitated by the underlying discourse. Taken as a whole the various sub themes construct different versions of truths that can be contradictory but coexist at the local, institutional and societal contexts. While the local context in the analysis emphasizes the discursive construction within a specific poster or organization, the institutional context focuses how organizations vary in the articulations of these subthemes. Societal contexts invoke the larger social contexts of the said discourses and emphasize how certain discourses are rendered invisible in the entire process of visual articulations. The following subthemes address, go forth and come back to the issues discussed above.

3.2 Visual Articulations of Gender

3.2.1 Gender articulated as woman

Multiple ways and forms of being a woman that are easily sidelined and marginalized in the dominant discourse, find spaces on the walls of the university. Posters do capture woman used as a tool in the maintenance of capitalist system, as a victim of the perils of capitalist societies, woman as subjected to violence in the areas of armed conflicts, woman as political activists fighting against the atrocities, woman embracing the menstrual cycle as a resisting force against the normative tabooed discourse, woman challenging the 'societal norm' of victim blaming in

rape cases, and many more. What is interesting to note, except a few (A. Jayaprabha, Kishwar Naheed and Irom Sharmila for example from the posters pasted during 2016, please refer to Figure 4), most of these portrayals are anchored by quotes from men, although rather marginalized from the mainstream discourse.

Ironically, almost all the organizations that delve into the theme of gender restrict the category limited to women. This has a few implications for gender discourse. Lives and constraints associated with women from the different sections of the society are articulated and get considerable space on the walls but at the same time the rest of the continuum is not at all looked at. The discourse on being woman is articulated at the expense of other gender discourses. Experiences of LGBT communities are still invisible when the discourses on gender are spelled out on the walls. As discussed in chapter III, these experiences from the other marginalized gender categories find expression only in relatively unstable and rather symbolic manner like organizations of cultural meets, painting the bark of a tree in rainbow stripes, multicolored ribbons hanging from the branches of the trees. Pehna (2020) rightly points out in this context that, "…our most glaring failure was our inability to bring caste and sexuality into an earnest dialogue with each other". (p. 315).

Moreover, JNU walls are relatively silent about how men become perpetrators in the patriarchal setup of the society. The invisibility of the discourses on masculinity many times lead to an idea as if men need not be self-reflexive about their positions of privilege. Most of the men interviewed posted as the viewer or onlooker of the visuals while women students were seen to be able to participate in the discourse despite not having any direct involvement in the making of poster art.

3.2.2 Women articulated as hapless victims

Articulation of the narratives of victimization is a powerful tool utilized in many of the posters. Student organization AISA has the largest share of such articulations. Many of these posters are adaptations of famous paintings.

For example, Figure 2, is an adaptation from the famous painting Third May by Picaso. Women and children portrayed in their vulnerability at the left of the posters are at the gun point of the perpetrators. In many such posters women do not gaze back at the perpetrators or the onlookers and the visual is anchored by a statement or a poem. The only agent of resistance from the left corner comes from the child who is bent downwards to pick up a stone. The victimization is woven with resistance though as reflected from the gaze of the woman standing at the left to the center and staring back at the perpetrators.

The poster by AISF, Figure 22, retrieved from P.C. Joshi Memorial Archive, constructs yet another narrative of victimization through a visual of a woman's hand coming out of fire. The hand still bears the burden of bangles and symbolizes the cry for help. The visual narrative is anchored by a poem that draws on the 'curse of being and becoming a woman' in a society that has patriarchal roots and that others the women in all possible ways. It encapsulates the pain of young girls, women, babied killed in womb and after they were born. The important construction of victimization lies in the fact that the text is addressed to audience and is 'about the women' not 'by the women'.

Figure 22- (Retrieved from P.C. Joshi Memorial Archive on 8 November 2016)

What is more specific to these narratives of victimization is that the text anchoring the visuals, in most of the cases, if it is a poem, it is in third person or rather a slogan or statement from the organization. Here women do not engage with the audience by either looking back or engaging in a dialogue.

3.2.3 Women articulated as agent of resistance

Another cluster of posters are those where women speak resistance, they look back at the perpetrators or gaze is returned to the audience. A Student organization DSU has a larger share for such posters.

Figure 23 (Retrieved from P.C. Joshi Memorial Archive on 8 November 2016)

Figure 24 (Retrieved from P.C. Joshi Memorial Archive on 8 November 2016)

For example, in Figure 6 the gaze of the three women is in the opposite direction from each other but, eyes being drawn as the prominent part of the face, their gaze is quite powerful and can be interpreted in the context of their body language, specifically their fists as if raising slogans. The text anchoring the visuals of the women is in first person where they seem to be asserting what being a feminist means for them.

Figure 25

Yet another poster speaks of resistance in a much more nuanced manner where again a text in first person (a poem by A. Jayprabha) anchors the visual holding a red axe and gazing back at the audience. She 'has taught her eyes to stare back equally sharp, stares for stares' and this is how she decides to wage her war and hopes for a day 'where not only the eyes but the whole body of a woman bristles'.

3.2.4 Women as glorified beings

There are a cluster of posters where women are glorified. In these cases, the texts anchoring the visuals are not addressed at the audience or spoken by the subjects positioned in the visuals, but these are directed to the subjects constructed in the posters.

Figure 26

A poster by ABVP can be analyzed in this regard. Three women who are portrayed helping each other in getting up are told '*Dukh tumko kya todega tum dukh ko do, Keval apni aankhein auron ke sapno se jod do'.* A close reading of the visual connotes the narrative of glorification which invokes the notions of 'sacrifice, devotion and dedication as inherent virtues for a good woman'. This narrative can also be seen rooted in the glory associated with the metaphor used for the nation- *Bharat Mata*. In one of the posters by ABVP, the scams during the UPA government have been recreated using the narrative of *Mahabharata*. Here, the prime minister and the chairperson of Congress are portrayed as Dhritrashtra and Gandhari, mythological characters, and the country is depicted as Bharat Mata wearing a *saree* of Indian flag. The scene invokes the

molestation of Draupadi representing the country whose *saree* is being pulled by the people

committing financial scams and an end of the *saree* is being put in a vessel named as Swiss bank

deposits. And, here the text anchoring the visuals is a statement from the organization. Here the

country is positioned as a passive subject with closed eyes portrayed as a helpless victim.

Figure 27 (Retrieved from P.C. Joshi Memorial Archive on 8 November 2016)

3.3 Visual Articulations of Caste

3.3.1 Through the portraits of anti-caste intellectuals

Portraits are one of the major ways of articulating a political group's ideology. When it comes to

how caste registers its presence on the walls of JNU, portraits of anti-caste revolutionaries

occupy the central space. Portrait of an anti caste revolutionary is often accompanied by a quote

and selection of this quote differs across organizations. For example- a poster by the organization

Youth for Equality clubs the portrait of Ambedkar along with Mahatama Gandhi, Mother Teresa,

Swami Vivekananda, Bhagat Singh and A.P.J. Abdul Kalam and is anchored by a poem from Rabindra Nath Tagore which recedes the issues concerning caste in the background.

The group is known for the anti-reservation stand in the campus and using Ambedkar's portraits with those mentioned above serves two purposes for the group. First, it allows them to appropriate Dr. Ambedkar as per their ideological stand and secondly, it furthers their stand that caste either does not exist or should not be the criteria in the distribution of resources.

Yet another group that deserves to be mentioned here is Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad. For an example, in one of the posters the portrait of Birsa Munda is placed beside the side portrait of Prithvi Raj Chauhan. Both the portraits are anchored by a poem by Ramdhari Singh Dinkar about the 'brave men'. Yet another lens to analyze this poster can be the construction of a specific notion of masculinity but what is more important is how the poster despite using the portrait of Birsa Munda manages to evade the discourse of caste and marginalization.

The more recent use of the portrait of Baba Saheb Ambedkar is seen in conjunction with the portrait of Rohit Vemula. The portrait and the quote anchoring the portrait 'Turn in any direction you like, caste is the monster that crosses your path' is followed by the demand from DSF of 'Enact Rohit Act now'. The poster is in response to the mainstream discourse of questioning the Dalit Identity of Rohit Vemula and fixes caste as the context of his 'institutional murder'.

BAPSA uses these portraits to visualize historical narratives as well. For instance, in a poster adapted from Shyam Sundar, the artist uses the portrait of Dr. Ambedkar to capture the polarized reactions from the dominant castes as well as the support Dr. Ambedkar received from certain sections of the society regarding the proposal of Hindu Code Bill.

The portrait art is also used by BAPSA to nuance the caste discourse in a traditional way too as in a portrait anchored by a quote. But here, the portrait of Ambedkar, Phule and Birsa Munda are anchored by a quote from Ambedkar. On the contrary, SFI usually combines the portrait of Ambedkar and Phule with Periyar anchored by the slogan of 'Educate, Agitate, Organise'. The group gives space to the portrait of Periyar too which is many times missing when other organizations construct the discourses on and around caste.

Figure 28 (Retrieved from P.C. Joshi Memorial Archive on 8 November 2016)

3.3.2 Through the everyday life narratives of Dalits specifically as portrayed in literature

AISA takes precedence over other groups present in the campus in articulating caste through the everyday life narratives found Dalit Literature. In such posters lines from the famous Dalit writes anchors the visuals rooted in caste discourse. In a poster which constructs the visuals of two men

carrying a pitcher tied around their necks, the older man is looking back at the audience while the younger one is looking at the older man. This symbolizes the generational continuity of oppression that certain sections of the society are compelled to carry forward. Interestingly, the poem, in Hindi, by Om Prakash Valmiki that anchors these visuals creates a contradiction and breaks the continuity of oppression, and problematizes the caste ridden reality of the society.

Now a similar discourse is constructed by SFI in yet another poster, where subjects constructed are not gazing back at the audience. Rather, it contains a more abstract presence of atrocities with reference to the incidents of caste atrocities committed against Dalits. While in the previous poster, AISA just names the incidents, the poster by SFI visualizes these incidents across a railway track giving the glimpse how widespread these oppressive practices are. Interestingly, the SFI uses the same poem, but translated in English which is a usual position concerning language usage taken by the group in most of the posters.

3.3.3 Through the subversion of mainstream mythological narratives

This is yet another strategy deployed by the groups to visually articulate the discourses on caste. The strategy was visible in many of the posters created by different organizations using the narrative of Eklavya anchored by a poem of Shashikant Hingolekar. The poster contains the visual of Eklavya carrying an arrow and a bow, and the identity of the mythological character is fixed through the text in the poster. The text problematizes what Eklavya had done by giving away his thumb to Dronacharya and the mainstream narrative of 'Guru Shishya parampara' glorified in Mahabharata is subverted to construct an anti-caste discourse.

Figure 29 (Retrieved from P.C. Joshi Memorial Archive on 8 November 2016)

Figure 30 (Retrieved from P.C. Joshi Memorial Archive on 8 November 2016)

BAPSA takes this subversion of narratives at another level in 2017 where same narrative is invoked but visual constructed is not of Eklavya but of the dog who was shot with arrows in the mouth by Eklavya. Rather than questioning Eklavya for giving away his thumb, his arrows are symbolizing Anti caste literature and also BAPSA which works with such discourses. Here the dog becomes symbolic of Brahmanism and the agency of Eklavya is restored.

The subversion is not only of narratives, but of color scheme as well. This puts BAPSA at a different level compared to other organizations. Where saffron was majorly used either by ABVP and NSUI for the purpose of creating a backdrop of their posters, in 2017 it was heavily utilized by BAPSA along with blue to set the backdrop of what they stand against. In one of the posters made in 2017, in the background of bright saffron color, the famous quote 'Hindus of the world Unite' is subverted to construct an anticaste discourse. It appeals to all 'Left and Right' Hindus of the world to unite and adds that 'you have nothing to lose but your caste'. It is also interesting to note that the visual utilized here is of 'Trishul' used by many Hindu organizations as a symbol.

3.4 Visual Articulations of the Intersections

3.4.1 · Class and Caste Intersections

When it comes to the visual articulations of intersections, class and caste is one of prominent discourses on the walls of JNU. Majority of the left leaning organizations have made posters by nuancing the economic aspects in relation to the maintenance of caste based structure of the society as well as the need to eradicate caste system for a socio-economically equal society. One of these posters was made by BASO during 2016 and pasted on the front wall of the central

library. The poster uses an image of a fair Brahmin man with a *shikha* which is being cut by a dark skinned man with an ax. The saffron *tilak* on a brahmin's forehead is replaced with an American flag and the quote by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar frames the intersectional context of the poster "The sky piercing slogan 'Down with Imperialism' naturally ignores brahmanism because of which Imperialism could entrench itself in India. How easy would it be to destroy imperialism if the foundation of brahmanism on which the superstructure of imperialism is erected, is itself weakend."

Figure 31

Yet another poster that can be discussed in the section is by BAPSA which encapsulates the class and caste debate. Here again a big bellied man with beard, long hair and a set of spectacles is seen saying to the students that 'so you have reached the interview alive. This makes you a dominant middle class SC, ST and OBCs.' Now the positioning of the man is fixed by using the

'Janeu' (a cotton thread worn by brahmin men across the body), and the statement used here captures the paradoxes of caste and class debates.
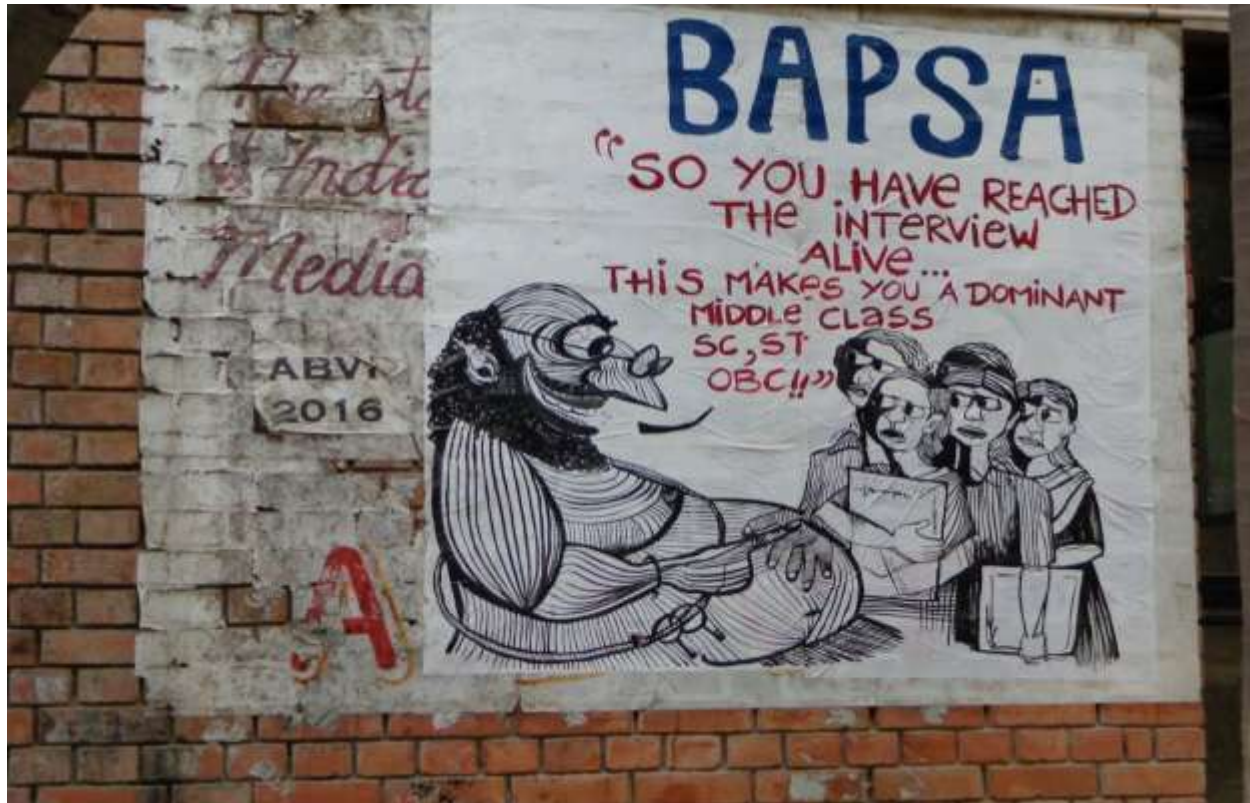
Figure 32

3.4.2 Women from marginalized sections as articulated on walls

Coming to the intersections of caste and gender, Dalit women, across organizations, are positioned as vulnerable, victimized, at times gazing back at the audience but having no agency of their own. What is partly true for the category of women as a whole is true for the Dalit women positioned in these posters. Even while constructing the visuals to present atrocities of Dalits, they are rarely seen as reacting against. So depending upon what is visible on the walls of

JNU, two subject positions can be attributed to marginalized women. There are women from marginalized sections whose bodies are constructed as the site of atrocities. One of the posters by SFI articulates this position whereas a woman's dead body is at the center of the poster with the perpetrators in the background. Yet another poster articulating a similar subject position by SFI is one where a sari clad woman is strangled to death with a saffron neck's noose. The text then anchors the context stating, "In silence we suffer no more, it's time we put a death knot on Manu who enslaved us". Even in her death she is positioned against the 'saffron ideology' which is the perpetrator in all the crimes against marginalized women.

Yet another position is of marginalized women who at times gaze back or stand with closed eyes as vulnerable and helpless. Many of the posters by AISA fall in this category. One of these posters is anchored by the lines of Heera Dom and a woman with closed eyes can be seen sitting on her knees. The poster is captioned with 'Fight caste oppression, fundamentalism and violence against women'

There are many other posters which construct either of the two positions or both the positions in the same poster, but the striking element of the constructed discourses is that these subject positions break for those looking at the visuals in the context of text which is in contradictions in most of the posters. This construction of women as implicitly agentic is set against the articulation of marginalized women as explicitly agentic. As mentioned in the section on Gender above, the only exception concerning the portrayal of marginalized women positioned as 'explicitly' agentic beings stands true for a group named Democratic Student Union. And interestingly, most of these posters utilize first person texts directed at the audience which leave the discourse open to interpretations for the onlooker vis a vis his/her/their social location.

3.5 Summary and Conclusion

To conclude, organizations differ significantly in the way they construct various subject positions through visual texts. Many of these subject positions are negotiated at three levels- first at the level of visuals utilized in the posters, second, texts used to anchor the visuals, and third at the level of the audience who interpret the posters as per their own social locations. AISA constructs these positions by adapting various paintings to construct in the discourse of marginalization. These positions are often negotiated by the contradictions between the visuals and texts but their articulations set a specific demand on the audience - to decode the meaning from the abstract art utilized in the posters. Pasted on prime spots (discussed in chapter 4), the life sized posters of AISA pulls the attention of the students, disturbs the 'aura' around famous works of arts, yet at the same time, reconstructs the 'aura'- the uniqueness associated with AISA posters. BAPSA constructs subject positions keeping the caste at the center of the discourse. All the posters whether these are rooted in anti caste narratives or portray anti caste revolutionaries or lay bare the agendas of the ruling regime, construct subject positions in an Ambedkarite perspective. Gender is still a less explored category for the organization on campus when it comes to poster art but it does create a difference with the portraits by Savitri Bai Phule. DSU as an active organization in various movements, constructs the positions of women as explicitly agentic. Protruding eyes of women gazing back strongly at the audience anchored with strong texts written in first person invite the dialogic engagement from the students. DSF does raise the questions of gender and caste, most of their posters capture the everyday realities on campus and in society at large. What binds the creations of most of the organization is that almost all the posters are adaptations or reproductions of visuals molded as per the requirement of the theme or issue to be constructed as a discourse.

Chapter IV: "Postering" as "Community of Practice" : Negotiations and Reifications of Meanings

The present chapter deals with the process of how walls are infused with ideas and ideologies, how intentionality is transferred to these walls, and how in the process actors and their actions are transformed into a community of practice giving rise to a number of reifications both in material and immaterial forms. The chapter has two sections. The first section presents the poster art as it comes across in reports, articles, and everyday conversations; and also as construed by the participants during the preliminary interactions on poster art. The second section has six subsections. The first subsection unveils the internal configuration, a process underlying the linear and staged conceptualization of poster art at the university. By depicting the details of all-organizational meetings held for postering during 2017 and poster making sessions of four student political organization, it sets forth two levels of social participation- inter-organizational and intra-organizational participation. The second subsection analyses the postering by emphasising the mutuality of engagement in pursuance of a joint enterprise facilitated by a shared repertoire. The next subsection analyzes postering as the contexts of connections and role of brokering in the whole process. The fourth subsection analyzes postering as a result of boundary encounter- specifically of delegation variety which provides an ongoing context of mutual engagement. Here, postering, itself, can be seen as a boundary practice which enables the coordination of different ideological reifications. It leads the analysis, in another subsection, to elaborate on how, at another level, walls become the boundary objects and are appropriated and reified in different ways by the students and the administration. For students, they are the sites of resistance and for administration they become the sites silencing this resistance. The last

subsection analyses the negotiation of identities by participants in relation to the practice of postering.

4.1 Postering construed as linear process of multiple steps or stages

Postering in Jawaharlal Nehru University is referred to as 'collective effort' and 'tradition'. It is marked by a number of variations across different student political organizations. But, as based on the narratives of student activists belonging to different student political organizations, it is usually construed as a linear and multistage process with a series of steps and specificities. In a broader sense the process goes on the whole year as the students are always in search of suitable and impressive visuals and texts and keep an eye on all the relevant and most attended and especially non-attended contemporary issues. But, the poster making starts at the end of winter semester before the admission of new students.

All the parties formally or informally constitute poster making committees of students who plan to stay on campus during summer break. Students in the constituted committees work at different levels and contribute in the process. Some of them volunteer for space capturing, others volunteer in purchasing essential items, some others help in deciding upon the themes and compatible visuals, some students come up with impressive and appealing texts synching with themes or visuals, some students do the sketching work, others participate in painting and there are also some students who supervise the whole process. Here are the steps that everyone involved in postering more or less agrees upon.

1. **Space capturing or space allocation**

Space capturing is considered the first step in the making of the wall posters. An evening before 5ᵗʰ of May every year, students and sympathizers of different parties stand or sit in front of the spaces they intend to occupy. They are required to stand there till the time limit is over. After that small sheets with a party name are pasted on the walls. The pictures of the walls are taken to keep in record that the place is occupied by a specific party. Most of the members interviewed regard space capturing as the most tiring and competitive part of the poster-making process. Because of this, the introduction of a lottery system was proposed to allocate at least the prominent spaces in 2015 but could not be implemented earlier. During 2016 the lottery system was adopted as students invested a lot of time in leading protests like 'Occupy UGC' against the scrapping of non-net fellowship and 'Save JNU' followed by the 9th February incident. Adoption of space allocation resulted in the utilization of previously least attended spaces and visibility of otherwise least visible political organizations.

2. **Finalization of the occupation of wall spaces**

After space capturing, wall spaces are finalized and political parties are assigned the captured or allotted wall spaces for a period of one year. If the allotted space is left vacant by a political organization even after the end of July, the place is occupied by other parties. There have also been disputes over the spaces if one party grabs the space captured or allotted by another. But as per the members of different organizations, these matters are handled by making compromises by the parties instead of letting these issues escalate into conflicts and fights.

3. **Decisions upon the themes to be portrayed: The brainstorming session**

Once the wall spaces are allotted, members of these committees come up with the themes. These themes are decided usually in the union meeting of different political organizations. Besides,

'Whatsapp' groups are another platform for such discussions. The method of selection is an extended process of discussion over contemporary issues among the members. Among these issues certain important ones are selected. It was reported by many participants that issues marginalized from the mainstream discourse are given prominence over others. Based on these selected issues certain themes to be portrayed are agreed upon.

4. **Selection of the visuals**

Visuals complementing the selected themes are finalized further. This is one of the most crucial aspects of the poster-making process. These visuals are not collected overnight. Members and sympathizers of political organizations are continuously in search of these visuals throughout the year. They save these visuals and modify them as per the need of the themes. Printouts of these modified visuals are taken and are given to the students who are assigned the task of drawing.

5. **Selection of the text**

Texts compatible with the visuals are written on the posters. The use of poems and slogans is an attempt to fix the meaning of a poster to a certain extent. The selection of the visual is not necessarily always followed by the text. At times impressive lines motivate the students to search for compatible visuals.

6. **Making of the panels**

Depending upon the size of a space allocated to an organisation, white sheets are joined to make panels. These panels are made of some specific sheets known to last long for a year. Also the sheets are chosen keeping in mind the texture of the wall as the red brick walls pose specific constraints regarding the selection of sheets. A relatively coarse texture of the walls does not

support the posters for longer durations. Interestingly, this task is considered to be non-technical in nature when it comes to poster making.

7. **Sketching of visuals**

After the panels are prepared, participants start sketching the selected visuals. Usually this work is done by the 'artist' of the group. The term 'artist' is used for the party member or sympathizer who is good at drawing or at times professional artists are also called / hired from outside. These professional artists are either the members of the same political organization at another institution or professional artists affiliated to the party in JNU. At times, professional artists not having such affiliations are also hired.

8. **Painting**

Painting the poster is said to involve 'technical' and 'non-technical' aspects. Coloring the background and bigger sections is usually considered non-technical and any member is trusted for that but when it comes to coloring the details and finer sections, again members efficient in art are trusted for that. There are many variations seen at this level. Some artists take the whole responsibility of the painting part and complete the poster on their own. Inputs from other members present during postering are incorporated also.

9. **Cutting the painting into pieces**

After the poster is complete, it is cut into different pieces. Being huge in size, it is not easy to paste them on the walls as a single piece. Divisions are made at non-crucial points so that visuals do not appear distorted after the pieces are joined.

Apart from the steps laid down above, there were certain specificities that were delineated based on the preliminary interviews of the study. These are as following-

- **Aim**

The aim of wall posters has been manifold. The primary purpose entails the politics of visibility. Through these posters, various student organisations register their presence in the campus and connect with the newly admitted students in a less time consuming, relatively easy and effective way. These posters also maintain the political spirit of the institution alive. Wall posters depicting different issues through this medium imbue the red brick walls with social-political assertion. Another purpose is the 'political initiation' of the students. Students become aware of the underlying diverse ideological perspectives on issues of local, national and international relevance.

- **Themes**

Participants make posters on various themes ranging from 'ideology' to 'issues'. Posters focusing on ideology are fixed themes that are portrayed every year by these organisations. Issue based posters usually have more variety in terms of visuals. These issues, as mentioned above, range from local and national to international level. When the themes, marginalized or sidelined from the mainstream discourse, appear dialogically on the red bricked wall of JNU, they familiarise the students regarding the structural and strategic neglect of the very issues.

- **Spaces**

Selection of the spaces on the walls is crucial from the standpoint of the politics of visibility. Taking this into account, spaces can be broadly characterized into conventional and

unconventional spaces. Conventional spaces are the ones that grab most of the attention from students. Wall spaces of the Central library, front walls and canteens of school buildings specially SSS II and SSS III, SIS I, SIS II, SL I, SL II are among conventional spaces. Buildings of life sciences and Sanskrit centers were found to be at lowest preference in this category. Kamal Complex, the only market in JNU was found to be another conventional space. Since 2016, walls of JNU have witnessed a shift in visibility after the introduction of a lottery system in the allocation of spaces. The shift was welcomed by many student organizations having low memberships as they could get the space on the walls of the institution which had not been possible due to capturing mode of distributing the walls. The shift also met with criticism from many organizations arguing that it would facilitate the entry of bogus groups in the process. Besides since the lottery system was for conventional spaces only, unconventional spaces were utilized more during 2016. Students could see the posters even at the spaces which used to remain empty throughout the year. For example, many posters were pasted in the passage between School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies and School of International Studies.

- **Themes*Spaces**

Themes and spaces intersect many times on the buildings of the university. Themes are often selected taking into account the nature of the space. For example, the walls of the SL have many posters with Hindi quotes. As pointed out by a participant (P 3), the major reason is that the students join the SL just after passing 12th and Hindi Centre has a larger strength of students in SL. In life sciences, themes based on science are prominent, while in the School of International Studies, issues of international significance surface on the walls.

- **Colour Schemes**

Colour schemes refer to the systematic and organized use of colours in co-creating posters. Colour schemes vary across student political organisations. Organisations have their own preferences for colours to construct their ideological positions in the posters. Besides, one of the organizations keeps the background color as light as possible while another uses bright colors even in the background of the images. After 2011, a shift has been reported in using the color schemes (discussed in detail in Chapter 6).

- **Use of Metaphors**

Each political organization has its own specific metaphors to convey its ideology. Ideologies are manifested through specific visual metaphors by different student organizations in ideology based posters majorly but also play a key role when visuals are modified as per the requirement of the issue based posters.

4.2 Postering as a Community of Practice

The process which is described and discussed as a composite of stages unfolds into a web of reifications, connections, continuities and discontinuities when analyzed as shared histories of learning where social participation transforms the actors into a community of practice. It is maintained by the mutuality of engagement and enriched by brokering of new elements.

4.2.1.Social Participation- Inter-organizational and Intra-organizational

While Inter-organizational level emphasizes the involvement of all student organizations, at intra organizational level students work within the boundaries of specific student organizations. The levels and specificities of social participation are based on the observations of the meetings held in 2017. Group membership is a relatively more salient aspect at inter-group level as members of

various students' political organizations represent their groups in all organizational meetings. At intra-group level, the discussions of more diverse nature take place. .

- **Inter- organizational participation:**

A series of all organizational meetings were held in June and July 2017 to make important decisions regarding postering.. First meeting, called on 5th June 2017 at 10 pm, was centered on four issues. First issue was regarding the mode of occupying the walls. Here the choice had to be made between a lottery system and capturing (*chekna* as organisations call it) of the walls, the process usually adopted to distribute the wall spaces for years. The second issue was concerned with the strategies to be adopted for eliminating the bogus groups. The third issue to be discussed was the retention of the old posters and the fourth point to be reflected was the redistribution of the rest of the wall spaces. Since the meeting was specifically called to decide upon the mode of the distribution of the walls, the extended and detailed discussion taking into account the opinions of all the political organizations was made. Almost all the representatives of different political parties preferred the lottery system as they found it much more democratic than capturing of the walls which supposedly favored the dominant and larger political groups of the campus in the previous years. As a participant argued in the meeting, "*Isi lottery ki vajah se chote sangathano ko last yaer saamne ki deewarein mili hain. Jin sangathano ke paas manpower nahin hain unko bhi same opportunity milni chahiye* / Because of the lottery systems small organisations could get the prime spots on the walls last year. Organisations which don't have manpower should be given the same opportunity" (5 June 2017, 11:10 pm). These organisations were- Hundred Flowers Group, Collective, DSF, DSU, UDSF, BAPSA, ABVP, Gorkha Students JNU. During the meeting AISA, SFI, and NSUI were the only political groups which favored wall capturing (*chekna*) as a mode of distributing the walls. During a discussion later on, one of

the participants voiced her disagreement saying, "*poora process administrative ho gya hai. Kya matlab distribute karna hai koi real state thode hi hai* / The whole process has been made administrative. What do you mean by distribution? Is it a real state?" (6 June 2017, 1:15 am). Many other organizations active on campus like SIO, BASO, AISF were not present for the meeting.

Another meeting was called on 6th June 2017 at 9 PM for finalising the mode of sharing the walls to be adopted for the year 2017. The course of the discussion allowed one person to put forward one's views at a time and others were requested not to interfere. The discussions were intervened by using short comments by many disagreeing with the speaker. Participants got involved in heated arguments regarding the elimination of bogus groups participating in the wall distribution process, the retention of old posters and the emphasis of 'large' organisations on wall capturing.

The discussion gave adequate time and space to each group present for putting forward the views leading to a healthy, sarcastic and humorous course of interactions. The whole discussion was rather democratic unveiling the competition between ABVP and other left leaning groups. But, on the question of mode of sharing the walls, specifically during this first meeting, ABVP and other small organizations stood together against AISA, SFI and NSUI. The meeting was chaired by the JNUSU President and Secretary. Secretary's participation was much more active compared to the president. While the JNUSU Secretary was participating and intervening constantly in the discussion, the President was observing the discussion patiently, speaking only when it was necessary to intervene. With a paper and pen he was noting down the minutes of the meeting and after a long and heated conversation he narrowed down four issues (specified in the earlier section) to be resolved.

Most importantly, among all the participants there were only three girls- the secretary of JNUSU, a member of HFG and another representative from GSJNU. Among them the secretary was chairing the session with the president and a member of HFG was among the most vocal participants of the meeting who put forward her stand on almost every issue raised in the meeting.

On 5ᵗʰ July 2017 in the second all organizational meeting, decisions regarding the retention of the earlier posters were made. It was decided that a minimum of six posters will be retained by a group. Above that limit a group was allowed to retain 50 percent of the posters. Hall was again divided on the question of the number of wall posters to be retained. The disagreement surfaced, again between the representative of AISA and other organisations over the number of retentions.

On 6th July 2017, for wall- marking, walls were categorized in P1 and P2 categories. P1 referred to the spots that were more prominent. These include front walls of the centers, walls of canteens and specifically the walls around the central library. An interesting observation during the meeting was that the representative of AISA was seen tearing the pieces of *parchas* pasted on the posters of AISA specifically complaining about "*Ye kya tareeka hai. Posters ke upper parcha chipka diye hain. Ye to nahin hona chahiye na JNU mein.* / What is this? People have pasted parchas on the posters. This should not happen in JNU" (6 July 2017, 2:05 pm).

A heated argument broke out in front of SSS 2 between the AISA member and representatives of other political organizations. He insisted on retaining all the 50% posters of AISA including the ones which were occupied by other organizations who failed to put up the posters in the occupied spaces last year. He also expressed his disagreement at the inclusion of even those spaces in the process of marking that were not the part of process earlier and were 'discovered' by AISA to

retain its visibility in the campus after getting relatively less numbers of spaces allotted to them during 2016. Yet another disagreement surfaced when the same member used the word 'accumulation' to support his argument which invited a number of political jokes and also angry reactions from other participants. One of the participants pointed out, "*Marx ke chele ho yaar aur accumulation ki baat karte ho. Soch to lo kya bol rahe ho*/ Despite reading Marx, you talk about accumulation. At least, think before speaking" (6th July 2017, 3 pm). Throughout the marking process, political jokes lightened the tense atmosphere. The collaboration during these meetings was at intergroup level, as the participants from different groups coordinated to facilitate the whole process.

Figure 33- (8th July 2017)

Many of the prominent spaces were not marked because of installation of wifi routers. But a few were marked despite being in a fragmented space at the SIS canteen. Such posters were divided into different parts and each part was marked separately.

Many participants left the meeting as soon as SSS III walls were marked. Starting from SL I, SLII, SIS II, SIS I, SES, SSS II, SSS I, SSS III were marked. At last the library was marked and the marking of other spaces was postponed to 7th July at 9 PM which was later rescheduled to 8th July in the afternoon.

The purpose of the meeting, held on 8th July, was to mark the remaining walls. Before the main process of marking started, organizations present there engaged into informal conversations on a variety of issues. Organizations started interacting but the representative of AISA did not participate. He later joined discussions with SFI and both the organizational representatives joined others after the SU President came for the meeting. Representatives of one of the small organisations didn't have anyone on campus to attend the meeting. They requested to include the group in the marking process over the phone call and assured their presence during the lottery to be held later.

Groups during the marking were not as enthusiastic as they were in the meetings. Organizations that participated were much less in the number than those of all organizational meetings. AISA, SFI, NSUI, Fraternity, MSF, SIO, Collective were the only organizations present for wall marking. Towards the end of the meeting, the discussion was held around the issue raised by ABVP for not releasing the poster containing information about the meeting of marking the walls. During the discussion only, the AISA representative declared that the organization would not be able to make posters this year. So, other organizations can paste the posters.

At last, during the wall marking, when walls of Teflas, the cafeteria adjacent to JNUSU office, were marked, the AISA representative again voiced the disagreement sticking with his earlier stand and pointed out that walls of Teflas were never marked earlier and AISA was the organisation which 'discovered' the space and put up the posters first, so the walls of Teflas should not be included in the process. But, the participants present in the meeting marked the walls of Teflas too including the spaces in the process of postering.

Figure 34 (13 July 2017)

After the marking of all the walls, it was decided to hold a meeting for random distribution of the spaces on 13 July 2017. All the present organizations except ABVP registered their names for the lottery. Representatives from ABVP had a stand that they were not informed prior regarding the wall marking and the meeting remain disrupted for a long time followed by the heated arguments. Afterwards, the representatives of ABVP left the room and the lottery process was resumed. In the process, each group declared the number of posters they wish to retain for the year. And, after that the office bearers of JNUSU drew the lots to decide upon the distribution of total 209 prime 1 and prime 2 spots. Many of the organizations like Gorkha Students JNU which were not sure of making posters gave away their spaces to other organizations and withdrew their names from the lottery.

After the lottery the further execution of the activity took over by the student organisations. These organisations prepared the list of the walls allotted to them and started the process of wall measurement and calculation of the estimated cost of the material required for the posters.

- **Intra- organizational Participation: Poster making in different organizations**

Followed by the long process of negotiations, student organizations participating in poster making practice started the negotiations within their respective organizations. They carved different pathways in co-creating the posters. For postering, four students' political organisations who made posters in 2017 were approached. These groups were- BAPSA- Birsa Phule Ambedkar Student Association, DSF- Democratic Student Federation, Collective, SFI- Student Federation of India.

Established by UDSF (United Dalit Students Forum) in 2014 on the birth anniversary of Birsa Munda, a tribal freedom fighter, BAPSA gained huge following among the students within a relatively shorter span of time. The seedling of the organization can be traced back to the disappointment with the left parties regarding the rejection of Lyngdoh recommendations and majorly because of the "failure of left in addressing caste questions". A participant (P (17) puts it like this,

> Go to KC and get to know the caste background of all the shopkeepers over there. Go to mess, ask about the caste background of people who cook and serve. Most importantly, go to hostels and ask about the caste background of people who sweep. In fact, JNU reproduces the similar outside society in a very subtle manner. And Left was never bothered about that….Even during 9th Feb controversy, Jai Bheem was used as a shield. The name of Bheemrao Ambedkar is the one that right wing is afraid of and it was

actually used by left as they know that only Laal Salaam will not work anymore. BAPSA came into existence when Ambedkar's name itself was stigmatized in JNU. Everybody laughed at the name of the group after its inception but BAPSA has struggled and emerged as one of the strongest organization on the landscape of JNU. (22 August 2018, 6:35 pm)

The credit that BAPSA gives itself is introducing portraits of Birsa Munda to the walls of JNU. One of these portraits was removed, as per the participant (P17), by the administration from the walls of the central library canteen during the visit of NAAC inspection team. BAPSA started participating in postering in 2016 followed by the JNU's 9th February controversy.

Observation done at the site of poster making of BAPSA in 2017 unveiled the culmination of various forms of art. In fact, the visual art of resistance came into being amid the performative resistance. The site chosen was the gallery of the SAA and many of the members of the group were registered in the school. Ten members of the organization were present for the purpose of poster making, nine men and one woman. Two of the members were trained artists from SAA only. Duties and tasks were shared among the group members. One of the members who were guiding the whole activity was searching for visuals and discussing it with other members. Almost everyone took part in the discussion around what should be sketched and painted on the posters but, execution of the task, the very act of sketching and painting was done by the artists. Gradually the discussions got diverse and the group was spontaneously divided into many small groups each reflecting on a specific issue regarding the selection of visuals and ideas to be portrayed on the posters. Political jokes were being cracked by the members but for BAPSA almost all the political jokes were centered on caste. These were satirical in nature focusing on

the condemnation of Brahmanism and appropriation of the image of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and other anti-caste revolutionaries..

While the poster on "Hindu Code Bill" was being sketched, students from another political organisation joined in the discussion and suggested changing the colour of '*Janeu*'. Another set of demands came from the members of BAPSA only who urged the artists to make the image of Brahmin more threatening. This was followed by the objection raised regarding the blue background of the Brahmin because blue symbolizes Ambedkarite thinking.

Figure 35 (24 July 2017)

Most importantly, in all the posters made by BAPSA, apart from portraits, the focus was on cartoons and caricatures. It turned out to be the only organization which not only gave the credit

to the original artist whose images were utilized in creating a discourse but also asked the artist who made the painting, to write his name too. Adaptation of images was observed a lot in the whole process of postering. For example-

Figure 36 (22 July 2018)

The whole atmosphere of painting was made more vibrant by Ambedkarite songs and *abhangas* performed by two members of the groups. At midnight, these songs and messages contained in them, motivated the people at work as well as made the atmosphere much lively.

Unlike BAPSA where postering was yet another act of performative resistance, For Democratic Students' Federation, poster making helped in the mobilization of new students as well as united the whole group. Compared to BAPSA where a clear division of duties was marked, DSF exercised this division in a different way. People involved in making posters were the members of the organization and were not the trained artists. A participant remarked, "We do not emphasize the perfection of a created image but on the association of the comrades. It is only in the imperfection of the image that collective efforts get reflected" (17 Juy 2017, 5:23 pm).

Figure 37 (17 July 2017)

In fact, students, specifically women, sketched and painted the posters. Almost all the members were enthusiastic about their work and most of them were undergraduate students whose admission assistance was done by AISA. One of the students put forward, "I am not from DSF. I am here because these people never pressured me to do anything for them as opposed to AISA

who did my admission assistance but wanted my help in organizing UGBM " (17 July 2017, 6:10 pm).

In DSF, it was not observed that students did not express any sense of ownership of the images and posters they co-created. One student sketched it and left. Another joined to colour a part of the poster. Yet another joined and corrected the mistake made by another person. Whether the suggestions were accepted or rejected, both were preceded by lengthy discussions. This was specifically true in case of the selection of quotes and even during such discussions and debates shared sense of responsibility was marked throughout the poster making sessions.

Collective established in 2015 also decided to make posters in 2017. For them, like all others political parties, big posters were the medium of registering the organization's presence on the political scenario of the university. Being a budding organization in campus, collective struggled in making the posters at faster pace but whatever posters they made were the result of hours' of brainstorming on themes, visuals and quotes. For example there was a heated discussion on the following poster specifically regarding the latter part of the slogan- *Na angrezi Pragati ki Pehchan* (Nor English a symbol of progress). Activists were seen divided on whether this should be mentioned or not. One side of the argument was that the statement is invalid in the face of the real scenario of the market where English is the benchmark of success. Another side held the view that it needs to be challenged. The debate took many turns but could not reach to any conclusion on the day of postering and it was decided that the poster would be put up but debate would be resumed later. Compared to other organizations, Collective was found to be more enthusiastic regarding poster making specifically for visibility in the campus. The stand and politics of the organization should be properly conveyed, that is why almost all the issues were

discussed at two levels- the opinions of the individuals over different issues and the stand of the organization as a whole.

Figure 38 (1 August 2017, 12:49 am)

For Student Federation of India, poster making was a spontaneous spurt of creativity. Although the organization made a lot many posters in 2016, many of these could not be pasted, according to a member of the group. In 2017, they decided to write quotes on posters. So, many members of the organization came together with the bunch of papers and colours and started writing the quotes with which they actually could relate most or which they wanted to be put up on the walls of JNU. One participant, a man, along with other friends co-created the poster with the slogan on

menstruation. Even the three words 'TAX- TABOO- FEAR' were added after long brainstorming session among the three participants.

Figure 39 (5 August 2017)

Figure 40 (5 August 2017)

Many quotations were the ones written mandatorily by the organisation. These are 'Study and Struggle' and "*Hum ladenge sathi aur jeetenge*/ we will struggle and fight, comrade." For other quotations students took help of internet. Lines written by philosophers, leaders and scholars were browsed whole night. Each quote was followed by a discussion led by the person who had, more or less, read the works of writer of the quote in question. Coming to stylistics, a senior member of the group helped everyone in differentiating the ways one can write with a brush. Even those members of the organisation who did not have any experience of drawing and painting enthusiastically sat to write the quote of their choice. A few also used relatively simple imagery to depict the idea on paper.

Figure 41 (6 August 2017)

Later on, selected posters from the repository of these posters with quotations, were pasted all over the campus.

In all the groups the different pathways bear upon different patterns of relations among actors, affordances, artefacts and action. All the four groups observed and participants on site which were interviewed always had audience in their mind while making the posters. Many of these participants, as discussed during the sessions, imagined their past selves while postering and contributed to the portrayal of issues what they themselves expected to be familiar with while joining the university. It is through these posters that they intended to reach to the students admitted to the university. Bu, coming to the role of actors, all the groups differed significantly. In the groups like BAPSA, the major work was done by professional artists while in DSF all the students collectively participated in postering. In collective, although all the participants took part in the making- writing, sketching, painting, the whole work is led by a few people. SFI was at another level where all the actors got freedom to utilize their own affordances but selection of the posters to put up on the walls out of all the prepared posters was driven by the ideology of the group.

It is through this relationship between the *student activists* (as party members are called by those students having no affiliation with any political organization on campus) and the very practice they engage in, a link between the participants of postering and other students of the university gets established. At both the levels of participation, inter as well as intra organizational, a lot many processes are at work and are discussed in following sections of the chapter.

4.2.2- Mutuality of Engagement

At both the levels, inter-organizational and intra-organizational, mutual engagement is what makes the process of co-creation possible. There are few core elements of this mutuality of interactions. First is the membership of a student political group of the university. This

membership is mandatory to participate in the all organizational meetings held for the purpose of postering and also for other agendas. These meetings are supposed to be led and addressed by the union where opinions of all the organizations are coordinated. It is to be noted that recognition of a person as member within a group is sufficient to include the person in the all organizational meeting. This holds specifically true for smaller political organizations. Here, in almost all the cases, no official or on paper membership is required. On inter-organizational level a clear hierarchy was visible during the fieldwork. Despite the fact that student union usually leads and convenes the meeting, AISA took an upper hand in the decision making process regarding the postering. It created unrest among most of the organizations present in the meetings.

What matters most for being engaged in the community of practice is the feeling of belongingness or being included. This operates strikingly at inter-organisational level more than within organization and explains well why ABVP is not the integral part of the whole practice. The group stands apart in terms of cooperating or resolving the issues through dialogue. The argument that broke out in the second all organisation meeting for lottery, the insistence on the need of circulating an official poster for the meeting, and above all, the way it sets apart from all the groups on ideological plane keep the group away from being in the core group of practice at the same time, maintaining its stake and presence in the larger practice as it does not fail to register its anger again the other student organizations and claiming 'being alone' among all the groups active in campus.

Mutual engagement not only instills the feeling of belongingness among the members of diverse groups but also makes the negotiations among the agents of diverse background and ideology possible at both the levels. At first level, people from different ideologies come together to negotiate the mechanisms and decisions on postering. So, knowing the fact that GSJNU will not

be able to make posters this year due to the unavailability of the participants, it gives away its space to other interested groups. While marking walls, it becomes difficult to identify which person belongs to which group as everyone takes up a duty voluntarily. Yet another case was of an AISA representative who was selectively seen fixing the torn posters of his own organizations specifically. At intra group level, among all the groups, especially true of Collective, these negotiations were found very striking. They discussed these differences at length before creating the posters.

Another important strategy highlighting the mutuality of engagement among different groups was political humor. Through ironically humorous statements, members of various groups not only point out their opinions but keep the spirit of dialogue alive. For instance an activist from AISF was seen commenting to another participant during wall marking, "*Yaar ye tumhare organization wale tumhari keemat nhi jaanege. Abhi bhi keh rahe hain purine ghar vapas aa jao*/ Dear, your organisation does not know your value. We are still asking you to come back home" (8 July 2017, 3:30 pm).

This long standing engagement results in the development of mutual relationships within and outside groups. Within groups these relationships develop intentionally or unintentionally both. A participant (P19) and member of a student organization in the campus reveals this about her competing organization,

> They especially prefer that romantic relationships should be encouraged among the people within the organization. So they are able to sense who the people who can go together are and then they, in a planned way, are assigned common duties in postering. But things are different when relationships are formed outside organizations, like my

loyalty has been doubted by my own party because of being in relationship with a person outside my group" (20 August 2018, 11:53 pm).

In the context of postering, mutual relationships are not only of love, friendships, affection and happiness; they are also of animosity, rivalry, disagreements, and conflicts. So postering as a community of practice is not always about peaceful and harmonious co-existence of the members of diverse backgrounds and ideologies but also of hatred and rivalry. During the all-organizational meetings the constant conflicts between the representative of AISA and other organizational representatives reveals the fair share of conflicts and disagreement that any community of practice can have. Since participants are connected in diverse and complex ways with each other, these relationships can be guided by the power and dependence both. AISA being the largest organization, at least from the vantage point of visibility generated by the posters, continue to exercise the power during such meetings. But, knowing the fact that postering is the collective activity, continuously engage with the participants in negotiating and finalizing the ways of coordination.

4.2.4- Co-creating a Joint Enterprise

This mutual engagement is around the co-creation of a joint enterprise where all the participants are stakeholders and negotiate the do's and don'ts of the practice. Despite all their disagreements, heated arguments, and diverse perspectives, participants in the postering find a way to continue the practice, and thereby, maintain and enrich the practice of postering. They are supposed to be following certain reified norms of mutual accountability like no organization can invade another organization's space once allotted or captured, no organization can tear the poster of a rival organization, and all the organizations have to abide by the mode chosen by the majority

regarding any aspect of postering. Many times boundaries are invaded, rules are violated but such matters, most of the time, are brought into attention through one or other channels for example, by publicly shaming the perpetrator, by making a poster again, by circulating the concern over social media, or through conversation among the representatives of groups.

The enterprise developed by the community of practice is not 'self-contained' in nature. It is organized and sustained for fulfilling certain goals and also becomes a response to the conditions and constraints they have to operate with. The political socialization of the students and the political visibility for the group are the two conscious specific ends met with the practice of postering. Now these ends have to be achieved despite the constraints imposed, from time to time, by the administration. This explains how and why the walls of SSS-III became one of the major spots to put up the posters after the admission process started to be conducted from the Convention Centre.

The practice, however, does not transform or transcend the conditions created by the administration but respond to those conditions in ways not determined by institution. This is why even after the posters have been banned by university administration since 2019 and an order was issued to remove the posters existing on the walls, participants started utilizing cloth banners, graffiti and virtual spaces too to continue the process of co-creating spaces of dialogues and debates. The whataspp statuses of the participants are the new sites of display for the old posters. The participants share their contacts with the newly admitted students, who, in turn, start following up the status updates of the participants, thereby, enabling an onset of the peripheral trajectories of the newly admitted students into the practice of postering. So, the new challenges result in negotiations of new strategies of response keeping the joint enterprise dynamic and emergent in structure and functions.

4.2.5- Negotiating a Shared Repertoire

Another crucial aspect that kept this joint enterprise alive is the shared repertoire including routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions and concepts that the poster making organizations have produced or adopted in the course of its existence, and which have become part of its practice. 5th May is known as unofficially the date of all organizational meeting. Summer term is known as the time to be invested in creating posters. Participants used to be in the look out of images, caricatures, paintings, quotes, poems the whole year to utilize in the posters. Mechanisms are discussed at length to get the postering done within the duration of summer vacation because participants need to gear up for campaigning for their respective organizations once the admissions start. The way the repertoire around the practice of postering has evolved, it reflects a history of mutuality of engagement over the preferred ways of sharing the walls depending on the conditions and constraints at any given point of time. The shift from wall capturing to wall allocation can be interpreted as part of the negotiations in relation to the shared repertoire of the community participating in the practice of postering.

The shared repertoire also becomes the source of boundaries of the practice. Only the participants have access to the ways the whole process actually work out. During the interactions, it was found that hardly any student who is neither a member nor a sympathizer of any of these students' political organizations know about the long procedures of the sharing of walls. These students participate only to the extent of reading and interpreting the posters for themselves and not directly contributing to the process of postering.

4.2.5- Beyond the Boundaries: Brokering and Connections Creating Continuities

The process discussed until this point has drawn upon the internal configuration of practice where diverse meanings are negotiated and artefacts are generated by the actors participating in practice. But the practice also involves relations and connections with the world lying beyond the peripheries of postering. Like the levels of participation, these peripheries are also defined by the kind of relations maintained outside the practice. Broadly, there can be three ways these relations are formed in the process of postering.

First, the practice is enriched by the efforts and activities of 'renowned political activists' who formally are no longer associated with the practice anymore. Many of the former members of these student political organizations working across diverse fields do contribute in the process of postering by either through occasional visits to the sites of poster making or sending their inputs and suggestions to the current 'authorities' of a specific student organizations they 'feel associated' with.

Secondly, artists who are not part of any such student organizations and work in different capacities on their own also become the bearers of maintaining these external relations. Many of these organizations approach these artists to make the posters and, in turn, yet another phase of meaning negotiations starts, thereby, enriching the process as a whole. This contribution need not necessarily be directed from the artists themselves, there are instances where content of posters are heavily influenced by specific artists working somewhere else unaware of the facts that his art accessible in the public sphere is enriching yet another practice of negotiating meanings in an educational space.

Thirdly, the connections and exchanges with other educational spaces also permeate the boundaries of practice and form a set of external relations. The support and contributions of JNU students to the *Pinjra Tod* movement initiated by Delhi university students is an example of interconnections forming at the peripheries of the postering practice. Many groups across social media were formed, protests were led and slogans were raised in support of the students fighting against the oppressive living conditions faced by women hostellers of Delhi University.

Actors involved in different sets of relations formed at the boundary of this practice also become the brokers who introduce novel elements into the practice itself, and thus, get involved in the process of participation and reification of new meanings. Artistic works of Shyam Sundar has been a catalyst in giving BASPA a status of prominent anti caste political organization of the campus. And the posters inspired by the artist's work transformed into the resources in the struggle against caste and have been utilized in diverse ways across protests, social media channels, and also in public meetings. Within the boundary of practice the task of brokering is taken up, predominantly at intra-organizational level. At this level, the responsibility of brokering lies with, again, the office bearers or the senior members of the groups. At inter organizational level the emphasis is majorly on the co-creation of the conditions and constraints that make the co-existence of diverse ideological discourses possible on the walls of the campus. As discussed in detail in the data, the task of co-ordination is performed by the student union JNUSU and the office bearers of JNUSU facilitate the maintenance of the practice by giving a platform of negotiations to different students' political groups willing to participate in postering in a given year.

4.2.6- Postering as a Boundary Practice and Walls as Boundary objects

Engaged in the practice of postering, for the members of students' organizations having diverse ideologies, postering becomes a boundary practice to come together and negotiate the ideas. Although, all the organizations remain very careful that the ideas of posters finalized within the organization must not be divulged, all-organizational meetings provide the platforms for the interactions of diverse ideologies for co-creating the campus into a more dialogic space. As mentioned, the relationships of conflict, hatred and rivalry do exist, but, postering as a boundary practice make the co-existence of ideologies possible.

In the process, the walls of the university serve as boundary objects as these are utilized at other practices and received by different sets of participants and audience for a distinct purpose. For student political organizations they are the means of admission assistance conveying their ideas and ideologies to the upcoming students, to register their presence within the campus and to reify the meanings and opinions on the issues that the specific organizations stand for. For students, not directly involved in the process of postering, these are the channels to know a campus a little more closely. They become aware not only of the presence of these diverse ideologies operating in campus, but also of the multiple perspectives on national and international issues they witness in the media every day. For administration, these walls are the part of larger infrastructure that accommodates various practices related to the functioning of a higher educational institution. Thus, from the vantage point of administration, posters on the walls symbolize the invasion of 'their space', vandalisation of public property and 'in-disciplinary acts' by students who, in turn, are served with proctorial inquiry notices and are 'punished' with fines, transfer of hostels etc. The administrative approach of authorities has resulted in installation of white boards at different

places across the university and students are strictly instructed to paste posters, notices and *parchas* on the 'designated spaces' only.

4.2.7 Negotiation of Identities

Postering, specifically for participants, also become the channel to negotiate the meanings of their experiences in relation to their membership in the community of practice. As pointed out in the section of inter and intra organizational levels of participation, the various tasks related to postering are performed by various actors having different position within their respective groups, it is during the course of performing and contributing in practice that they start experiencing the practice, interpreting their positions vis-à-vis postering, understanding the duties they are trusted with, becoming aware of what they actually know and what they don't know, what they should know and what they should not try to know, and, above all, the experiencing and knowing both are negotiated during the practice itself.

These negotiations open up the specific trajectories for the participants. In case of postering, the identities are majorly negotiated at intra-organizational levels where more diverse and in-depth discussions take place and where the decisions around ideas and ideologies are taken. Most importantly, these trajectories are not linear. These intersect, go back and forth, depending upon the conditions and constraints in the context of a specific organization. Major trajectories are peripheral, inbound, insider, boundary and outbound. Here it is to be noted that these trajectories are not just the ways of being and becoming as the participants construct in their narratives, but the way they experience the participation in the practice of postering, the way they negotiate their ways into the practice and the way they 'perform' their negotiated reifications of identities.

A student, not affiliated to or sympathsing to any of students' organizations follow the peripheral trajectory into the practice. S/he has acess to the practice only at the level of reading and interpretation after the display and not at the sites of 'co-production' of posters. Any such student sharing the impact of any poster or any quote that s/he remembers follows this course into the participation in the practice, never reaching to the full membership of the community of practice. Artists hired by various organizations who do not have 'studentship' of the university follow, more or less, this trajectory of peripherality in the course of negotiating their experiences of membership. They are guided by the participants engaged in brainstorming sessions held for thr making of posters. But in case of artists not having the studentship, this peripheral trajectory intersects with boundary trajectory, a catalyst in brokering of novel elements into the practice.

Yet another trajectory of negotiating the identity observed was inbound. Many of the participants join the postering sessions with the prospects of full participation in the future. During 2017, many newcomers participated in the poster making sessions of the group, DSF. Through their interactions at the site of co-productions, through their own narratives delineating their positions regarding the students' political groups and through their preferred ways of participating in the postering, it was obvious that though they were not the members or sympathizers of DSF, most of them ended becoming a member of the organization, thereby, negotiating their experiences of identity vis-à-vis postering.

Many participants, despite being insiders of the groups, negotiate and renegotiate their experiences in relation to postering. Here, the interplay of seniority and juniority manifests itself. In the words of a participant (P16),

Starting mein laga tha, are bhai, yahan activism ke liye art bhi karna pdega lekin dheere poora tareeka pata chala poster banana ka. Pehle main sirf dekhta tha poster bante huye, halaki group ka member tha,lekin dheere dheere maine bhi poster banana start kiya aur ek point pe to poora lead bhi kiya tha kyuki I was increasingly dissatisfied with the issues dealt with in posters one year. Meeting mein baat rakhni pdhi apni but finally, I led the poster making for that year. / In the beginning I felt that, oh no, here we have to do art as well to continue activism. But, gradually I got to know the full process of poster making. Earlier I used to observe the poster making, although I was the member of the group,, gradually I started making the posters and at a point I also led the process for a year because I was increasingly dissatisfied with the issues dealt with in the posters. I put forward my view in the meetingand I finally I led the poster making for that year. (18 September 2018, 7:10 pm).

Participants having insider trajectories continue renegotiating their position depending on the conditions and constraints attached. Many times becoming during the course of renegotiating. A participants turns into 'rebel' and the trajectory of being an insider takes any of the two routes. Either it intersects with the boundary trajectory and the 'rebel' participant introduces new elements within the practice or it intersects with peripheral trajectory where the 'rebel' participant withdraws the full membership from the group, thereby, limiting his/her contribution and participation in the very practice.

One of the most significant trajectories of negotiating the experiences vis-à-vis postering is outbound trajectories. This, in true sense, connects the local with the global. Participants leaving the university usually follow this trajectory recreating the space of novel relationships, redefining

the mutual relationship developed during the practice of postering, carving a new position or association with the community of practice and attempting to see the world outside the practice in a new way. Many alumni, specifically within few years after leaving the university, do visit the postering sites of the organizations they used to be members of. They not only establish the connection of the practice with the outside world making the boundaries more permeable but also join the course of boundary trajectory reinventing and reinvigorating postering in an organization.

4.3 Summary and Conclusion

The chapter discussed how the whole process of postering transforms the actors and action into a community of practice which, then, negotiate and utilize various resources in the co-creation of artefacts to be 'consumed' in the cultural context of the university. This community is defined by the denser relations of mutual engagement in the pursuit of a joint enterprise and developing a shared repertoire in order to sustain the practice contributing to the shared histories of engagements. Postering, in this course, serves as a boundary practice around which ideological negotiations take place on the walls of the university. The very practice also becomes a channel to negotiate the identities of the participants following specific trajectories as they enter or lead out to the community of practice.

Chapter V-Walls as Doorways: How Walls permeate the Psychological Space

The present chapter has two sections. First section discusses the strategies deployed on the walls designed to permeate the psychological space of the students. The second section deals with this psychological permeation of reified discourses on the wall into the everyday narratives of students not directly involved with the sites of production.

5.1 Ways of Seeing: Visual Technologies at work

5.1.1 Technologies of Display

When it comes to poster art, postering community utilizes institutional technologies to articulate particular forms of knowledge. These techniques serve as ways of deconstructing and reconstructing the meanings. They produce a dialectic space containing multivoicedness out of the red-bricked architectural space. What is notable here is that these technologies of display are utilization of the given space. That means the architecture was never constructed to accommodate these posters. It is these posters which constructed the dialogic space.

Figure 42

The first important technique used is the differentiation of the buildings across the campus. The classificatory schema is constructed as buildings are differentiated by two dimensions- thematic classification and number of the posters. This differentiation is most visibly marked between the buildings of science and non-science schools. Most of the science schools of the campus are populated with a few theme based posters that are less likely to invite contemplative eyes of the onlookers compared to the posters pasted on the walls of non-science school buildings. The thematic organizations of posters aligned with the academic expertise of various schools become the markers for students.

One specific and major technique that applies to all forms of poster art in the campus is that the art is here in an open display and accessible to everyone in the campus. Unlike galleries, it is located in the everyday context of people residing in the campus. As mentioned by one of the people involved in postering what facilitates this open display of art is the material basis of these posters. "Here the texture of the wall does not support pasting the poster for a longer duration. It used to come off very soon due to the harsh weather conditions of Delhi. Because of that AISA for the first time experimented with the material of these posters and utilized croma sheets in postering. After that, almost all the organizations started using the same sheets to avoid wear and tear."

So, the efforts to overcome material constraints associated with postering turn the campus into a 'gallery' in a way as same posters occupy the space for a longer duration to be the part of everyday discourses.

Coming to yet another technology associated with the exhibit of the posters is spatial organizations of the posters which is intentional and unintentional both and adds to the

classificatory schema of the campus. This shift from intentional spatial organization to unintentional one was observed after 2016 when a lottery system was introduced to distribute the spaces on the walls and spaces were classified into prime and peripheral spots. Earlier since all the organizations used to 'fight' to reserve the spaces on an agreed upon date, the selection of the space was relatively more intentional. Now the intentionality is exercised by deliberately initiating a dialogue through posters. Many of the organizations paste specific posters in a proximal distance of posters that present competing ideologies. For example- here are the two posters from the walls at the back of school of social sciences II and III respectively.

When such dialogues are created, certain ways of viewing are invited from the onlookers- contemplative eyes to see the visually and spatially fragmented reality. This contemplative gaze is maintained as the audience follows the posters across spaces. Spots are arranged in a way so that it becomes easier to contemplate about the posters in relation to each other, further inviting in inter-textual readings and interpretations of these posters.

This applies more to the posters pasted by the group AISA where the artist intentionally creates abstract art in most of the work that requires contemplation. This serves two purposes for the organization. First, audiences who are motivated to contemplate, stop by, think and reflect. Secondly, the abstract art lingers more in the memory of those who cannot interpret and for them postering in JNU becomes synonymous to AISA.

5.1.2 Textual Technologies

There are certain ways how these posters are presented as the 'objects to be contemplated'. Captions are one of these particular ways. Captions usually include slogans and names of the organizations. These invite even the unattending eyes and register their presence in people's consciousness. One of the examples are the posters centered around AFSPA. Posters demanding

to scrap AFSPA are often anchored by a slogan written in broad letters and the name of the organization. One of the AISA poster puts this as

"End the impunity of armed forces to kill, rape, brutalise at will in the North East and

Kashmir!!

Fight State Repression!!

Defend people's rights against UAPA, communal witch-hunt and draconian laws!!"

These slogans anchoring the visuals give a context even to the 'ignorant eyes'- onlookers who are not familiar with the law of AFSPA.

Yet another example is a poster by SFI which is anchored by the captions "India- A Republic of hunger" and "India- A Republic of Inequality". The caption immediately sets the context for the audiences who do not pay heed to the visuals and texts in detail.

The posters as a whole prioritize some information over others. Audiences are led to know about the issues, context of the issues and importantly, the organizational affiliation. This is prioritized over the names of the artists who actually sketch, paint and write the posters. Exceptionally, a few posters by BAPSA made and pasted in 2017, worked with a different strategy.

Figure 43

Here not only the artist leaves a signature at the bottom right corner but the source of adaptation is also mentioned. As mentioned by a participant (P20),

It was done as per ideology the organization stands for which forbids them to usurp someone else's work. An organization working against caste based structure of the society, first, cannot claim anyone else's idea as its own; secondly, it is also crucial to bring the original creator of these sketches as well as the ones who translated, rethought and reimaged these works of art at the foreground of these posters. (24 July 2017, 11:10 pm).

Added to this, in the first case discussed above, decoding of the painting in relation to the source of adaptation and reproduction also rests on the audience while the second clusters of posters readily provide this to the audience inviting 'inquisitive eyes of the audience'.

Moreover, yet another aspect that deserves attention here are the texts that anchor the visuals and are anchored by the captions of the posters. This is a relatively more interpretive part of any posters and can be called technologies of interpretations. These are utilized in primarily two ways. When these texts are set against the visuals and generate contradictions, it requires a much more sustained attention from the audiences. For example, a poster (Poster VI, Chapter I) by AISA where the portraits of three terrified women/girls are anchored by a strong satirical text titled 'What was she wearing' by Steve Connel can be interpreted at many levels. First, the vulnerable women in conjunction with the text can be seen as invoking a sense of regret among the audience which engage in victim blaming in rape cases. Second, the difference in their facial expression specifically communicated through the eyes as they gaze back at the audience can be seen conveying that the position and response to each victim can vary. The one in the foreground

appears as helpless and conversing with the audience directly even when her mouth is covered with a cloth symbolizing the act of violence committed against her. The one in the background conveys a sense of numbness through her eyes while the one at the bottom right conveys the sense of shock and pain inflicted on her.

Such posters usually end up generating the process of relay where meanings are more layered and require a deeper reflection from the audience. In contrast to that there are posters where visuals and captions are in sync with the text.

Here technologies of interpretation are relatively fixed and anchored to convey a strict meaning. For example, a poster by AISA pasted on the building of one of science schools, presents a portrait of Einstein created with the help of stencil, is anchored by the text written in anti capitalist framework titled as 'This Crippling of individuals I consider the worst evil of capitalism' and uses the image of an icon of science by emphasizing his work 'Why Socialism'.

Figure 44

Yet another textual technology is repetition. There are posters which are remembered across generations of students as they are repeated in different years or by different organizations. *Eklavya's poster* titled 'If you had kept your thumb, history would have been different' is an apt example of how these repetitions, temporally and spatially, work to register a longer impact in people's consciousness.

5.1.3 Technologies of Layout

The spaces where technologies of layout are operationalized are those where the audience is invited to sit, especially in groups. Canteens, spaces surrounding canteens, spaces outside the school buildings which accommodate sitting areas are spaces where these technologies are utilized at their best.

In canteens, all the walls are classified under prime spots and each wall is covered by the poster. So, it does not matter where you sit in the canteen, at least one poster occupies your perceptual space. Most of these posters use long poems and quotes in such areas as they anticipate longer and relaxed attention of the audience. They also utilize bright and contrasting colors to make best use of the light colored walls of the canteens.

The layouts are intentionally or unintentionally dialectic in nature emphasizing the multivoicedness of discourses. The case of the School of International Sciences can be used as an example in this regard. There are six posters pasted on the walls of the canteen. While the poster by ABVP titled 'Communist Morality- Reject Communism' is set against the one by TNM on 'saffronization of education' and by DSU 'on privatization and saffronization of education. The one criticizing the privatization of education by DSU can be seen in complementing the one by AISA 'imagining no possession by John Lenon'. The one on the armed forces impunity in the

certain sections of the country emphasizes the protest by a woman, Irom Shramila, for the welfare of her brothers and sisters suffering due to the 'draconian law' is set in conjunction with poem by Kishwar Naheed, a feminist urdu writer from Pakistan, who challenges the system to punish her as she has 'freed the womanhood from the insanity of the deluded night'.

Figure 45

Figure 46

Figure 47

Figure 48

A spectator sitting in the canteen become the participant of these discourses and within a few minutes s/he is introduced to the idea of saffronization, communism and its portrayed blind spots, struggles of people in Kashmir and North east region of the country, a feminist voice from Pakistan resisting against religious fundamentalism and violence against women, the idea of the world having no possession and perils of privatization.

5.1.4 Relatively Impalpable Technologies

In order to overcome the ephemerality of posters which can easily be destroyed by touch, distance is used as an important strategy. Most of the posters are pasted on the large walls inaccessible to the human touch. People are invited to 'look' and 'reflect' and not to 'touch' and 'ruin'. This also extends, in a way, to the organizations involved in postering as there is an unsaid rule that no organization will put any 'parchas' and posters on an already pasted poster.

This impalpability is relatively less in case of the posters pasted in the canteens as these are at proximal distance of the students but being eateries, these spaces are less vulnerable to be destroyed by touch as compared to the posters pasted in staircases and walls inside the buildings. As an artist puts it, "we wish to paste the posters in closer proximity to the students but most of the time they end up destroying the posters, consciously or unconsciously by using nails across the edges of the bricks".

Here as obvious the purpose is to produce an audience which is discouraged to touch and encouraged to look at the posters.

5.1.5 Spaces behind the displays

The walls of the schools and canteens are the places where 'objects to be contemplated' are displayed and where the carefully structured forms of knowledge work, but there are spaces where the structures of knowledge are reflected on, brainstormed and co- created. These spaces are mostly the messes of the hostels where meetings are held after dinner. Halls of the student union building are also utilized for this purpose. Students belonging to different organizations meet in these places with their ideas for the posters. These spaces are catalysts in operationalizing the construction, reconstruction and technologies of display.

Ironically, the walls of hostel messes are blank and posters are not pasted here. Here printed visuals and texts find place on the doors as well as the walls of many hostel rooms. Students putting these visuals and texts strategize their public image as per their political ideology. Many students put up portraits of Ambedkar, Che Guera, Jyotiba Phule, Savitribai Phule and Periyar etc on their doors. It guides the people of different organizations as to which rooms are to be campaigned and which are not. Many students put up the organization's sticker or batch on their doors which, in turn, serve the more obvious cue to know about a person's ideological affiliation. These symbols tacitly limit the access of various organizations to campaign their ideologies across many rooms.This is an example of how individual subjectivities are expressed.

5.2 How Walls permeate the everyday narratives

The previous section presents the analysis of the technologies that facilitate the intended ways of seeing. But, reified discourses on the walls of the campus do permeate in everyday narratives of the students, specifically those who do not belong to any specific student political organization. A critical analysis of these narratives unveils the paths of this permeation. Since the question posed to the participants of the research oriented them to look back at their journey in the institution, most of the participants constructed their stories in a linear progression. The stark

similarity found in all the narratives of the participants of research is that while narrating their experiential journey they mention at least one poster, often a quote or image that impacted them. Most importantly, this 'impact' is not necessarily constructed positively in all cases. Analyzed based on the way the narrative was positioned vis-a-vis poster art, each narrative followed its own idiosyncratic progression of the events.

5.2.1 How Artists position themselves

The narratives of the artists are filled with the instances and stories, largely chronological, around the making of specific posters. They trace their evolutionary trajectories of 'constantly becoming' an artist. This stands specifically true for the artists who are hired by the organizations. Narrating his journey A(1) points out,

> *JNU mein maine as artist bahut grow kiya hai. Kitni cheezein hoti thi jo main pehle kiya karta tha. Jaise Bharat Mata ko draw karna dekh lo. Yahan aane se pehle main bahut draw karta tha kyuki utni understanding nahin thi. Pehli baar jab maine bharat mata draw karna chaha tab mujhe baith ke samjhaya gaya ke kyu hum ye metaphor draw nahin karte. Basically, JNU mein desh ke door door jagahon se bachcha aata hai. Har koi us metaphor se relate kar paaye ye zaroori nahin. Iske baad agle saal aur experiment kiye meri khud ki bhi kai painitins maine posters mein banayin JNU ke liye* / I have grown a lot as an artist in JNU. There were so many things that I used to do earlier. For Example, take the example of *Bharat Mata.* Before coming here I also used to draw *Bharat Mata* in my paintings because I did not have such understanding. First, when I tried to draw *Bharat Mata* in a poster I was made to understand why we do not use that metaphor. Basically, in JNU students come from far off and remote sections of the country too. It is not necessary that everyone relates with that metaphor. Next year, I did

more experiments and I also used my own painting in composing the posters for JNU (18 July 2018, 6:30 pm).

He further positions himself within the narrative as someone who 'contributes' in the poster making where others are also involved in the process,

Hum posters banate hain lekin poster making sirf banane wale ka kaam nahin hai. Poets hote hain group mein. Lines wahi dhhond ke laate hain poster pe likhne ko. Fir likhne wale bhi to aur hote hain jo apne ek style se likhte hain posters pe. Log generally artist ko hi creator samajh lete hain/ We make Posters but poster making is not only the work who draws or paints the poster. There are poets in the group too. They only look for the lines to write in the posters. Also, there are people who write in the posters in a specific style. People usually take artists only as creators. (18 July 2018, 6:30 pm).

Such self-positioning is prominent in the narratives of the artists whether they are the students of the university and member of the specific political organization or are just hired by the students' organizations, or are the members of the same organization working outside the university. The narrative of A (1) constantly follows this attachment and detachment pattern. In the progression of the events in the narrative, he, on one hand constructs himself as someone who is part of a larger process and on the other hand, as central to the process of postering by positioning himself as agentive in relation to the decisions making, "*Kuch posters hain jo main nahin banata. Jaise main portraits nahin banata. Aisi kisi bhi tarah ki hero worship mein mujhe yakeen nahin*"/ There are posters which I do not create. For example, I do not make portraits.I do not believe in any such hero worship" (18 July 2018).

The narrative of A (5), although linear in the progression of events, constantly constructs himself as an 'artist who has to fight a mental battle' , "Zaroori nahin hai jo aap ki artistic sensibility ho

vahi sangathan ki ideology ke saath fit baithe. Artist ko kai baar mental battle ladni hoti hai aur apni sensibility se pehle sangathan ki marzi ko dekhna hota hai/ It is not necessary that your artistic sensibility aligns with the ideology of the group. An artist has to fight psychologically as well many times and has to put the will of the organization before his or her sensibility. (12 July 2018, 6:15 pm).

Although, A(1) also constructs himself as the actor experiencing such dilemmas, but as the narrative progresses, it is easier for A(1) to detach himself from pain and he proceeds with the narrative. It might be possible because of the peripheral trajectory of participation in the process as A(1) has not been a student of the university but A (5) is a student of the university and also a sympathizer of the organization.

This is also true for the agentic positioning of oneself in relation to the 'ownership of the art'. While A (1) positions himself in a pattern of attachment and detachment with 'his' posters, A (5) follows the course of owning his artworks and constructs himself as 'the creator' with the posters created.

Yet another narrative of an artist A (3) takes an altogether different course in positioning himself vis-a-vis postering. He embeds his own identity as an artist in the collective process. The stories and references of the specific posters made by him are also embedded in the negotiation among the 'actors' involved.

> All my JNU memories are associated with JNU politics in one way or the other. *Lekin jab yahan aaye the Marx Lenin ka naam bhi nahin suna tha. Bahut alag jagah lagi thi campus mein*. I came to know about the nature of student politics through some other organization… but if I am comparing then, the present organization, *chahe poster making ho ya kuch aur interaction* If it is a poster making or any other interaction. I feel the

belongingness. *Poster making bhi ek mauka ban jata hai aur logon se judne ka aur seekhne ka/* Poster making provide a way to connect with people and learn from them /All my JNU memories are associated with JNU politics in one way or the other But, I didn't even know the name of Marx and Lenin before coming here. Campus used to feel like an altogether different place.I came to know about the nature of student politics through some other organization… but if I am comparing then, the present organization,If it is a poster making or any other interaction. I feel the belongingness. Poster making provide a way to connect with people and learn from them. (10 August 2018, 3:20 pm).

The very purpose of putting the narrative of the artists among all other actors in an altogether different category was guided by the way participants of the process reify the identity of 'being an artist'. When approached for the interactions, many of the research participants responded saying, "but, I am not an artist". This takes us to the next section how other research participants, specifically the audience, position themselves in relation to postering.

5.2.2 How audience position themselves: Posters as nodal points in narratives

The major departure from the narratives of actors including artists and other participants of postering is manifested in the narratives of the research participants not associated or affiliated to any student organization. As contrasting to the 'constant becoming' dominant in the narratives of artists and other actors (discussed in detail in chapter IV), in the everyday narratives of research participants having no direct involvement in the process of the negotiation of meaning at the site of production, the reference of the posters serve as a nodal point for the transition in the narrative. All these participants never had the full membership or access to the postering,

therefore, can be seen having a peripheral trajectory of identity in practice. For example, in the following excerpt, this transition is oriented from institutional to personal trajectory.

> ...they do need to reflect on their modes of protest .Now, if I talk about people like me not having a direct exposure to how these organizations work, we do want to contribute from our end to the struggles led by them, like for example attendance issues. That was unjustified for sure. But there was no clarity at least to me at that time where the protest was proceeding towards…but yeah, the kinds of academic opportunities students get in the campus and also the kind of experiences.....talking about the experiences, these have been mixed good and bad both. I still remember my first day in the university when I saw this quote on the wall of the administration block- *Lado padhai karne ko Padho samaj Badalne ko*. I was doing admission formalities. At that time I was skeptical if I would be able to continue the journey here. But, that quote is still etched in my mind. *Usne mujhe sikahya ke ladna bura nahin hota/* that taught me that it is not wrong to fight. (P 30, 7 August 2018, 9:15 pm).

Yet another narrative manifesting the use of posters in a similar vein as a nodal point to facilitate a transition between institutional and personal experiences is as following,

> Posters make the campus vibrant. I got familiar with the campus through these posters in the first place. My admission assistance was not done by any organization since I knew a little about the campus politics through my sister. Here I learnt that Left is not some organization. There are shades of left. I still remember the poster of AISA at SSS3- saying to know who rules over you, you need to reflect who you are not allowed to

question. I don't know but at that moment I relived so many personal experiences in a minute. (P. 17, 13 September 2018, 1:15 pm).

Another participant takes the narrative to yet another level of psychological space and constructs the posters as companions or friends during the early years of joining the university, "I overcame my loneliness that I experienced in the university in the very beginning with the help of these art works. Almost everywhere I was accompanied by these famous scholars who were always ready to challenge the socially imprisoned mind of mine" (P.38, 17 October 2018, 5:30 pm).

This trajectory of institutional to personal is subverted when the participants construct the 'impact' of the posters not so positively. Such narratives are oriented from personal to institutional and here, the posters become the sites of pointing out the 'hypocrisy' of the institutional space. Excerpts from three such narratives are as follows-

> *Main raha hu first generation learner. Koi nahin padha meri family mein. Sirf main hi aage aa paya hu. Janata hu kitni koshish ki hai yahan tak aane mein. Lekin kya kahun, jati to yahan bhi peecha nahin chodhti. Jab caste pe baat karte huye deewarein rangi dekhta hu to lagta hai itni hypocrisy kis liye? BAPSA ke aane ke pehle koi engage bhi karta tha caste question se. UDSF tha lekin itna difference nahin dekha at least maine to/*
> I am a first generation learner. No one is literate in my family. Only I have been able to reach here. I know how much effort I have put to reach here. But what to say, caste does not stop following me even here. When I see the walls coloured with the dialogues about caste, I feel, what purpose does this hypocrisy serve? Did any organisation ever engage with the caste question before BAPSA was constituted. UDSF was there but I did not see much difference. (P35, 22 August 2018, 6:30 pm).

Family se society tak sabka wohi haal hai. Humko to aaj bhi 'come out' karna hota hai. Yahan ki deewaron tak pe hum nahi hain jahan saare discourses laane ka dum bharte hain saare. Kis angle se ye place gender equal hai. For them gender means women only. Unhi ke baare mein baat hoti hai. Genders ki baat aaj bhi kisi ko samajh nahi aati. Gender ki continuum wali understanding sirf parades tak hi seemit hai./ From families to society the situation is the same. We are still expected to 'come out'. We are not even on the walls where these people boast of bringing all the discourses. How can this place be gender equal? For them gender is woman only. They talk only about them. Nobody understands the meaning of 'genders'. Continumm based understanding of gender is limited to parades only. (P. 43, 20 August, 2018, 3:53 pm).

Who talks about Muslims here? When we are in need, the sensibilities and sensitivities of progressive and liberals just die down. Najeeb became a memory after that point of time. Who talks about him anymore? I respect the struggle and movement of 2016 followed by the suicide… actually 'institutional murder'of Rohit Vemula but have you seen such sensitivity for Najeeb? He has become a memory now which people talk about at times but, such wall culture of JNU, did they raise any voice through these walls for Najeeb? No, because posters have a purpose and demanding justice for Najeeb does not sync with that. (P 37, 17 August 2019, 6:47 pm).

In the first excerpt, the participant mapping the personal journey constructs himself as vulnerable in the face of the frustration emanating from caste based discrimination. But the narrative progresses to the posters and takes a turn towards resistance pointing out the limitations of the

reified discourses. In the same narrative, the participant constructs himself as a victim as well as an agentic being able to unveil and question the hypocrisy in the garb of progressive ideology. Yet another expresses the similar frustration with the 'presence and absence' of gender on the walls and here too, the walls become the transitional points connecting the personal and institutional. The last one accounts for the disappointment from the community of JNU addressing the issues pertaining to minorities. All the three participants position themselves as 'others' in relation to the community of the university. Walls here again serve as nodal points shifting the narrative from personal to institutional frame of reference and the source of the experience of being 'othered'.

It is worth mentioning that in the excerpts used here participants orient the narratives either personal to institutional or institutional to personal. But the posters as nodal points connecting the personal and institutional in the narratives do appear at many junctures, often underscoring one trajectory over the other, as participants construct and negotiate their position and identity in relation to the walls.

5.3 Summary and Conclusion

The chapter analyzed the major strategies deployed at the site of consumption of the visuals. These strategies included the technologies which facilitate the reach of these visuals to the students of the university. These strategies are negotiated and discussed as part of practice during different levels of participation- specifically during the making of posters within the organizations. The chapter further explored how the walls permeate the psychological space of the students in the campus. Narratives analyzed reveal that the poster art is used as a nodal point to switch between institutional and personal experiences and in many cases also become the

source of the experiences of being 'othered' in the university. Artists also follow different trajectories in co-creating and experiencing this art. For one, it is not tough to give away the ownership of the art while for another leaving the ownership causes the 'mental battle' and yet another, perceives himself just as a part of collective in co-creating the walls of JNU.

Chapter VI- "Postering" to Collective Catharsis: Phases and Transitions

The present chapter focuses on the transition of a community of practice into the collective catharsis in the aftermath of 9th February 2016. The chapter has three sections. The first section discusses the major categories of visuals utilized on the landscape of the university from walls to the protests. The second section underlies the major transitions in the life of the walls at the campus. The third section discusses in detail, using the photographs captured from 2016 to 2019, how the graded imposition of restrictions by the administration resulted in the subsequent deterioration of the poster art from the university's landscape and how gradually the poster art was replaced by the spontaneous and less organized expression of resistance- through graffiti.

6.1 Visual Culture at the University I: Variations on the walls

The embodied reifications resulting from the process of participation play a crucial role in transforming the physical space of the campus into a dialogic space. As discussed in the previous chapters, a number of strategies are employed by the actors to ensure the wider reach of these posters among the students. A painting, a slogan or a poem emphasizing specific discursive constructions call attention to the otherwise marginalized issues as well as accentuate the invisibilized dimensions of mainstream contemporary issues in a creative way.

Apart from the posters of different styles, distinct ideologies, and diverse issues that adorn the walls of JNU, the visual culture of the university is not limited to the posters alone. It accommodates other forms of visual art such as banners, graffiti and the posters co-created in response to a call of protest. Three distinct forms of visual art have been found significant in putting the accent on the construction of this culture of discourses and dissents.

Big Posters

Figure 49 (Clicked on 2 October 2017)

These are the most conspicuous types of visuals in the university. These posters, their making and the discursive constructions manifested by them have been discussed in detail in previous chapters. The very purpose of mentioning these posters here is to emphasise their distinction from other types of visual arts that in conjunction with these posters sustain the oral culture of the university. Many of these posters survive years on the walls of JNU, thereby constantly registering the presence of the specific student political organization in the university. One of the participants emphasizes this saying "*Bade bade posters bht kuch signify karte hain. Inko dekhe lagta hai ke university mein visual culture hai public space mein dominant presence dikhate hain. Dikhate hain ke organization kitna sincere hoga, well organized hoga. Chote posters*

dekhke lagta hai ke aise hi laga diye hain / Big posters signify a lot. They denote the presence of visual culture and the dominant presence of a specific student organization. They reflect the sincerity and well organized nature of an organization.(3rd December 2016, 8:15 pm)

This view was further strengthened when participants not directly or indirectly involved in postering were asked an additional question towards the end of the interview. They were asked to name the student organizations active in the university. Interestingly all the participants started the list from AISA irrespective of their liking and disliking for the very organization. Many representatives of different organizations shared the same view. One of the senior members of SFI, during the first round of introduction, asked the question whether the AISA members have been approached or not. He further added, "*AISA ke bina aap study kaise karoge*/ How will you conduct this study without AISA" (3rd December 2017, 1 pm)

The posters that survive many years and also the ones that are repeated on the walls also generate and sustain intergenerational dialogues around these posters.

Figure 50 (Clicked on 3rd January 2017)

For example, the poster on the menstruation taboo has been one of major topics of debate among students. Two students were observed discussing the poster during the fieldwork. In the conversation an old student introduced the poster culture of the university emphasizing that *Kai baar ye log ye nahin sochte ke kya kahan lagata chaiye. Pehle ek menstruation pe poster banaya tha jis mein ek mentruating lady ko ek priest ke sar pr baitha show kiya tha. Usko dekh ke ajeeb lagta tha, ya kehlo ghinn ati thi*. (Many times, these people do not think before pasting the posters. Earlier in one of the posters a menstruating lady was depicted sitting on the head of a priest. It used to cause the feeling of uneasiness. In fact, it looked disgusting." In response to this, the other student said, *lekin jaise aap bata rahi ho mujhe kuch ajeeb nahin lag raha. Kahin to hum menstruation ka taboo todenge.* (But as you are describing, I don't feel any uneasiness or disgust. We have to begin breaking this taboo from some point). (7th July 2017, 3:15 pm)

As obvious from the discussion, because these posters are retained on the walls for a longer period of time and are co-created with a long 'administrative' process as a participant calls it, it can be expected that they represent the visual culture of the campus by standing out in the collective memory of the university and significantly impacting the impression a student organization creates on students' mind.

Visuals Utilized in Protests

Another set of visuals are specifically created to utilize in protests. These posters vary depending upon the nature and purpose of utilization. For example, posters with slogans and quotes are mostly utilized for a protest within the campus. Here are the series of posters pasted at Sabarmati Dhaba as part of the protest against dismantling GSCASH (Gender Sensitization Committee Against Sexual Harrasment).

Figure 51 (Clicked on 21 September 2017)

Many times printed small posters and photos are also utilized during exhibitions. Here are the ones utilized on the completion of 100 years of Russian Revolution on 8th November 2017.

Figure 52

Figure 53

Apart from these, there are posters which come closer to the bigger posters in their conceptualization. These are co-created within a very short span of time in response to a call of protest by the student union, but the creation of these posters depend on the availability of the artist too. For example, many such posters were utilized during the protest held on demonetization in November 2016.

Figure 54 (Clicked on 24th November 2016)

Figure 55 (Clicked on 24th November 2016)

It is obvious that in most of the posters utilized in protests clarity and straightforwardness is prioritized. As per the artist involved in creating visuals for demonetization, *Thode se time mein zyada baat kehni hoti hai. Koshish karte hain ke direct message hi convey karein. Agarimages use bhi karte hain to koshish karte hain ke vo catchy aur direct ho.* / We are expected to convey a lot using minimum words during protests. We try to keep the messages direct. If we are using images, we make sure that these are catchy and clear. (24 November 2017, 10:15 pm).

Graffiti

Graffiti has always been part of the campus but, as discussed later, the walls of the university have seen the rising popularity of graffiti recently. The texts i.e. slogans and poems; and portraits of revolutionaries with the help of stencils are directly inscribed on the walls. "RSS Killed Gandhi" written in saffron colour at many places in the campus was one of the popular graffiti.

Figure 56 (Clicked on 14th November 2016)

Yet another that can be used to manifest the graffiti culture was the one inscribed on the wall of

the administration block in the black ink emphasizing the freedom struggle in Tibet.

Figure 57 (Clicked on May 2017)

Apart from the walls, seats in the dhabas and roadside were also used as prominent places to

inscribe graffiti. What is to be noted here is that the presence of graffiti was relatively less

compared to the big posters which recorded a significant shift in the aftermath of the 9th

February incident on campus.

6.2 Visual Culture at the University II : Walls in Transitions

Visual culture in the university goes through many changes every year based on the negotiations

among the actors involved. These changes have not been consistent and patterned, though an

overall analysis of the posters and postering sessions, the interviews with the research

participants help delineating two major ruptures in the life of the university leading to significant

transition on its visual landscape.

6.2.1 Walls after Lyngdoh

A sharp difference can be seen in the colour schemes, size, issues raised, quotes used, images utilised before and after implementation of the recommendations of Lyngdoh committee in JNU. As per one of the participants from SFI, "The posters used to be simple with plain background and relatively straightforward messages. Not many experiments were done when it came to the colour schemes, metaphors and images incorporated" (20 November 2016, 1 pm).

Figure 58(A poster from 2005, Retrieved from the personal archive of Dr. Subin Dennis)

Figure 59(A poster from 2006, Retrieved from the personal archive of Dr. Subin Dennis)

The transition came at the visual landscape of the university during the 'no election phase' in JNU. The most politically active campus of the country was being depoliticized as they rejected the recommendations of Lyngdoh committee. During this time, as one of the artists put forward, "AISA experimented with the walls of the campus and introduced life sized posters with portraits of Marx and Che-Guera and most importantly, they started composing the posters rather than just reproducing the already existing imagery or political cartoons" (12 June 2018, 7:20 pm). The postering changed the way of representation for JNU posters. From sheets to ideas there were many innovations that were introduced. Now posters were inspired from the various artists and appropriated to visually construct a diverse range of issues- For example- this is how Picasso was used as a resource to retell the narrative of repression.(Figure 2).

One specific trend that this period is known for is the artistic bent given to the posters. "These were not merely posters, but paintings that were pasted at selected spaces on the walls" (10 August 2018, 1:15 pm). Stemming from AISA, it was adopted by many other organizations on campus. Other organizations also started calling trained artists for postering. This, on one hand transformed the walls with more sophisticated artefacts, thereby introducing a major transition on the landscape of JNU but also introduced new 'brokers'- trained artists who added new elements into the practice of postering. One of the artists puts it like this, "We are the ones who started composing the posters rather than reproducing it only. I got to utilize most of my own work in postering many times….Still, I would say that JNU has not explored the poster as a form which looks at the synchronization of image and texts. Many of the posters if you cut in half will exist independently" (12 June 2018. 7:15 pm). Another pathway that opened during this phase was the introduction to the political cartoons and caricatures to the walls in a more nuanced and

contextualised manner which has been continuously evolving till date specifically during the period post 9th February 2016.

Figure 60 (Retrieved from P.C. Joshi Memorial Archive on 8 November 2016)

6.2.2 Walls after 9th February 2016

After 9th February 2016 incident at JNU which resulted in the sedition charges and consequent arrest of the JNUSU members and the activists involved in the organization of a public meeting, many radical shits were brought out on the walls of JNU. The whole process of postering became much organized in the beginning but gradually less planned in many ways. As discussed in the previous chapter, the process to co-create a reified association between the larger students' community and the students' union got transformed into the crystallization of an outlet for collective catharsis. In the beginning the process became much more organized and 'administrative' as the lottery system and a method of marking and allocating the walls developed instead of capturing of walls (*Chekna* as called by student activists), but gradually

also paved the path for more spontaneous ways of assertion like graffiti, small posters and many other transitions.

- From material to virtual walls

One of the most important transitions was the shift from material to virtual walls. Virtual walls are more and more being used to put forward the stand of any student organization. During the observation it was found across all organizations that they put the posters on the official Facebook, and recently on Instagram too, pages of their organizations and on the public profiles of the activists. Group discussions, one to one dialogues and long brainstorming sessions are gradually being replaced with the lengthy discussions on the Whatsapp groups of different organizations. Even the all organizational meetings got delayed and hardly four people including the researcher turned up during the call for an all organizational meeting on 5th May 2018.

Posters that were used to introduce the ideologies and stands of various organizations to the students were nearly replaced by the printed flex panels of AISA in 2018. To reach the wider student community during admissions, a large number of activists utilized their Whatsapp display pictures and status. One of the activists prepared a collection of pictures to put on status and the collection included the pictures of old big posters of the organization, famous quotes from the left intellectuals and also screenshots of the selected number of seminal works like Capital by Karl Marx. .

- From Portraits of Revolutionaries to Leaders

Another major shift was in the selection of who should be represented. Big posters which started from the life sized portraits of Marx, Che Guevara, Lenin and also Ambedkar, are nearly, not replaced, but being sidelined because of giving room to the caricatures of then Prime Minister till 2014 and followed by Narendra Modi till date. An alumni puts it like this, "Now there are no more Marx, Lenin and Che. JNU replaced these with Ambedkar first and then with Modi. Believe it or not, they have given Modi such a big stature that he should not have been given at all" (7th July 2018, 9:30 pm).

Such a trend is actually brought about by the emergence of cartoons and caricatures on the walls of JNU. AISA 'discovered' and 'dedicated' around 12 walls to represent the ironic and humorous caricatures of Modi in different contexts and named it 'Modi Gallery'.

Organizations like AISF and DSU also utilized the caricatures in their posters too. But the major drawback is that many times 'freshers' are not able to decipher the subtle ironic representations. For example, a poster in SSS-III depicting Narendra Modi was subjected to a lot of criticism from the activists' community and confusion from the students not officially affiliated to any students' organization. Many of the respondents said that it is not possible not to attribute the poster to ABVP if someone does not see the name of DSU printed over on the poster.

- From paintings to cartoons and caricatures

As discussed above there is a shift from the paintings to the cartoons and caricatures. The trend might be attributed to the unavailability of the trained painters and also to the loss of time invested in the negotiations and protests over a larger number of circulars issued by the administration. But cartoons and caricatures itself went through many stages in the process.

Started with big posters portraying the caricature of Dr. Manmohan Singh, it took a shift to Modi

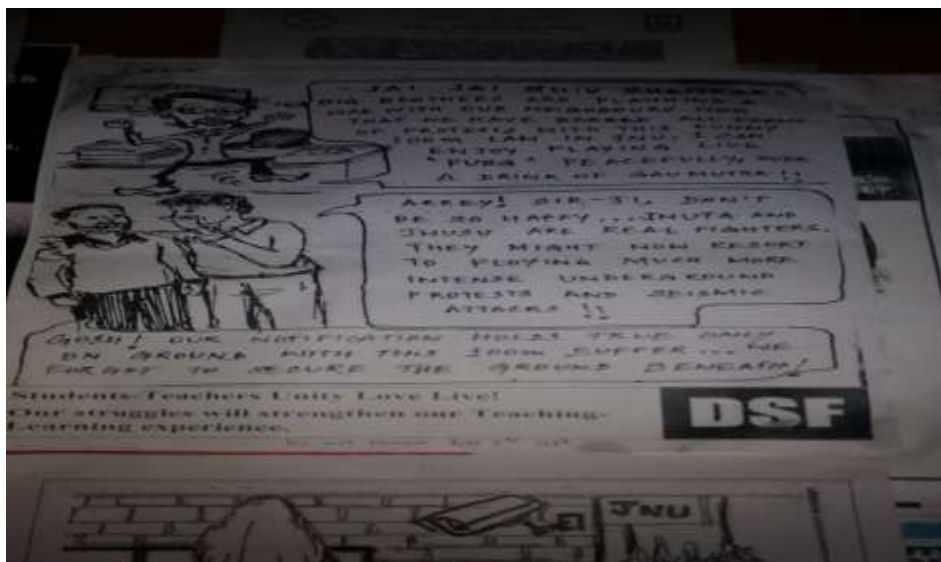and now to the general issues of the campus through small posters.

Figure 61

Figure 62

Gradually the shift has been towards the more economic and less effortful ways of conveying the message to the student community.

- From organized practice to spontaneous and less coordinated expression

Another shift from the organized creation of the wall posters to the spontaneous registration of resistance is one of the most important transitions after the 9th February incident. Small posters, and graffiti started taking the place of the posters co-created with the long and patient investment of time. Spray paints of different colors and stencils gradually became much more familiar to the walls of the campus and by 2020, all the major walls were covered with graffiti, mostly anonymous.

These shifts in the visual culture of the university were not isolated instances of artistic experiments, but the origins of this major transition can be traced back to a series of protests from 2015 onwards and also, deeply connected to a series of orders and instructions from the 'above' and resistance from the 'bottom'. The following excerpt extracted from an interaction with an administrative officer (Ad1) gives a glimpse of the position administration had the walls posters, "*Deevarien university ki hain aur ye students space ka batvara khud karte hain vandalism ke liye.*"(Walls are the property of the university and these students divide and occupy them for vandalism) (8 March 2018, 6 pm).

The whole process, looked at from the lens of collective catharsis, unveils how in response to or in resistance against administrative orders the process of community of practice transformed into a more spontaneous and less coordinated process of collective catharsis.

6.3 Route to Collective Catharsis: Walls in Transitions

Collective catharsis refers, in the context of the present research, to the recent popularization of graffiti across the campus. As mentioned, in most of the cases it has been less coordinated and negotiated among the actors. The actors here, as in the case of postering, have not been necessarily affiliated to any student political organization on campus.

Towards the end of 2015 many students of the university were involved in the protest against the decision of University Grants Commission for scrapping the non-Net fellowship which is provided to the researchers pursuing M.Phil and PhD from central universities. During the #OccupyUGC movement, as it was called, students from various universities protested in the premises and the streets around UGC. Many of them utilized the medium of graffiti, posters and other forms of art to register the resistance against the order of the government. One of the participants (P17) describes, "*We wrote slogans on posters and also used graffiti to resist. One of the most interesting things that we did was painting a manhole around the UGC premises. In fact whatever we found, we just painted that*" (3 September 2016, 5:15 PM). The protest was widely covered by the media across the country.

The protest was later followed by yet another movement- Rohith Vemula movement during late January and beginning of February 2016. Students and teachers of the university came in support of the movement. It was during this period when Prof M. Jagdesh Kumar took over as the Vice Chancellor of the university from Prof. Sudhir Kumar Sapory. This was later followed by the 9th February incident at the campus which drew attention of the national and international media.

Analysed from the lens of rupture and resulting transitions, the point can be marked as a major rupture leading to discontinuity in the experiential life of the university cantered specifically on

the identity in practice, a JNUite. The collective memory of 9th February was largely shaped by the anti-JNU narratives during this time. The theme that combined all these narratives was-either JNU or the country. The identity of a JNUite was 'othered' and reified as an 'anti-national' across social media platforms and the newsroom debates further complemented and strengthened the narrative. New terminologies were coined to further 'define' the identity of a JNUite. These were 'anti-nationals, tukde tukde gang, azadi gang and so on.

Here are the excerpts from interviews of the students of the university supporting such 'othering' of the identity-

> ...the identity that used to be the symbol of an asset turned out to be a burden. We resisted but the constant pressure to leave JNU from the families was piled up, at least in my case (P27, 8 July 2018, 8:15 pm).

> It was the early morning of 10th or 11th February 2016. I received a call from a relative. I was specifically asked about the people who raised slogans and advised to be away from 'such elements' .… Later on things changed drastically. You know, my own people who were earlier proud of getting selected in JNU said that *tum JNU wale yahi karte ho na.* (you JNU people do only these things na). Things have never been the same since then. I am constantly asked about my age, *aur ye bhi ke meri padhai kab khatam hogi* (and also when will I be finishing my studies). (P35, 9 October 2018, 8:15 pm)

> I still remember that I was literally stuck in Munirka around that time. Around that time means *yahi kuch teen-chaar din baad ki baat hai. Auto ka wait kar rahi thi. Jaise hi ek auto wale se bola ke bhaiya JNU chaloge. Vo haste huye bola, madam, Pakistan chor dein.*(It happened around four five days after that. I was waiting for an auto in Munirka.

As soon as I asked an auto driver that, brother, will you go to JNU, he smirked and said, madam, shall I drop you to Pakistan.) (P29, 6 September 2018, 10 pm)

"*In logon ne sach mein naam kharab diya. Kahin bhi jao to yahi justification dete raho ke hum vaise nahin hain.* " (These people just spoiled the name. Now we have to defend everywhere that we are not among them) (P34, 8th July 2018, 5:15 pm)

The first three excerpts give an idea of how the identity of a JNUite was 'othered' in everyday discourse after 9th February 2016. The last excerpt unveils how the process of othering was happening within the university itself where many students started differentiating themselves from 'those JNUites'.

But, for most of the students residing in the university, the collective memory of 9th February was of collective injustice. Burden of that collective injustice was laid either inside (as in the last excerpt) or outside the university (as in the first excerpt). Still, students came out on roads for rallies and protests. This was the time when even common or self- acclaimed 'apolitical' students joined the movement. A participant puts it this way,

Students who did not even believe in the cause of student politics came out on the streets with big banners in their hands shouting 'stand with JNU' at the highest pitch of their voice. What do you think? It all happened for Kanhaiya, Umber, Anirban or the students who were charged with sedition. Not exactly. Such a big movement could be possible because the name of JNU was at stake. Students' identity as JNU students was at stake. People were on the roads to save JNU.(P23, 2 July 2019, 11:00 am).

Many articles were written explaining the positions of the university. Many people joined the debates defending the idea of the university. For many days, the administrative block remained fully occupied by the students. The area around the 'pink palace' as the building of the administrative block was called by the students, came to be known as 'freedom square'. For many days, lectures were held on nationalism and later on the series of lectures were published in the form of a book edited by JNUTA (Jawaharlal Nehru Teachers' Association) in January 2017. Educational institutions around the world extended their support to JNU. Many social media pages were created and one of these named as #StandwithJNU. Social media profiles of the students were filled with posts extending support to JNU and coexisted with the posts of people criticizing and abusing JNU students.

All this served as a background and the process of postering became more organized during 2016. As per a participant,

> That year, as far as I know, in the history of JNU, almost all student organizations operating on campus made big posters. That year in the history of JNU almost all the organizations made posters. Teflas was filled with organizations belonging to diverse ideologies. Day and night continuous brainstorming was happening. Themes, visuals, quotes were the major topics of conversations. Such a good number of posters were never made in JNU earlier. (P6, 7th July 2017, 5 PM).

One major reason for the engagement of most of the organizations was this urge to gain visibility in the campus and as discussed in the fourth chapter, the shift from wall capturing to lottery system made this further possible. The organization which had a low number of memberships

also made and pasted the posters on the allocated spaces. Hundred Flowers Group and Collective were one of these student organizations.

Interestingly, not all the posters made were pasted on the walls during 2016. Many organizations had to keep the posters in reserve. Yet another participant explains that saying,

> From 2015 to 2016 almost all the activists were participating in one or other protests. Although we made the posters with great enthusiasm, by the time we were expected to paste it, we were actually tired. We pasted many posters but not all. Many of the activists went home. So we decided to keep the posters in reserve for the upcoming year. (P21, 10 November 2016, 10:33 pm)

This 'tiredness' was manifested in the postering meetings of the upcoming year. Although all organizational meetings were held, none of the organizational representatives turned up in response to the first call of the all-organizational meeting in June. This was already delayed as the usual date for the first all-organizational call used to be around 5th of May after the completion of the winter semester. First meeting was held on 5th of June for the year and the second meeting was held almost a month after that on 3th July 2017 followed by the wall marking meetings on 6th and 8th July. Walls were further allocated on 12th and 13th July and various organizational representatives noted down their spaces carefully.

For the year 2017 only four organizations out of the fifteen which participated in the postering process of the year made the posters. These were BAPSA, DSF, Collective and SFI. These organizations made separate posters to be used during admission assistance. AISA came up with the banners reproducing the old posters and utilized those during the admission assistance in 2017.

Even before the meetings for postering held, around the beginning of 2017, all the posters from the buildings of administrative blocks were removed and students were prohibited pasting any kind of posters on the administrative building. But, the walls of the building were soon covered with graffiti.

Figure 63 ((Clicked on 2 February 2017)

Figure 64 (Clicked on 17 March 2017)

The wall marking process during the year unveiled the fact that the only posters that were not removed from the walls of the administrative block were those pasted by a student organization, ABVP.

Figure 65(Clicked on 8th July 2017)

The restrictions were made further stringent and the hundred meter area around the administrative block was prohibited to hold any kind of protest. Sabarmati lawn was designated as a site of protest for the students. Boards denoting hundred meter boundary were put around the administrative block declaring the area restricted for any student protest or postering. Symbolically, students were pushed hundred meters away from the space occupied by the administration.

Yet another order from administration surfaced and it was regarding mandatory attendance. The order was resisted by the student community and to register the resistance on 15 January 2018, students using paints and chalks filled the area around schools of social sciences with sarcastic quotes, statistics, slogans.

Figure 66 (Clicked on 15 January 2018)

Figure 67 (Clicked on 15 January 2018))

Figure 68 (Clicked on 15 January 2018)

Since the students utilized chalks in most of the writings, it was relatively temporary. But, it was followed by the 'occupation' of the administrative block on 11 February 2018 where students pasted small handwritten *parchas* all over the walls of the administrative block.

Figure 69 (Clicked on 12 February 2018)

Figure 70 (Clicked on 12 February 2018)

Figure 71 (Clicked on 12 February 2018)

Figure 72 (Clicked on 12 February 2018)

Parchas pasted on the walls were removed the very next day and walls were painted again retaining the 'pinkness of the palace' in the words of a participant. The walls were gradually becoming less coordinated spaces and this was furthered by the lockdown of the school buildings in response to the circular on attendance and to demand the complete roll back of the same. During the student initiated lockdown again, the buildings of the schools were again covered with small posters made by the protesting students.

Figure 73 (Clicked on 13 March 2018)

Not only this, during attendance resistance, students painted the walls of the schools with graffiti with slogans and quotes.

Figure 74 (Clicked on 1 April 2018)

Figure 75 (licked on 1 April 2018)

Graffiti had already made a much stable space on the walls of the campus by then and what added to the popularization of graffiti even more was the order from the administration regarding the ban on the posters. The exhaustion and frustration with the restrictions imposed in graded

manner manifested itself in a way that none of the meetings and negotiations took place during May- June 2018 for the purpose of postering and most of the students retained old posters only. A notice was circulated on social media groups in July 2018 (Appendix B) which stated that students are instructed not to put up any poster at 'undesignated places'. It was soon followed by the installation of the billboards on the front walls of schools' and hostels' buildings. Although different student political organizations were concerned regarding the issue, no concrete step was taken by any of the organizations.

Despite the fact that authenticity of the notice was questioned by many students, in May 2019 too, no meeting was held for the purpose of negotiating the process of postering for the year. The practice sustained for years in the campus was getting dismantled gradually. And, the circular dated 10 June 2019 (Appendix A) changed the landscape of visual art in the campus.

Figure 76 (Clicked on 12 July 2019)

Many workers of the university were ordered to remove the posters from the walls. Many organizations and students tried to negotiate with workers too, but they were just following the orders. Almost all the posters were removed from the walls of schools, canteens and passages between the buildings. The admission process was also restricted to the premises of convention center limiting the interaction between the members of student political organizations and newly admitted students.

Unable to find any other platform, on 19th July 2019, a whatsapp group was formed to create an archive of the posters. Students from various students' organizations active on the campus, sympathizers of these organizations and students not affiliated with any of the students' organizations joined the group and shared the collection of the posters.

Figure 77 (Screenshot taken on 19 July 2019)

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Finally, the students constantly grappling with the issues of attendance, hostel manual, proposal to increase fee towards the middle of November 2019 'occupied' the administrative block and the buildings of the administrative blocks were covered with graffiti.

Figure 78 (clicked on 17 November 2019)

Figure 79 (Clicked on 17 November 2019)

Students were moved out of the block soon and the administrative block was 'cleaned' and painted again. Protests over the issues continued after that but walls were silenced during the period of lockdown in the wake of pandemic as most of the students moved out of the hostels. A short visit and quick observation in the campus during 2022 revealed that many organizations including AISA, BAPSA, GSJNU revived the poster culture on the walls of JNU but the walls are still dominated by the graffiti of diverse colors and content.

Figure 80 (Clicked on 20 June 2022)

6.4 Conclusion

The present chapter discussed how in the aftermath of 9th February 2016, the practice of postering sustained in the university was transformed into collective catharsis leading to the popularization of graffiti and other forms of art that can ensure anonymity to certain extent. It showed how the solidification of boundary of insider and outsider created a rupture in the experiential life of the university and in the face of constraints imposed by the university administration in a graded manner; graffiti became the dominant mode of registering the resistance. Along with the shift to digital platforms, graffiti replaced the larger posters from the walls of the institution till February 2020. Many organizations did make the posters and put up on the walls of school but those were soon removed by the administration. In the wake of pandemic, the walls were further transformed into the virtual walls and facebook, twitter, whatsapp statuses of the students became the sites of display of ideas and ideologies. A quick observation of the campus during 2021- 2022 revealed the revival of the posters on the walls, specifically of AISA, BAPSA and Gorkha Students of JNU, but graffiti still remain the prominent medium of registering resistance from the students of the university.

Chapter VII Restating and Reiterating the Thesis: Conclusion, Limitations, Implications and Future Research

The present chapter has four sections. First section presents the brief background and sets the focus of the study. Drawing upon the analysis the second chapter summarizes and concludes the findings of each chapter. The next section discusses the theoretical and practical implications of the study. The last section underlines the limitations of the study and points out the alternative pathways and frameworks that can be utilized to extend the work.

7.1 Recapitulating the Background

Social sciences and humanities have gone through a biographical turn in recent decades whereby, the significance of biographies as scholarly and critical method of inquiry has been established (Randers, Haan & Harmsma, 2017). Recent revival of psychobiographical inquiries (Mayer & Kovary, 2019; Schultz, 2005) can be seen as yet another manifestation of the biographical turn. But, similar to biographies, psychobiographies have also been largely limited to studying the lives of individuals and seeking answers to elusive aspects of people's lives. The field has also been unfairly faithful to psychoanalytic theory as the major approach of analysis, though recent theoretical experiments, namely in positive psychology, have challenged the autonomy enjoyed by psychoanalytic theory since the inception of the field.

One aspect that has gained little attention, is the essentialism that psychobiographical research operates with regarding the focus on the lives of individuals i.e. 'the great man approach' deployed in most of the studies. In this context, the present study argues that biographies are not the autonomous territories of individuals but, societies, cultures, institutions etc. also have their own biographical trajectories; and that, these biographical trajectories, when explored, may

traverse novel paths with layered possibilities beyond cultural and individual reductionism, i.e. the intersectional spaces of individuals and societies/cultures. Following the line of argument, the present research conceptualises psychobiography as an exploration of ruptures and transitional processes. It seeks to explore the concept of creativity as a nodal point between psychobiography and cultural psychology and sets the focus on the cultural psychobiographical exploration of postering- a term that is coined to encapsulate the political art in the present context, in Jawaharlal Nehru university New Delhi.

In the quest of a *Koan*- a term referring to the focus of psychobiography, data was collected through direct observation of postering and campus activities . Biographical narrative interviews were conducted in order to rule out the transfusion of awe and aura into the narratives of research participants. Collections of the posters available at the P. C. Joshi Memorial Archive at the B.R. Ambedkar Library, Jawaharlal Nehru University was accessed with the due permission from the authorities. Pictures of the posters put up since September 2016 were clicked to maintain the archive.

The data collected from above mentioned methods and sources was used to delineate four levels of exploration. At the first level, reified discourses on the walls were analyzed setting forth the nuanced understanding into the discourses of marginalization. The second level led to the complex process of co-creating these reified discourses and the transformative possibilities entailed in the practice of posturing. Another level of exploration was formed unveiling the strategies and technologies deployed for transforming the walls into doorways. It also mapped the paths through which walls permeate into the everyday narratives. The fourth level attempted to bring to the surface the major shifts and transitions in the wall life of the institution delineating the *koan* as major transition at the aftermath of 9th February 2016. This major transition was

analyzed as the transformation of an organized practice around the walls into a process of collective catharsis paving the path to the popularization of graffiti in the campus.

7.2 Summary and Conclusion

The reified discourses unfold on the walls of the university. For the analysis, the discourses negotiated by most of the organizations were selected- discourses of marginalization with a specific focus on gender, caste and their intersections. The presence of gender is articulated on the landscape of university as focusing on women who are present as hapless victims, agents of resistance and glorified beings. As an agent of resistance, she gazes back at the perpetrators or spectators. The visuals in this case are mostly anchored by the text written in first person. In posters, where a woman is glorified, the text anchoring is often directed at the woman herself in the form of an 'advice' often and the agency is transferred to the third person offering the advice. Caste is articulated on the walls through the portraits of Dalit icons, the everyday lives of Dalits as portrayed in literature and the subversion of mainstream mythological narratives. BAPSA takes an upper hand in infusing the narratives with the everydayness of discrimination as opposed to the abstract expression deployed by AISA. Coming to the intersections, many organisations have raised the issues of caste and class in a single frame. They emphasise the economic aspects in relation to the maintenance of caste based structure of the society as well as the need to eradicate the caste system for a socio-economically equal society. Based on the intersections of caste and gender, two specific subject positions can be delineated for Dalit women. They are either constructed as bodies being the centre of atrocities or as ones who at times gaze back or stand with closed eyes as hapless victims. There are posters where these two

subject positions are juxtaposed while using the 'implicitly agentic' visuals of women with the 'explicitly agentic' text.

Various student organisations differ significantly in the way they construct various subject positions through visual texts. Many of these subject positions are negotiated at three levels- first at the level of visuals utilized in the posters, second, texts used to anchor the visuals, and third at the level of the audience who interpret the posters as per their own social locations. AISA constructs these positions by recomposing various paintings to construct the discourse of marginalization. These positions are often negotiated by the contradictions between the visuals and texts but their articulations set a specific demand on the audience - to decode the meaning from the abstract art utilized in the posters. Pasted on prime spots, the life sized posters of AISA pulls the attention of the students, disturbs the 'aura' around famous works of arts, yet at the same time, reconstructs the 'aura'- the uniqueness associated with AISA posters. BAPSA constructs subject positions keeping the caste at the center of the discourse. All the posters, whether these are rooted in anti-caste narratives or portray anti caste revolutionaries or lay bare the agendas of the ruling regime, construct subject positions from an Ambedkarite perspective. Gender is still a less explored category for the BAPSA on campus when it comes to poster art but it does create a difference with the portraits by Savitri Bai Phule. DSU as an active organization in various movements constructs the positions of women as explicitly agentic. Protruding eyes of women gazing back strongly at the audience anchored with strong texts written in first person invite the dialogic engagement from the students. DSF does raise the questions of gender and caste; most of their posters capture the everyday realities on campus and in society at large. What binds the creations of most of the organisation is that almost all the posters are adaptations or

reproductions or re-composition of the visuals molded as per the requirement of the theme or issue to be constructed as a discourse.

The discourses of marginalization discussed above are reified through the long process of churning and brainstorming during the poster marking towards the completion of winter semester at the university. The process of poster making, ordinarily conceived in the oral culture of the institution as a mere composite of a few stages and steps, turns out to be much more complex and layered. It takes place at two levels, inter-group and intra-group level. At intergroup level, it is led by the office bearers of students union (JNUSU) who call for the 'all organizational meetings' aimed at making decisions for the posters towards the completion of winter semester in the university. Different organizations active in the university send one or two representatives for such inter-organizational meetings to voice their respective opinions and suggestions for the process to be followed for the present year. All the participants mutually engage to set up the rules for the distribution of the walls. In the 2017 all-organizational meeting the major concern raised was the retention of posters which were in good condition which sparked a heated debate among the members as retaining even half of the posters meant that one of the prominent organizations will continue to have the largest share of the walls across the university. Although, keeping in mind the labor and pains involved in postering, a certain percentage of the posters were allowed to be retained and for the rest of the spaces wall marking and allocation of the spaces through lottery was decided. Here at both the levels, inter-organizational and intra-organizational, mutuality of engagements among the participants materialize the process of co-creation. At inter-organizational level, it opens the door for the dialogue among people and organizations of varying ideologies; and at intra-organizational level, it instills a sense of belongingness among the members of the same organization. The participation at both levels

manifests itself in the form of a joint enterprise negotiated despite disagreements and heated arguments. When rules subscribed by this joint enterprise are violated and the said boundaries are invaded, the matter is handled with various forms of dialogue i.e. through the *parchas* raising the issue. For example, organizations have negotiated the way of co-existing on the walls by not tearing up or overwriting or covering the poster of one another. This joint enterprise of postering is sustained through a shared repertoire that the organizations working together have developed over time. This includes routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions and concepts that the poster making organizations have produced or adopted in the course of its existence, and which have become part of its practice. The process of postering, in a nutshell, transforms participants into a community of practice and in turn, itself becomes a boundary practice which brings together the organizations of diverse ideologies setting the path for the politics of ideas. The postering itself becomes a source of boundary which is permeable for those familiar with the shared histories of participation and reifications. It also facilitates the connections with the outside world through brokers, here artists and alumni, who despite having peripheral and outbound trajectories of identities continuously enrich the practice by enabling the entry of novel elements.

There are a number of strategies and technologies that are employed to transform these walls as the doorways and permeate the psychological space of the students on campus. These strategies make the boundary between public and private more fluid and absorbing. Three strategies which were found to be significant here- are technologies of display, text and layout. Technologies of display include the strategies based on which buildings are differentiated. Posters are pasted keeping in the mind the larger academic discourse a specific school represents. The open display of posters accessible to all is yet another technology employed. Embedded in the everyday life of

people residing in the university, it produces a spectator who is invited not only 'to look' but to contemplate on the issues dealt in the posters. The intentional and unintentional dialogue between the posters is yet another strategy that makes the space more dialogic. The shift from unintentional to intentional dialogue was observed specifically after 9th February 2016, when mode of the distribution of the walls was shifted from 'capturing the walls' to the 'allocation of the walls'. Earlier the inter-group dialogue was relatively unintentional as groups used to capture the spaces and design the posters to create the dialogue at an intra-organizational level. After the spaces were distributed, inter-group dialogue between the posters became much more intentional. For example, BAPSA pasted many posters in 2017 contrasting sharply with the ABVP by appropriating saffron color. Textual technologies include the way texts are used in the posters either anchoring the visual by fixing the meaning or relaying the meaning. The former fixes the meaning for the audience but the latter demands much more sustained attention from the audience. Yet another textual technology utilized is that of repetition. There are certain texts which are repeated with different visuals for years and also by different organizations. *Eklavya's poster* titled 'If you had kept your thumb, history would have been different' is an apt example of how these repetitions, temporally and spatially, work to register a longer impact in people's consciousness.

Technologies of layout are also deployed in a way that invites contemplative eyes of the spectators. Canteens, spaces surrounding canteens, spaces outside the school buildings which accommodate sitting areas are spaces where these technologies are utilized at their best. For example, in canteens almost all the walls are the prime spots for pasting posters. Organizations paste posters with longer texts and quotes on the canteen walls which require sustained attention from the spectators. No matter where one sits in a canteen, the perceptual space is always

captured by one or other poster. These layouts, intentionally or unintentionally, are dialectic in nature and pit one poster against the other emphasizing multivoicedness of the discourses. For example, a spectator sitting in the canteen is, within a few minutes, is familiarized with to the idea of 'saffronization', communism and its portrayed blind spots, struggles of people in Kashmir and North east region of the country, a feminist voice from Pakistan resisting against religious fundamentalism and violence against women, the idea of the world having no possession and perils of privatization.

Another strategy to overcome the ephemerality of the posters is the utilization of distance. Most of the posters are pasted on big walls not accessible to be touched by the spectators. Thereby, people are invited to 'look' and 'reflect' but not to 'touch' and 'ruin'. This impalpability is not maintained in case the posters are pasted in canteens. Being eateries, these spaces by design discourage the touch from the spectators.

Therefore, the maintenance of the practice of postering, the co-creation of discourses and the designs and strategies of display, all the processes have been relatively much organized, sustained and debated upon for years.

This organized practice transitioned into a relatively more spontaneous expression followed by the incident of 9th February 2016. Transitional process operated through collective catharsis which rather explains gradual decay of the posters from the walls of the university and the popularization of the graffiti. It was furthered by the pent-up feelings that many students were unable to express at the moments and the collective memory that was being formed at the time. After 9th February the boundary of insider and outsider was much more solidified. The students who were neither affiliated nor sympathized with any of the organizations operating in the

campus experienced the sudden salience of their identities as JNUites. The frustration of the students who were at the forefront of the incident was of another level. The whole 'community' of the university was humiliated by being called *'tukde-tukde* gang', anti-nationalist etc. The collective memory of the incident was being structured in a way that 'anti-nationalist narrative' came to the foreground. As per this narrative, one was either with JNU or with the country. Media coverage contributed a lot in bringing the narrative at the center in people's collective memory as news channels all over the country were covering even the smallest activities on campus. The narrative was also facilitated by the activation of the old memories of agitations attached with JNU. But, on the other hand, alternative narratives also gained prominence among the stakeholders at the university as well as the sympathizers of the institution. The collective memory was more clustered here as students felt victimized and prepared to resist against the mainstream narrative miring the consciousness of the public. Online articles were being written defending the idea of JNU, protests were held, and the administrative block remained occupied with the students for days. This led to the purgation of emotions through the shared practice of postering during May 2016. Almost all the organizations, even the smallest ones who never invested in postering, participated in making posters. For the first time the whole campus saw such a large number of posters even at many unusual spaces which remained underutilized earlier. Interestingly, many of the posters could not be pasted and were reserved to be utilized next year. It was followed by the gradual decay and dismantling of the community of practice sustained for years on campus. In 2017, all organizational meetings were held, although delayed, to deliberate over the issues in postering and mode of the distribution of space and almost all the organizations participated, relatively less people participated in subsequent meetings. Debates

were heated and dialogues were sustained but only four groups carried forward the postering at intra-organizational level.

Posters were made and pasted in 2017 but the activity was not carried forward in 2018. Students were 'uninterested' 'unmotivated' to continue with the postering. This was the time when graffiti was occupying space in the campus and became all the more significant followed by the graded and gradual surveillance of the administration. First, the administrative block was turned into a 'pink palace' and banned for posters. A 100 meter area from the administrative block was prohibited for any protest and rally. In July 2018, with a notice, students were warned against pasting posters at 'undesignated places'. Billboards were installed at hostels and at academic buildings. A year after that, a circular was issued and postering was banned invoking the Delhi Prevention of the Defacement of Property Act 2007 and as per the decision taken in 272nd Executive Council Meeting held on 13 March 2018. After the circular came out in July 2019, posters were removed from all the academic buildings and students resorted to graffiti and banners to express their unrest.

7.3 Implications: Theoretical and Practical

There have been attempts centered on advanced and more sophisticated theories of psychoanalysis, and perspectives from positive psychology earlier to explore the theoretical choices in the field of psycho-biographical research. But, as mentioned earlier, the very conceptualization of psychobiography as an exploration of individual lives restricts the emerging possibilities. The present research focusing on cultural psychological paradigm sought to explore a '*koan'* relating with the dialogic space of the university. It purported to imagine the poster art, transforming the architectural space into the dialogic one, as an entity which not only provides

students with the sense of the diversity of opinions and experiences, but also transforms them into a community of practice negotiating and reifying the discourses through participation and mutual engagement. Conceptualizing the psychobiography as a study into rupture and transitions, it attempted to push the boundaries that psychobiographical research operate with and utilized the cultural psychological paradigm to analyse the sociality, materiality and temporality of poster art which has been the inherent part of the campus for many decades. Furthermore, the theoretical lens used here opens up many nodes of discussion relating to the future research, namely the cultural psychological theory emphasizing the social genesis of the person, can also prove to be a more nuanced theoretical standpoint to study the processes of transitions in an individual.

Coming to the practical implications of the present research, it underlines the significance of co-creating such dialogic spaces which register the presence of diverse discourses, thereby, laying the ground for sensitizing the students coming from diverse backgrounds and social locations to the issues that are usually pushed to the periphery. These co-created spaces instill a sense of inclusion and resistance against any exclusionary policy among the students coming from the marginalized sections of the society which can be specifically true for spaces like central universities which represent relatively more diverse sections of the society. There have been debates and controversies regarding the adherence to caste based reservation in the institution and students openly criticized the admission policies adopted by the administration. As the analysis showed how the identity of JNUite is also construed as a 'burden' by some students, more attempts are required to build a better connection among the students and representatives of the students and wall art has served as a strong medium for that.

7.4 Limitations and Future Research

The major limitation of the research is the relatively less exploration of 'audiencing' dimension of co-creation. It was earlier incorporated in the design of the study and students were approached to respond to selected posters. But, it was observed that projection, although worked for the artists to some extent who reflected on their journey as an artist in relation to the posters, most of the students, except a few, responded to the posters only superficially at the level of description (aspects of which were also included to analyze posters). So, it was rather studied as transitional points in their narratives where they brought out the references of the posters which impacted them in significant ways.

The present research attempts to lay down path to the cultural psychobiographical exploration at the backdrop of cultural psychology of creativity. The future research in the area can focus on writing a psychobiographical narrative based on the dimensions explored during the research. Such narrative can give deeper insights into the process of co-creation in the context of the university and also, can open up the doors for more theoretical experiments in the field of psychobiography. Furthermore, as mentioned above, the further exploration of the dimension of 'audiencing' can facilitate a deeper understanding into how political art permeates the psychological space, specifically in the context of higher institutions, and mediate the socio-political understanding of the students.

To sum up, the narrative of 'good old times' which is usually glorified by the alumni and even current students who have spent many years in the university when they feel nostalgic of 'those old days', extends in a way when the participants recall the resisting and dissenting walls of the university which were silenced after July 2019. But it falls flat when the narratives are oriented

towards the memories of evolution of the dialogic space created by the wall art where new discourses continued to be constructed, reflected on, and reconstructed and now, the campus is moving towards the more nuanced presence of the discourses of marginalization, although on the virtual walls in the face of restrictions imposed by the administration.

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Appendix A

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
ESTATE BRANCH
NEW DELHI   Ph.: 26704024

F. No. Estate/Swachh JNU/2019-20
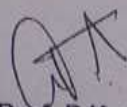
10-06-2019

CIRCULAR

Whereas, as per Delhi Prevention of Defacement of Property Act, 2007 (Delhi Act 1 of 2009), "defacement" of property – building, hut, structure, wall, tree, post, fence, pole or any other erection by the means of writing – printing, painting, decoration, lettering, ornamentation etc. produced by stencil and impairing or interfering with the appearance or beauty, damaging, disfiguring, spoiling or injuring in any other way whatsoever and the word "deface" shall be construed accordingly and will attract penalty/action for defacement of property as provided therein.

And whereas, JNU in the 272nd Executive Council, JNU meeting dated 13.03.2018, under "Any Other Item" resolved that "No property of the University, including walls and buildings, will be used for putting posters/bills, except in the designated places". The E.C. further resolved that those, who paste or fix posters/bills at the designated places, will be responsible for removing the same at the appropriate time.

Now, therefore, in accordance with the above instructions and E.C. Resolutions, all concerned are hereby called upon to strictly abide by the same.

All concerned are further advised to use designated bill boards, which have been provided at Academic buildings, the Hostels, the Central Library, the Health Centre, Shopping Complexes, the Canteen behind Central Library, the Ganga Dhaba and Food Court near Sabarmati Hostel, for pasting/fixing posters/bills.

This issues with the approval of the Competent Authority.

(Prof. P.K. Joshi)
Director, Swachh JNU
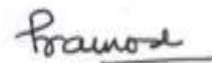
To,
All JNU Campus residents.

Appendix B

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI

July 24, 2018

CIRCULAR

All students of the University are instructed not to put up any type of posters/banners etc. at undesignated places in the University. If there are such posters/banners etc. already put up at undesignated places, these are required to be removed by 10.00 a.m. tomorrow.

REGISTRAR

To

All students of the University