

**PLURALITY IN MULTICULTURALISM: A
PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS**

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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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2010

Dedicated

To

My Parents

DECLARATION

I, Puja Rai, do hereby declare that the dissertation entitled *Plurality in Multiculturalism: A Philosophical Analysis* submitted by me for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy is an authentic work and has not been submitted for any other degree or diploma of this or any other University to the best of my knowledge.

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CERTIFICATE


This is to certify that the dissertation entitled *Plurality in Multiculturalism: A Philosophical Analysis* by Puja Rai, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy, is her original work. It has not been submitted, in part or in full, for any other degree or diploma of this or any other University, to the best of our knowledge.

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Preface

The present work is the study of *Plurality in Multiculturalism: A Philosophical Analysis*. The term 'multiculturalism' means acceptance of cultural norms, beliefs, practices, etc. of all cultures by the State. It is a philosophy that recognizes ethnic diversity within a society and that encourages others to be enlightened by worthwhile contribution to society by those of diverse ethnic background. Multiculturalism involves a study of human life within historical and cultural framework, culturally derived system of meaning and significance. Humans are culturally embedded and there is internal plurality as well as external plurality in culture. Plurality of values has been given important place in all multicultural discourses. How to understand plurality or to recognize the other remains a fundamental question in multiculturalism.

Gadamer creates a horizon of culture in terms of history, language and geography on the one hand and on the other hand with the help of hermeneutic discourse he moves towards the fusion of cultural horizon and thereby helping the growth of multiculturalism. Gadamer through his concept of 'fusion of horizon' has tried to show that no meaning or culture is to be considered as absolute. He, through his concept of culture, tries to provide the space where the voice of the other is heard and a strong pluralistic perspective is upheld.

Every culture is deeply rooted in the sense of affinity and diversity. By virtue of affinity, a culture creates diversity with other languages, values, etc. It implies that the moment a culture emerges and creates affinity; it simultaneously gives rise to diversity. The status of plurality can be analyzed through the help of three approaches taken towards multiculturalism – secularism, liberalism and communitarianism. Multiculturalism incorporates all the approaches under its inclusive policy.

While working on this dissertation I was greatly helped by some of the texts of the authors like – Sri Aurobindo's *Foundations of Indian Culture*, Ruth Benedict's *Patterns of Culture*, Gadamer's *Truth and Method*, Immanuel

Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, etc. I am also grateful to the authors whose works have indirectly helped in my work. I am also grateful to Prof. Bhikhu Parekh whose lectures on multiculturalism immensely helped me in my dissertation.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

I, in the present dissertation, will develop the concept of plurality in the contemporary discourses on multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is a perspective to understand, analyze and appropriate the cultural embeddedness of human beings. In every discourse on multiculturalism, plurality is the most operative term. How to understand plurality or to recognize the others remains a fundamental question in multiculturalism. Multiculturalism presupposes that human beings are culturally embedded; meaning and significance of their life-world depends on culturally derived system of meaning and significance. In the study of culture we find that there are ontological, cognitive, connotative and evaluative aspects involved. In the analysis of cultural phenomena, man is found to be at the centre. He himself creates a cultural being. Man is born and brought up according to certain systems and social norms. In every culture we find that certain symbols are created which metaphorically and suggestively refer to knowledge and values. On the basis of these symbols certain conventions, typologies and belief systems are created in the society. When we analyze the belief system, then cognitive aspects starts emerging. It implies that cultures have a definite pattern and patterns can be channelized in calculations, arrangements, hierarchies, universalities, etc. This implies the cognitive aspects of culture. Connotative aspect means acting in a certain way within the culture, a way of life with meaning and significance. Culture also has evaluative features like – high and low, mainstream and subaltern, majority and minority, etc. Humans are culturally embedded and there is internal plurality as well as external plurality in culture.

In the present dissertation, I will try to focus on certain issues as following –

1. Since there are plurality of cultures and each culture is geographically constrained/contained/limited and people from one culture move to another culture where the other culture is prevalent, in such a situation there is bound to

be conflict. With the help of multicultural discourse, I wish to address these conflicting situations and try to resolve it. Multiculturalism is one such possibility to resolve these conflicts.

2. There may be different kinds of multiculturalism, for instance in – Canada, U.S.A, and in Europe. In Europe particularly, France has a secular multiculturalism, Germany adopted a pluralistic approach, but partially and same is the case with U.K. In India particularly accepting the plurality of cultures has been the ethos of the society. And it was on this general ethos that India has been regarded as democratic, pluralistic, liberal society. These features would be conducive to multiculturalism. In West, plurality leads to fragmentation but in India in spite of plurality it does not lead to fragmentation but refers to collectivity. Hence, there are two different views regarding the concept of plurality between Indian and the Western countries. So here focus will be drawn towards this problematic concept of plurality.
3. Secularism, liberalism and communitarianism are the three approaches taken towards multiculturalism. With the help of these approaches, I will try to analyze the status of plurality. And an attempt will also be made in direction in which multiculturalism incorporates and even transcends secularism, liberalism and communitarianism.

In order to deal with the above issues, I would like to take up certain methods like analytical, phenomenological, critically evaluative and comparative. In order to understand a particular culture I will adopt the method of analysis regarding certain concepts. I will be adopting the phenomenological aspect also to understand the horizon of a particular culture. I will also try to evaluate critically the patterns of culture. Cultures have been coming in dialogues with the other cultures and through this process of dialogue one culture is capable of understanding the other culture. And by means of dialogue/multilogue, one try's to understand the hermeneutic aspect of culture like – language, symbols etc. I will also take the help of comparative method as it helps in evaluating the cultures in relation to each other, thereby, emphasizing

the cultural differences. And this comparative method will help us in understanding our own cultural process.

In the chapter *An Examination of Culture: The Notion of Plurality*, I will develop and examine the concept of culture and the notion of plurality operating in it. In the context of Indian culture, I will discuss Sri Aurobindo's (1872-1950) position both in terms of appreciating Indian culture and proposing a critique of the Western culture. I will develop the patterns of culture as envisaged by Ruth Benedict (1887-1948). Culture has a reference to the cultivation of values, norms, practices etc. and as such it involves ontological, epistemological and moral dimensions.

Ontologically, it is a concept of a human being (collective, not individual, human being), epistemologically culture has cognitive aspects and ethically there are values and norms involved in it. The ontological, epistemological and ethical dimensions of culture create certain perspectives within which we can identify a particular culture and go into the details of the pattern which a culture has created. In the first half of the twentieth century Ruth Benedict, an anthropologist has taken up this issue and brought it at the level of the academic discourse under the title *Patterns of Culture*. Ruth Benedict through his work presents the sketches of three cultures – the Zuni, the Dobu, and the Kwakiutl and uses these cultures to elaborate her theory of 'culture as personality-writ-large'.

There are patterns to cultural phenomena. In a nutshell it can be said that culture consists of the aspects of religion/*dharma*, spirituality, philosophy, ethics, aesthetics, and archaeology, etc.

In the chapter *An Examination of Multiculturalism*, I will develop and examine the concept of multiculturalism in three phases – first from 1970 to 1990, second phase from 1990 from 1999 and the third phase of 21st century. Under these phases, multiculturalism is viewed as a perspective on or a way of viewing social nexus, constructing historical, geographical and linguistic

relationships. It is concerned with laws, ordinances and status to provide equal recognition by the State to different cultural identities. This term basically means the fusion of cultural diversities. In order to organize my discussion in this chapter, I propose to divide it into two parts –

Part I- Cultural Plurality vis-à-vis/ Multiculturalism since 1970.

Part II- Hermeneutic Dimension of Discourse on Culture.

In the first part of this chapter, I will engage myself with the notion of *Cultural Plurality vis-à-vis/ Multiculturalism since 1970*.

Multiculturalism is a philosophy that recognizes ethnic diversity within a society and that encourages others to be enlightened by worthwhile contribution to society by those of diverse ethnic backgrounds. According to Bhikhu Parekh, ‘multiculturalism is best understood neither as a political doctrine with a programmatic content nor as a philosophical theory of man and the world but as a perspective on or a way of viewing human life’¹. As such multiculturalism involves a study of human life within historical and cultural framework, culturally derived system of meaning and significance.

Multiculturalism claims of repudiating the hierarchical status of culture and accepting the universalistic features of cultures. Multiculturalism also claims that the universalistic features of all cultures should be accepted. And the universalistic features are not only to be accepted but also to be appreciated. Along with repudiating the hierarchical status within culture and accepting the universalistic features of all cultures, multiculturalism proposes civil and democratic rights, property and settlement, marriage and inheritance and above all citizenship so that people belonging to each cultural community could be recognized as valid participants in the civil society. And when these rights are given then multiculturalism is established.

¹ Parekh, Bhikhu, *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory*, Palgrave, New York, 2000, p.368.

In the second part of this chapter, I will describe *Hermeneutic Dimension of Discourse on Culture*.

In the late twentieth century Gadamer (1900-2002) proposes fusion of cultural horizons by applying the method of hermeneutics. This method can help us to understand the role of culture in any multicultural society. It is all the more important because unless we understand a specific culture in terms of the meaning of the texts of the culture, we will not be in position to show its relevance to another culture. We are living in plurality of cultures but to say that a culture is relevant in the context of another culture will pave the way for the multiculturalism. Gadamer's contribution lies on the one hand to create a horizon of culture in terms of history (effective-history), language and geography and on the other hand with the help of the hermeneutic discourse he moves towards the fusion of cultural horizon and thereby helping the growth of multiculturalism.

The main aspect of his theory of culture is the passion for the other. Gadamer through his concept of 'fusion of horizon' has tried to show that no one meaning or culture is to be considered as absolute. He through his concept tries to provide the space where the voice of the other is heard and a strong pluralistic perspective is upheld.

The 'fusion of horizons' along with *bildung* helps us to accept the other in full recognition and respect. This is what lies at the roots of multiculturalism.

In the chapter *An Examination of the Status of Plurality in Multiculturalism*, I will develop the doctrine of multiculturalism in the context of the concepts of pluralism in the philosophical system of India and the West. Pluralism is the most operative term in the formulation of discussion on culture and multiculturalism. Every culture is deeply rooted in the sense of affinity and diversity. We have the affinity for a culture because we are born and brought with that. It is the aspects of language, symbols, values, cuisine, festivity celebrations of birth, marriage and even the concept of death that create the cultural affinity. By virtue of affinity, a culture creates diversity with other

languages, values etc. It implies that the moment a culture emerges and creates affinity; it simultaneously gives rise to diversity. It can therefore be said that plurality implies an understanding of affinity and diversity. The philosophical basis of affinity and diversity lies in the concept of identity and difference. This notion can be traced in Aristotle's logic with its three laws²-

1. The Law of Identity- This law asserts that if any statement is true, then it is true, e.g. S is S. The principle of identity asserts that every such statement is a tautology.
2. The Law of Contradiction- This law asserts that no statement can be both true and false at the same time. The principle of contradiction asserts that every statement of the form $p \sim p$ must be false, that every such statement is self-contradictory.
3. The Law of Excluded Middle- This law asserts that every statement is either true or false. The principle of excluded middle asserts that every statement of the form $p \vee \sim p$ must be true, that every such statement is a tautology.

What lies at the centre of Aristotle's logic is that identity and contradiction/difference cannot be true at the same place. They must therefore be kept separate from each other. This philosophical insight can be found to be deeply rooted in the plurality of cultures, i.e. different culture can exist and flourish at different places at the same time or at different time. But multiculturalism advocates the notion of identity and difference. Identity lies in giving equal rights and recognition to all cultures but even then these cultures have their own existence as they differ from one another in regard to their norms, values, practices, etc. In order to organise my discussion, I propose to divide the chapter into three parts –

Part 1 – Secularism: An Approach towards Multiculturalism.

Part 2 – Liberalism: An Approach towards Multiculturalism, and

² Copi, I.M, Cohen, C., *Introduction to Logic*, 10th edition, Delhi, Pearson Education Asia, 1998, p.389.

Part 3 – Communitarianism: An Approach towards Multiculturalism.

I, in first part of this chapter will throw some light on *Secularism: An Approach towards Multiculturalism*.

The process of secularization during 17th century was an attempt to develop the institutions of education, science and technology, industry and market free from the dominance of religion. Secularization described in terms of Peter Berger, ‘the process by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols’.³ In the course of time ‘secularization’ became a perspective to look at cultural phenomenon and recognized the cultural aspect as distinct from the religious aspects. For instance – Latin was the language of the church and was understood as a language through which religious matters were explained. Due to the process of secularization, dominance of religion was repudiated. During the 18th and 19th century in Europe languages like English, French, German, Spanish etc., all evolved from Latin but have repudiated the religiosity of the Latin language as the result of the process of secularization.

Secularism is the core of integration. It implies a sense of belonging, or feeling or togetherness and unity. It means creating social and religious respect among the people of the country. Being secular is an approach towards multiculturalism as it provides equal respect to all religions.

Now, in the second part of the chapter, I will deal with *Liberalism: An Approach towards Multiculturalism*.

Liberalism has been branded as meta-ideology which means that it encompasses many principles, values and elements within its fold. Liberalism is the belief in the importance of liberty and equality. Liberalism’s most honoured slogan says this: ‘Individuals must be left unimpeded to pursue their own

³ Madan, T.N., *Images of the World-Essay on Religion, Secularism, and Culture*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, p.57.

conception of the good life'.⁴ Individualism, freedom, reason, toleration, consent, constitutionalism, equality, justice, etc are some of the elements of liberalism.

Philosophers like Locke, Kant and Mill have given immense importance to individuals. The core of Locke's individualism is the assertion that every man is naturally the sole proprietor of his own person and capacities – the absolute proprietor in the sense that he owes nothing to society for them – and especially the absolute proprietor of his capacity of labour.⁵ Liberalism first became a powerful force in the age of Enlightenment whose goal was rational self-determination. For Kant, a truly moral person cannot passively accept the customs and values of any society. A moral person has to be autonomous. Autonomy is the ability to live by one's own laws. According to the notion of autonomy, person is only bounded by his personal idea of right and wrong. J.S Mill was another liberal thinker who aimed to show the kind of life human beings ought to lead and exploring the type of the society conducive to it. The most important point made by Mill is that, "over himself, over his body and mind, the individual is sovereign".⁶ He maintained that civil society must always guarantee the civil liberty of its citizens – their protection against interference by an abusive authority.

By pluralism, liberals refer to the proliferation of opinions and beliefs that characterize a stable social order. For liberal philosophy, pluralism leads easily to toleration. In liberalism, there was acceptance of freedom and recognition of the other at the level of individuals only.

And in third part, I will deal with *Communitarianism: An Approach towards Multiculturalism*.

⁴ Bilgrami, Akeel, "Secularism, Liberalism and the Moral Psychology of Identity", in *Multiculturalism, Liberalism and Democracy*, (ed.) Rajeev Bhargava, Amiya Kumar Bagchi and R. Sudarshan, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2007, p.173.

⁵ Macpherson, C.B., *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke*, Oxford University Press, London, 1962, p. 231.

⁶ Mill, J. S., *Utilitarianism, Liberty, Representative Government*, J. M. Dent and Sons LTD, London, 1910, p.73.

The existence of community is central to the discourse of culture. Plurality implies communitarian life in society. Notion of community will be discussed with the help of Kantian formulation of disjunctive judgments. 'In all disjunctive judgments the sphere (that is, the multiplicity which is contained in any one judgment) is represented as a whole divided into parts (the subordinate concepts), and that since no one of them can be contained under any other, they are thought as co-ordinated with, not subordinated to, each other, and so as determining each other, not in one direction only, as in a series, but reciprocally, as in an aggregate...'.⁷

Construction of community is possible on the basis of certain symbols which are the marks of the identity of a particular community. It is followed by certain belief systems, rituals and conventions of that particular community. The symbol, the ritual, the belief system and the values embodied in them create the moment of affinity, concern, inclination and thus they give rise to the emergence of culture. Plurality of cultures emerges because of the plurality of the communities.

Communitarians view people as 'embedded' in particular social rules and relationships. Such embedded selves do not form and revise their conception of the good life; instead, they inherit a way of life which defines their good.

Thus, in this way I will try to locate the notion and place of plurality in multiculturalism, while focusing on the concept of culture. I will also articulate the notion of plurality in Indian and Western culture. To explicate this view clearly I will look into the three approaches towards multiculturalism i.e. secularism, liberalism and communitarianism.

⁷ Kant, Immanuel, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by N. K. Smith, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, pp. 117-118.

Chapter 2

An Examination of Culture: The Notion of Plurality

I, in the present chapter, shall develop and examine the concept of culture and the notion of plurality operating in it. In the context of Indian culture, I will discuss Sri Aurobindo's (1872-1950) position both in terms of appreciating Indian culture and proposing a critique of Western culture. I will develop the patterns of culture as envisaged by Ruth Benedict (1887-1948). Culture has a reference to the cultivation of values, norms, practices etc. and as such it involves ontological, epistemological and moral dimensions. Ontologically, it is a concept of a human being (collective, not individual, human being), epistemologically culture has cognitive aspects and ethically there are values and norms involved in it.

I would like to deal with the definitions of culture both in Western and Indian perspectives. The word *culture* (L. *Cultura*, G. *Kulture*) from the verb *colere*, means to cultivate. There are different meanings given to the term culture. In 1952, A.L Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn¹ gave 164 definitions of culture. However, the word *culture* is most commonly used in three basic senses² –

- a) Excellence of taste in the fine arts and humanities, also known as high culture.
- b) An integrated pattern of human knowledge, beliefs and behaviour that depends upon the capacity for symbolic thought and social learning.
- c) The set of shared attitudes, values, goal, and practices that characterize an institution, organization or group.

Raymond Williams describes the word culture in his book *Culture and Society* as:

¹ Kroeber, A.L. and Kluckhohn Clyde, *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*, Cambridge Mass, Peabody Museum of American Archaeology, 1952.

² www.wikipedia.org/wiki/culture, retrieved on 09.26.2009.

The word culture in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, came to mean, first, 'a general state or habit of the mind', having close relations with the idea of human perfection. Second, it came to mean 'the general state of intellectual development, in a society as a whole'. Third, it came to mean 'the general body of arts'. Fourth, later in the century, it came to mean 'a whole way of life, material, intellectual, and spiritual'. It came also, as is known, to be a word which often provoked, either hostility or embarrassment.³

In the twentieth century, culture emerged as a concept central to anthropology, encompassing all human phenomena that are purely results of human genetics. Specifically, the term "culture" in American anthropology had two meanings⁴:

- a) The evolved human capacity to classify and represent experiences with symbols, and to act imaginatively and creatively; and
- b) The distinct ways that people living in different parts of the world classified and represented their experiences, and acted creatively. Following World War II, the term became important, albeit with different meanings, in other disciplines such as sociology, cultural studies including philosophy, organizational psychology and management studies.

The term 'culture' entered into English usage with the publication of E.B.Taylor's text *Primitive Culture* in 1871. The following definition was given in this classic text: "Culture or civilization...is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."⁵

Parsons in his article *Multiculturalism and the Problems of Particularism* has asserted that *Kant* referred to culture as "the human capacity to will universal moral laws."⁶

Various philosophers in the past have tried to define culture differently. Here, three definitions from major thinkers can be taken into account:

³ Williams, R., *Culture and Society*, Penguin Publishing, New York, 1961, p.16.

⁴ www.wikipedia.org/wiki/culture, retrieved on 09.26.2010.

⁵ Lane, J.E. and Errson, S., *Culture and Politics: A Comparative Approach*, Ashygate Publishing Ltd., Guildford, 2005, p.18.

⁶ Parsons, Joshua, "Multiculturalism and the Problems of Particularism", *American Political Science Review*, Vol.88, No.1, March, 1994, pp.169.

[Culture] denotes a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life.⁷

Geertz relates culture with symbols. Through studying the symbols, one can access to the formations of social phenomena. Culture is a content in which people live their lives. Culture is only the pattern of meanings embedded in symbols. The function of culture is to impose meaning on the world and make it understandable.⁸

The view of Geertz provides a great emphasis on the role of symbols in culture. But a culture cannot be completely understood without its political aspects such as institution etc. Institution is related with culture, as is clearly stated by Malinowski:

Culture is an integral composed of partly autonomous, partly co-ordinated institutions. It is integrated on a series of principles such as the community of blood through procreation; the specialisation in activities; and last but not least, the use of power in political organisation. Each culture owes its completeness and self-sufficiency to the fact that it satisfies the whole range of basic, instrumental and integrative needs⁹

Malinowski relates culture with institutions. He is credited with Functionalism, which explains a culture as an interrelated whole, not a collection of isolated traits. The theory of functionalism states that – all human culture could eventually be related to the satisfaction of basic needs. Rituals, kinship patterns, economic exchanges, were not to be explained in terms of their origins, but their current use. His emphasis on the current significance alone on institutions meant the neglect of any historical context.¹⁰

Malinowski's view of culture is neglecting the role of history in the construction of culture and this is the flaw of his cultural theory. So, Pye's view of culture is to be addressed here who is admitting the role of collective history in the political culture. Pye presents culture as:

⁷ Lane, J.E. and Errson, S., *Culture and Politics: A Comparative Approach*, p.17.

⁸ www.indiana.edu/wanthro/theory-pages/Geertz.html, retrieved on 09.27.2009.

⁹ Lane, J.E. and Errson, S., *Culture and Politics: A Comparative Approach*, p.17.

¹⁰ www.encyclopeadia.com/doc/1088.Malinowski, retrieved on 09.27.2009.

Political culture is thus the manifestation in aggregate form of the psychological and subjective dimensions of politics. A political culture is the product of both the collective history of a political system and the life histories of the member of that system, and thus it is rooted equally in public events and private experience.¹¹

Culture, according to Pye, is not primarily, a cultural concept at all, but identity, basically a psychological one. The concept of “political culture” believes that a specific people share about how politics should be carried out. Pye believes that people can disagree on ideology, but still share the same political culture.¹²

With the help of above definitions, it is clearly seen that one definition of culture leads to the emergence of other definition. Culture defines everything that man does, and how he does it, in the process of self-fulfilment. Culture is the method of self-realisation of the individual and society, the measure of development of both. Various fields in knowledge – ethnography, archaeology, history, literary criticism and so on – study the various spheres of culture.

A culture has three dimensions – ontological, epistemological and moral. But for dealing with these dimensions, there is need for a culture to be recognised as the centre of our study. I, in my work will try to focus on the Indian culture. Sri Aurobindo¹³ in *Foundations of Indian Culture* vindicates *sādhana*, *vidyā* and *kalā* as three inter-related aspects of Indian culture. Indian culture is a culture of knowledge, of dialogue, of spirituality, of yoga, and so on.

According to Sri Aurobindo, ‘India’s central conception is that of the Eternal, the Spirit here encased in matter, involved and immanent in it and evolving on the material plane by rebirth of the individual up the scale of being till in mental man-it enters the world of ideas and realm of conscious morality; dharma.’¹⁴

¹¹ Lane, J.E. and Errson, S., *Culture and Politics: A Comparative Approach*, p.17.

¹² www.wikipedia.org/wiki/political-culture, retrieved on 09.29.2009.

¹³ Aurobindo, Sri, *Foundations of Indian Culture*, Sri Aurobindo Library Inc., New York, 1953, p.59.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p.4.

The Foundations of Indian Culture (1953) is divided into three parts. In part one, he raises a question and tries to answer it in terms of 'Is India Civilized?' In part two, he deals with 'A Rationalistic Critic of Indian Culture' and in part three he discusses 'A Defence of Indian Culture' under the subheading – Religion and Spirituality, Indian Art, Literature and Polity. In addition, he provides an Appendix entitled 'Indian Culture and External Influence'. I will be taking up the basic pre-occupation which Sri Aurobindo has in part two, which has been divided into six chapters, and also from the Appendix. In every chapter, Mr. William Archer is criticizing the Indian culture from various aspects and it will be seen that what kind of response can be provided against his arguments.

Sri Aurobindo has defined culture as:

The culture of a people may be roughly described as the expression of the consciousness of life which formulates itself in three aspects. There is a side of thought, of ideal, of upward will, and the soul's aspiration; there is a side of creative self-expression and appreciative aesthesis, intelligence and imagination; and there is a side of practical and outward formulation. A people's philosophy and higher thinking give us its mind's purest, largest and most general formulation of its consciousness of life and its dynamic view of existence. Its religion formulates the most intense form of its upward will and the soul's aspirations towards the fulfilment of its highest ideal and impulse. Its art, poetry, literature provide for us a creative expression and impression of its intuition, imagination, vital turn and creative intelligence. Its society and politics provide in their forms an outward frame in which the more external life works out what it can of its inspiring ideal and of its special character and nature under the difficulties of the environment.¹⁵

All human experience is supposed to be brought under three aspects as – science, morality and art. This was an Enlightenment project. Sri Aurobindo did not describe human experience and culture exactly in the terms which were taken in Enlightenment project but took his ideas from it. He used the terms *vidyā*, *sādhanā* and *kalā* respectively for science, moral and art. Science covers the area of knowledge. *Sādhanā* means practicing as following the rules and hence can be equated with term moral. *Kalā* includes art, poetry, literature, music, etc.

¹⁵ Aurobindo, Sri, *Foundations of Indian Culture*, p.59.

Archer said that 'India must be proved altogether barbarous in order to destroy or damage her case for self-government.'¹⁶ Archer is an imperialist writer. By calling India as barbarous, he (Archer) is trying to show the West as superior in front of India. He, through his argument, is trying to create hierarchy in which the West is kept at the top whereas India at the bottom.

Sri Aurobindo did not very clearly provide any argument against Mr. Archer's claim of calling India as barbarous. But still have argued that 'an ill-informed misrepresentation of facts, a light-hearted temerity of judgement of things, he (Archer) has not cared to study constitute this critic's title to write on Indian culture and dismiss it authoritatively as a mass of barbarism.'¹⁷ But now here a question can be raised – what can be the criteria for calling a country barbarous? Those people can be called barbarous who does not have a language to communicate. But India has Sanskrit language from the very beginning, from or before the time when *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads* were written.

In India it was during the high Vedic beginning, the grand spiritual stir of the *Upaniṣads*, the wide flood of Buddhism, Vedānta, Sāṅkhya, the Puranic and tantric religions, the flowering of Vaishnavism and Shaivism that intellect, thought, poetry, the arts, the material life flowered into splendour.¹⁸ In Indian culture, we come across many school of philosophy which have tried to emphasise on the cognitive part in their own way. Vedas have been called the storehouse of knowledge.

To call India as barbarous is unreasonable. Mr. Archer's view about India is just a collection of some unfavourable comments made by others. He himself is not able to provide a strong ground for his arguments. His only motive behind criticising India is to serve a material interest.

¹⁶ Ibid, p.51.

¹⁷ Ibid. p.52.

¹⁸ Ibid. p.92.

Second issue is of morality on the basis of which Mr. Archer has criticised the Indian culture. He denies that there is any real morality in Hinduism.

But as per my view Archer's criticism of India on the basis of morality is baseless. Hinduism talks of righteousness and there are many admirable ethical doctrines in the Hindu writings. India has propounded various ethical doctrines from very ancient time. In ancient India four supreme ends of life were recognized – *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*. *Dharma* means right conduct and penance, not religion. *Artha* means right sense of earning and *kāma* means satisfaction of right desires. Once we have achieved all these, then we go towards attainment or fulfilment. Life is divided into four stages and different stages have been allotted different works. The *Brahmacarya* should observe celibacy, purity, cleanliness, study of the Vedas etc. The *Grhastha* should marry and lead an honest life for own good and social good. Then *Vānaprastha* should move to a forest, engaging himself in meditation and prayer. Then they should lead the life of a recluse (*sannyāsin*). In this way this system elevates an individual to the highest stage of perfection.

There is evaluative aspect in the concept of morality. Moral means values and principles. Whenever we talk of morality, or an action on the moral ground, we try to evaluate it in terms of good or bad, right or wrong. For example, Buddha said that violence is a sign of barbarity, but non-injury, compassion, or love is a sign of culture.

Thus, India has strong ethical grounding. So, Archer's attack on the ethical aspects of India is unreasonable. It is the land from which many great people got enlighten and they used it in enlightening the whole world.

In chapter two, Archer has attacked the concept of spirituality and relation between religion and philosophy prevailing in India. The western mind is dominated by the practical reason and considers themselves as modern considering India as backward which should try to develop itself in their sense.

According to Sri Aurobindo, from the very beginning, Indian culture has remained a spiritual, an inward-looking religio-philosophical culture. The inward look of the spirit is central and original peculiarity from which everything has derived. Indian culture has a right even to throw a challenge to rationalistic modernism and say:

Attain first my level of spirituality before you claim to destroy and supersede me or call on me to modernise myself entirely in your sense. No matter if I have myself latterly fallen from my own heights or if my present forms cannot meet all the requirements of the future mind of humanity; I can reascend; the power is there in me. I may even be able to develop a spiritual modernism which will help you in your efforts to exceed yourself and arrive at a larger harmony than any you have reached in the past or can dream in the present.¹⁹

Sri Aurobindo has rightly explained that the western mind is dominated by rational idea and has denied religious and spiritual concepts. The criticism made by them is not really an intellectual criticism, but is only an expression of mental dislike and a fundamental difference of temperament and standpoint.

All philosophy is speculation according to Archer. The outward world and the normal fact are the only verifiable truth. He reproaches Indian philosophy for taking its speculative seriously and for presenting speculation in the guise of dogma.

Second issue on which Archer has attacked India is regarding the relation between religion and philosophy. For Aurobindo – Philosophy and religion, are the soul of Indian culture, inseparable from each other, a thing high and splendid, but ineffective. Indian philosophy has seized hold on life, has had an enormous practical effect on the civilization. In the days of the Stoics and Epicureans philosophy got a grip, but only among the high cultured. Nietzsche has had his influence, certain French thinker also in France, the philosophies of James and Bergson have attracted some amount of public interest; but it is mere nothing compared with the effective power of Asiatic philosophy. Plato's idea of philosophers as the right rulers and best directors of society seems to him the most fantastic and unpractical of notions; the philosophers, precisely

¹⁹ Ibid, pp.60-61.

because he moves among ideas, must be without any hold on real life. The Indian mind holds on the contrary that the *Rishi*, the thinker, the seer of spiritual truth is the best guide, not only of the religious and moral, but the practical life.²⁰

Thus, for Indians the ultimate truth is the truth of the spirit and for the European the ultimate truth is more often truth of the pure reason. Indian culture reconciles spirit and reason. The clash between religion and science, philosophy and science is a leading phenomenon in Europe. But a harmony, a consensus, a union must be established between philosophy and religion as seen in Indian culture.

In the third chapter, Archer has put a charge against the Indian philosophy that it turns away from nature. Its turn does not lead towards the study of nature, but away from it.

But to say that Indian philosophy turns away from the study of nature is to ignore its magnificent history. India holds the first position in various fields such as – mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, medicine, surgery. India was also the teacher of Arabs from where Europe recovered the last habit of scientific enquiry and got the basic from which modern science started. India made discoveries in various directions as – notation of decimal in mathematics and that earth in reality is moving but just appears as still, was declared by Indian astronomers, many centuries before Galileo.

Now here a question can be raised that is it possible to think of a development through only metaphysical tendencies and by avoiding the study of nature. And for answering the question I can quote Sri Aurobindo:

A remarkable feature of the Indian mind was a close attention to the things of life, a disposition to observe minutely its salient facts, to systematise and to found in each department of it a science, shastra, well founded scheme and rule²¹

²⁰ Ibid, p.65.

²¹ Ibid, p.71.

So, in this way it is clear that Indian philosophy was not moving away from the study of nature but was providing a ground for the scientific tendency and hence it cannot be called as the land which is capable of only unsubstantial metaphysics.

The next charge levelled against Indian culture is that it is not a hope culture. Sri Aurobindo denies this charge and says:

Pessimism is not peculiar to the Indian mind: it has been an element in the thought of all developed civilizations. It is the sign of a culture already old, the fruit of a mind which has lived much, experienced much, sounded life and found it full of suffering, sounded joy and achievement and found that all is vanity and vexation of spirit and there is nothing new under the sun or, if there is, its novelty is but of a day.²²

Pessimism is a part of all developed civilizations. According to Buddha, life is full of suffering. And for emphasising on suffering Buddha has been sometimes called as a pessimist. A system is called pessimist if it stifles at hope and declares that this world is a weary place to live in and there is no bliss in the world or beyond. Buddha has never said this, so he cannot be considered as a pessimist. Buddha pointed to a way for getting rid of the suffering and that extinction of suffering is *nirvāna*. Buddhist *nirvāna* is open to all.

Indian culture does not give immense importance to the material progress of man or the race but has a keen towards the spiritual progress. And this pessimism with regard to life is not the sole note of the Indian religious mind; its most popular forms accept life as a game of God and see beyond our present conditions for every human being the eternal nearness to the Divine.²³

There is less emphasis on the materialistic aspect in Indian culture than the spiritual aspect. In Indian culture, reaching the nearness to the Divine was thought within man's grasp. Thus, such a description can hardly be called a depressing or pessimistic theory of existence.

²² Ibid, p.84.

²³ Ibid, p.85.

In the fourth chapter, the total irrationality of Hinduism is the main theme of the attack. The charge of irrationality which is imposed on Hinduism is not justifiable in Sri Aurobindo's view. He provides an argument for showing that the charge is not reasonable – The pervading irrational character of Hindu religion is explained by the allegation that the Indian people have always moved towards the form rather than the substance. But this kind of movement has to be supposed as a universal feature of the human mind, not only in religion, but in society, politics, art, literature, even in science. In every conceivable human activity there is a worship of the form and forgetfulness of the spirit and Europe is no exception to it. In Europe, killing etc. was done for spirituality and religion. So, it has hardly a record which would entitle it to cast this reproach in the face of the East.²⁴

Thus, the claim of calling or considering India as irrational is either false or invalid in its nature. Many turmoil situations have been created in the name of spirituality and religion in the West. Movement towards form is a universal feature of human mind and Europe is no exception to it, so, just on this basis it (Europe) cannot impose the charge of being irrational on India.

In the fifth chapter, the Western impression of Hinduism is being described as an entirely metaphysical and other-worldly system dreaming of things beyond. But, if that is so, India would have not been able to do anything great.

Man in the West has always been a living creature of Nature and is set under impossible situation to get salvation. Aurobindo tries to show that man occupies a very important place in India and can attain salvation whereas in the West, it becomes impossible for man to attain salvation. According to Sri Aurobindo:

²⁴ Ibid, p.89.

Man in the Indian idea is a spirit veiled in the works of energy, moving to self-discovery, capable of Godhead. He has the spiritual capacity to pass to a supreme and extraordinary pitch of manhood and that is the first aim which is proposed to him by Indian culture²⁵

Thus, in Indian culture man is supposed to have the power to become one with the Absolute. Man acquires more important position in Indian culture as compared to that in the West.

But this conception of man becoming one with God gives rise to another issue in front of us. The positivist Western mind finds it difficult to give the conception of the rank of a living and intelligible idea. The status of *mukta* appears to it as a baseless chimera. Indian notion of Oneness with God went against the Christian notion of God, before whom man is only a grovelling worm.

The great aim of spiritual liberation and perfection, *mukti*, *mokṣa*, was infused into the life of human being in Indian culture. The entire life of the individual was guided towards the realm of the supreme reality. Sri Aurobindo elaborates this point more clearly in his words:

Spiritual freedom, spiritual perfection were not figured as a far off intangible ideal, but presented as the highest human aim towards which all grow in the end and were made near and possible to his endeavour from a first practicable basis of life and the Dharma. The spiritual idea governed, enlightened and gathered towards itself all the other life-motives of a great civilized people²⁶

Thus, it is clearly stated that the concept of *mokṣa* is the central point of the Indian culture. The whole ordering of society was cast into a scale of graduated ascension towards the supreme submit.

In the last chapter, issue emerges for having a firm outward basis on which the practical development of India's spirit and its idea in life can be found. How the natural life of man is to be taken, while allowing it sufficient scope and variety and freedom, yet to subject it to a common *dharma*. Indian culture has provided the double system of the four *varnas* and the four *āśramas* for its

²⁵ Ibid, p.112.

²⁶ Ibid, p.122.



own guidance which it throws into a basic system of the individual life in the social frame.

In ancient India, there was a system of four *varnas* – *Brāhman*, *Kṣatriya*, *Vaiśya* and *Śūdra*. Sri Aurobindo was also impressed by the four *varna* system of the Indian culture. He explained its significance in following lines:

For the real greatness of the Indian system of the four *varnas* did not lie in its well-ordered division of economic function; its true originality and permanent value was in the ethical and spiritual content which the thinkers and builders of the society poured into these forms²⁷

Birth was accepted as the first gross and natural indicators but is not and cannot be the soul state of *varna*. The intellectual capacity and spiritual stature were the other important features.

The whole system of society, founded on the four *Varnas*, was made a harmonious means for the elevation and progress of the soul, mind and life from the natural pursuit of interest and desire, first to the perfection of the law of our being, *Dharma*, and at the end to the highest spiritual freedom. For man's true end in life must be always the realization of his own immortal self, this entry in its secret of an infinite and eternal existence.²⁸ Thus, this system of four *varnas* not only made well-ordered division of economic function in society but also help in the attainment of the man's true end in life i.e. his own immortal self.

The Indian system provided a framework of the individual and gave him a scale and gradation for his life. This high convenience was the object of four *āśramas*. Life, according to Sri Aurobindo, was divided into four natural periods and each of them marked out a stage in the working out of this cultural idea of living. Four *āśramas* were – *Brahmacarya*, *Grhastha*, *Vānprastha*, and *Sannyāsin*. The word *Brahmacarya* etymologically means 'living in the *Brahman*'. A student for the first twenty five of years of life was required to

²⁷ Ibid, p.129.

²⁸ Ibid, p.131.

devote his energy to study and learning. He was called a *Brahmacari*, because he was required to gain knowledge about reality, world and God. After that he was allowed to enter the householder stage, where he can get married, enjoy his life, and pay his debt to the society and its elements and by the way he discharge his life functions. He prepared himself for the last greatest purpose of his existence. In the third stage, he moves to forest and lead a solitary life of mediation and prayer. He lives in a broad freedom from the stricter social bonds. In the last stage of life, he removed all ties and went on wondering over the world making his soul ready for the eternity.

Indian culture examined the secrets of external nature and discovered and lived the boundless and miraculous truths of the inner being; it fathomed self and understood and possessed the world.²⁹

Four *puruṣārthas* were accepted in the Indian culture – *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*. *Mokṣa* was considered as the aim of life and all the three were means of attaining that goal. *Artha* and *kāma* were not given immense importance in early times but things changed with the growing time. *Artha* and *kāma* were in some direction developed at the expense of the *dharma*. But still some strong basis of the old knowledge remained to inspire, to harmonise, to keep alive the soul of India.

Thus, the system of four *varnas*, four *āśrams* and *puruṣārthas* helped the Indian culture in its astonishing growth and development.

In the Appendix, named 'Indian Culture and external influence', the most attractive issue is that, in today's world, is it possible for any country to remain aloof without having contact with other countries. And if one is in contact with other, is he just imitating the former. Just imitation is bad, but one could have assimilation and acceptance attitude.

²⁹ Ibid, p.133.

One thing that attracts the attention is, how India could survive when there is huge rush of modern life and thought which is almost opposite to her own. Sri Aurobindo provides answer to this question as – ‘India can only survive by confronting this raw, new, aggressive, powerful world with fresh diviner creations of her own spirit, cast in the mould of her own spiritual ideals.’³⁰

In the last century, attempt was made to imitate the European civilization and throw ancient culture. But for recovery of its own base and strength there is no need of imitation but acceptance and assimilation. Any idea is to be accepted not because it is European but because it is human, because it presents fruitful view-points to the spirits, because it is the thing of the greatest importance in the future development of the life of man. Assimilation means that everything from Europe must not be crudely taken, but ‘must go back to whatever corresponds to it, illumines its sense, justifies its highest purport in our own spiritual conception of life and existence, and in that light work out its extent, degree, form, relation to other idea, application.’³¹

Thus, it has been clearly seen that Indian culture has never included external influence but had a power of selective assimilation, subordination and transformation of external elements as characteristic of its processes.

Now we will see various aspects related with Indian culture:

Ontological Aspect – In the analysis of cultural phenomenon, we find that man/*puruṣa* (women) is at the centre of it. The basic difference between man and animal is that, man eats what he himself produces unlike other animals who adapt themselves with nature. Man objectivises nature and creates a culture for his own survival. But this culture is always rooted in some kind of communitarian life. This way man and his history, geography and language constitute the nucleus of every culture. Man could be defined in many ways. Man is homo sapien, homo cultural, homo linguist and even homo techniques,

³⁰ Ibid, p.433.

³¹ Ibid, p.437.

but above all man is fundamentally a cultural being. Man is born and brought up in certain belief systems and social norms. When we start examining those belief systems and social norms, we move towards the philosophical aspect of it as is said by Socrates, 'an unexamined life is not worth living.'³²

The Indian idea of the world, of Nature, and of existence is not physical, but psychological and spiritual, according to Sri Aurobindo. But it does not mean at all that Indian culture concedes no reality to life, follows no material or vital aims and satisfactions, or does not care to do anything for our actual human existence. *Upaniṣad* says, 'matter, mind, life, reason, form exist for the sake of the self. But that does not reduce their importance but on the contrary enhances it by hundred times. The dignity of human life was recognized in the ancient Indian thought.'³³ In Indian culture man is supposed to have the power to become one with the Absolute.

Epistemological Aspect – When we start examining the beliefs and myths of a particular society, we move from ontological aspect of a culture to the epistemological one, for example, in the Jews tradition as well as in Christianity and to some extent in Islam, we find an original myth which says that God created man in his own image. This is followed by the people of these communities even to the extent that man is god's own image. But when we start examining these myths then we look at the content and intent aspect of it. As content it talks of two diverse entities – God and image, but the intent aspect is the mutual relationship between the two. In logical form it can be expressed like this – 'Man is like God/Man is God'. We can further examine these issues in terms of universality like – All men are like God. But different cultural identities take up this issue differently. Thereby we come across pluralistic aspects of cultures. Other epistemic categories like transformation,

³² Lavine, T.Z., *From Socrates to Sartre: The Philosophic Quest*, Bantam Books, New York, 1984, p.16.

³³ *Ibid*, p.111.

cyclicity, evaluation etc., have been borrowed from the culture but have been given a new connotation.

Evaluative Aspect – Culture are also embedded in values (*mūlya*), derived etymologically from the root word *mūla*, it also means that something which is at the end. Culture as the embodiment of the value is at the both in the beginning and in the end.

India has propounded various ethical doctrines from very ancient in the terms of *puruṣārtha*, i.e. meaning of being a person. It has two tier value system namely – *abhyudaya* (achievements) and *niḥshreyas* (fulfilment). In the sphere of *abhyudaya*, we have *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma*. And in the realm of *niḥshreyas*, we have *mokṣa*. *Dharma* means right conduct and penance and not religion. *Artha* means right sense of earning and *kāma* means satisfaction of right desires. Once we have achieved all these, then we go towards attainment or fulfilment i.e., *mokṣa*. *Dharma*, *artha* and *kāma* are considered as the means for the attainment of *mokṣa*.

The ontological, epistemological and ethical aspects of culture create certain perspectives within which we can identify a particular culture and go into the details of the pattern which a culture has created. In the first half of twentieth century Ruth Benedict, an anthropologist has taken up this issue and brought it at the level of the academic discourse under the title *Patterns of Culture*.

Ruth Benedict through his work *Patterns of Culture* (1935) tries to explain the meaning of the term culture. In the present volume, author presents the sketches of three cultures – the *Zuni*, the *Dobu*, and the *Kwakiutl*, and uses these cultures to elaborate her theory of ‘Culture as personality-writ-large’. Benedict tries to explain the term culture, through the help of the first three chapters –

- What really binds men together is their culture, the ideas and the standards they have in common.³⁴
- A culture, like an individual, is a more or less consistent pattern of thought and action. Within each culture there came into being characteristic purposes not necessarily shared by other types of society. In obedience to their purposes, each people further and further consolidates its experience, and in proportion to the urgency of these drives the heterogeneous items of behaviour take more and more congruous shape.³⁵
- The diversity of culture results not only from the case with which societies elaborate or reject possible aspects of existence. It is more even due to a complex interweaving of cultural traits. The final form of any traditional institution goes far beyond the original human impulse. In great measure this final form depends upon the way in which the trait has emerged with other traits from different fields of experience. The nature of the trait will be quite different in the different areas according to the elements with which it has combined.³⁶
- If we are interested in cultural processes, the only way in which we can know the significance of the selected detail of behavior is against the background of the motives and emotions and values that are institutionalized in that culture.³⁷

Thus, with the help of Benedict's definition, it is made clear that for understanding a culture, there is need to understand the individual living in that culture, as is correctly stated by Franz Boas in the introduction of this book: 'We must understand the individuals as living in his culture; and the culture as lived by individuals'.³⁸ A person within a culture can be understood in relation to the pattern or traits of their particular culture.

³⁴ Benedict, Ruth, *Patterns of Culture*, Routledge and Kegan Paul Limited, London, 1935, p.11.

³⁵ Ibid, p.33.

³⁶ Ibid, pp.26-27.

³⁷ Ibid, p.35.

³⁸ Ibid, p.x.

Author is in favour of the comparative method as it helps in evaluating the cultures in relation to each other, thereby, emphasizing the cultural differences. And this comparative method will help us in understanding our own cultural process. She takes the analysis of three cultures explicitly and also takes the 'American culture' implicitly to show the utility of studying 'primitive culture'. Primitive culture because of its relative simplicity and lack of cultural change makes the complete analysis possible. Primitive cultures are the laboratory in which the diversity of human institutions can be studied.³⁹

The careful study of primitive societies is important today rather, as we have said, because they provide case material for the study of cultural forms and processes. They help us to differentiate between those responses that are specific to local cultural types and those that are general to mankind. Beyond this, they help us to gauge and understand the immensely important role of culturally conditioned behaviour.⁴⁰

Modern societies in comparison to primitive societies have grown too complex for adequate analysis. Modern societies are too complicated. Western civilizations, with their historical diversity, their stratification into occupations and classes, their incomparable richness in detail, are not yet well enough understood to be summarized under a couple of catchwords.⁴¹

In this way, author tries to compare the two (Primitive cultures and American culture) showing that the primitive society is better to make study of. In primitive society, the cultural tradition is simple enough to be contained within the knowledge of individual adults, and the manners and morals of the group are moulded to one well-defined general pattern. It is possible to estimate the inter-relation of traits in this simple environment in a way which is impossible in the cross-currents of our civilization.⁴² Now after describing the

³⁹ Ibid, p.12.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p.14.

⁴¹ Ibid, p.38.

⁴² Ibid, p.13.

importance of the primitive culture, Benedict begins to describe the three 'primitive cultures'.

The Zuni

The *Zuni* are a ceremonious people, a people who value sobriety and inoffensiveness above all other virtues. Their interest is centered upon their rich and complex ceremonial life. Friedrich Nietzsche uses the term *Apollonian* and *Dionysian* for Greek tragedy. There is contrast between *Zuni* and other cultures of North America. So, *Zuni* is described as *Apollonian*.

The *Dionysian* pursues them [the values of existence] through 'the annihilation of the ordinary bounds and limits of existence'; he seeks to attain his most valued moments escape from the boundaries imposed upon him by his five senses, to break through into another order of experience. The closest analogy to the emotions he seeks is drunkenness, and he values the illuminations of frenzy. The *Apollonian* distrusts all of this, and has often little idea of the nature of such experiences. He keeps the middle of the road, stays within the known map, and does not meddle with disruptive psychological states.⁴³

Benedict has tried to show the simplicity of *Zuni* culture by comparing it with the Native Americans cultures. The whole of the *Zuni* culture is explained in regard to the *Apollonian* aspect and its contrast is shown with the help of *Dionysian* aspects prevailing among other cultures.

The Dobu

Dobu Island lies in the d'Entrecasteau group of the southern shore of eastern New Guinea. Like the *Zuni*, almost every aspect of *Dobu* life reflects their general cultural pattern, although, for the *Dobu*, their cultural trait revolves around a common and constant treachery.

⁴³ Ibid, pp.56-57.

Dobuans are dangerous people. They are considered as warriors and magicians. They are lawless and treacherous. They do not have any political organization. It has no legality. And reason of this is not that the Dobuan lives in a state of anarchy, 'Rousseau's "natural man" as yet unhampered by the social contract, but because the social forms which obtain in *Dobu* put a premium upon ill-will and treachery and make of them the recognized virtues of their society.'⁴⁴

Dobuans get prosperity by defeating his opponent in a conflict. They are passionate, jealous and suspicious. A person who is having lot of conflicts with other person is considered to be a good man. Theft and adultery were considered as the object of the valued charms of the valued man of the community.

The treacherous conflict which is the ethical ideal in *Dobu* is not palliated by social conventions of what constitutes legality. Neither is it ameliorated by ideas of mercy or kindness. The weapons with which they fight carry no foils. Therefore they do not waste breath and risk interference with their plans by indulging in challenge and insult. "If we wish to kill a man we approach him, we eat, drink, sleep, work and rest with him, and it may be for several moons. We bide our time. We call him friend"⁴⁵. Therefore when the diviner weighs the evidences in determining the murderer, suspicion falls upon anyone who has sought out his company. If they were together for no reason that appeared customary, the matter is regarded as proved. As Dr. Fortune says, "the Dobuans prefer to be infernally nasty or else not nasty at all"⁴⁶.

Thus, for *Dobu*, life consists in extreme form of animosity and malignancy. For them, existence means the life full of conflicts and struggles with the other people. Suspicion and cruelty holds a special place in their life. In this way they are directly opposite of *Zunis*, who are peace loving. Benedict's description of

⁴⁴ Ibid, p.95.

⁴⁵ Ibid, p.123.

⁴⁶ Ibid, p.123.

Dobu culture shows its contrast with the pattern or traits which is prevalent in *Zuni* culture.

The Kwakiutl

Benedict describes the culture of the northwest American Coast in her final example. The tribes of the North-West Coast were considered as *Dionysian*.

In their religious ceremonies the final thing they strove for was ecstasy. The chief dancer, at least the high point of his performance, should lose normal control of himself and be rapt into another state of existence. He should froth at the mouth, tremble violently and abnormally, do deeds which would be terrible in a normal state. Some dancers were tethered by four ropes held by attendants, so that they might not do irreparable damage in their frenzy.⁴⁷

The *Dionysian* slant of North-West Coast tribes is as violent in their economic life and their warfare and mourning as it is in their initiations and ceremonial dances. They are at the opposite pole from the *Apollonian* Pueblos, and in this they resemble most other aborigines of North America. The pattern of culture which was peculiar to them, on the other hand, was intricately interwoven out of their special ideas of property and of manipulation of wealth.⁴⁸

Thus, the *Kwakiutl* tribes are described as *Dionysian* as opposed to the *Zuni* who are considered as *Apollonian*. A clear contrast regarding the pattern of culture is seen between the *Zuni* and the *Kwakiutl*.

The three cultures – *Zuni*, *Dobu* and *Kwakiutl* differ from one another in their behaviour and acts. They not only differ from one another in regard to the traits which they follow but also in opting different directions in pursuit of different ends. The end and the means which one culture is trying to attain

⁴⁷ Ibid, pp.126-127.

⁴⁸ Ibid, p.131.

cannot be judged in terms of another culture, because both the cultures are incomparable.

There is lack of integration in one culture whereas extreme case of integration is found in another culture. It is not everywhere due to the same circumstances, and it can vary from one culture to another culture.

Benedict in her book *Patterns of Culture* talks of cultural relativism. The recognition of cultural relativity carries with it its own values, which need not be those of the absolutist philosophies. It challenges customary opinions and causes those who have been bred to them acute discomfort. It rouses pessimism because it throws old formulas into confusion, not because it contains anything intrinsically difficult. As soon as the new opinion is embraced as customary belief, it will be another trusted bulwark of the good life. We shall arrive then at a more realistic social faith, accepting as grounds of hope and as new bases for tolerance the co-existing and equally valid patterns of life which mankind has created for itself from the raw materials of existence.⁴⁹

Critics have objected to the degree of abstraction and generalization inherent in the 'culture and personality' approach. Some have argued that particular patterns Ruth Benedict found may only be a part or a subset of the whole cultures. For example, David Friend Aberle writes that the Pueblo people may be calm, gentle, and much given to ritual when in one mood or set of circumstances, but can be suspicious, retaliatory, and warlike in other circumstances.⁵⁰

Each culture has its own moral imperatives that can be understood only if one studies that culture in whole. Every culture has its own traits and ends which according to them is right. A culture must not depreciate the customs or values of the other cultures. Every custom has its significant for a culture which is carried out by their ancestors. It is impossible to evaluate the people by our

⁴⁹ Ibid, pp.200-201.

⁵⁰ <http://www.artandpopularculture.com/RuthBenedict>, retrieved on 12.06.2009.

own standards. Every culture has its own values, so, it is not possible to have a generalization of values in all culture.

Now after dealing with the notion of culture according to Sri Aurobindo and Ruth Benedict, I will now focus on the relationship between culture and civilization. Culture is what we are and civilization is what we have. Culture gives the vision and civilization creates the organ. There is a very intimate relationship between culture and civilization. But before dealing with the relationship between these two terms, it is first necessary to look into the concept of civilization.

The word civilization was coined from the Latin '*civis*' means 'city' or 'state'. In a more extended sense, *civis* could connote the inhabitant of a city or state.⁵¹ Civilization was thought to confer certain distinctive marks that separated a society from others. Civilization was conceived in terms of either a society or community bearing certain identifiable marks inhabiting a defined geographical area or representing a distinctive stage in human development or together civilization consisted of a special type of traits that were good, virtuous, refined, etc. Civilization originated essentially as a dichotomous concept. It made sense only when contrasted with its opposite: savagery, barbarism, primitiveness.⁵² According to Kroeber and Kluckhohn, the concept of civilization was a Renaissance formation and originated in the Roman languages, probably French and derived from the verb "*civiliser*" meaning to achieve or import refined manners, urbanization, and improvement.⁵³

In an older but still frequently used sense, the term "civilization" can be used in a normative manner as well as in societal contexts where complex and

⁵¹ Bhattacharya, Sibesh, "Theories of the Nature, Origin and Spread of Civilization-Traditional and Modern", in *A Golden Chain of Civilization: Indic, Iranic, Sementic and Hellenic up to cent.600 BC*, (ed.) G.C Pande, New Delhi, Centre for Studies in Civilization, 2007, pp.111-128.

⁵² Ifversen, Jan, *The Meaning of European Civilization: A historical- Conceptual Approach*, Working paper no 51-97, Centre for Cultural Research, University of Aarhus, Electronically Published: Feb18, 1998, pp.9-10.

⁵³ Kroeber, A.L. and Kluckhohn, Clyde, *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*, p.145.

urban cultures are assumed to be superior to other “savage” or “barbarian” cultures. The concept of “civilization” is used as a synonym for “cultural (and often ethical) superiority of certain groups”. In a similar sense, civilization can mean “refinement of thought, manners, or taste”.⁵⁴ This normative notion of civilization is heavily rooted in the thought that urbanized environments provide a higher living standard, encompassed by both nutritional benefits and mental potentialities.⁵⁵

Now here I will discuss the stages of civilization and its corresponding forms⁵⁶—

The concept of civilization has more than one meaning. Generically it denotes the historical alternative to the savagery and barbarity.

Secondly, civilization may be taken to mean a relatively high stage in society’s mastery of the forces of nature, a relatively high level of organization of social relations and, in general, all aspects of social existence and culture and also a uniqueness of material and spiritual life of society in the frame work of the nation, the state unit or the region. In this sense it embraces the overall motion of human history, the global achievements of the society, the world standards evolved in the development of culture, society, technology and the productivity of labour, and also, of course, all the specific features of the regional, national and ethnic forms of social existence.

Thirdly, civilization may be thought of as a limitless universal phenomenon embracing not only terrestrial but also extraterrestrial forms in their assumed endless diversity, denial of which would be tantamount to acknowledging the greatest of all the divine miracles. The universe is eternal and infinite. It cannot, in principle, contain only one terrestrial civilization. If it did civilization would not be something natural and functioning according to

⁵⁴ www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/civilization, retrieved on 10.10.2009.

⁵⁵ www.wikipedia.org/wiki/civilization, retrieved on 11.27.09.

⁵⁶ Spirkin, A., *Dialectical Materialism*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1983, pp.323-324.

certain laws, but a unique, unnatural, entirely fortuitous exception to the logic of the life of the universe and would thus have to be regarded as something miraculous. This was intuitively perceived by many ancient thinkers, who acknowledged a countless number of world's inhabited by rational beings. It would be only natural if human civilization, having penetrated outer space, sooner or later came into contact with extraterrestrial forms of civilization.

Historical Context of Civilization

Historically civilization defines not the early dawn of humanity not its childhood or even adolescence, but its growth and maturity, the established forms of society.⁵⁷ In 1388, the word civil appeared in English meaning “of or related to citizens”. In 1704, civilization began to mean “a law which makes a criminal process into a civil case”. Civilization was not used in its modern sense to mean “the opposite of barbarism” – as contrasted to civility, meaning politeness or civil virtue – until the 18th century.

The first occurrence of *civilization* in French was found in the Marquis de Mirabeau's *L'Ami des hommes ou traité de la population* (written in 1756 but published in 1757). He explained that ‘civilization’ was a mode of behaviour consisting of manners, politeness, civility, etc., characterizing a people. But this behavioural mode was also crucible that produced either virtue or corruption. And it is from this fact that the behavioural mode derives its social significance. Thus, civilization is that special kind of behavioural trait that promotes virtue and hinders corruption.⁵⁸

The word civilization was introduced into the English language by Adam Ferguson in 1767 in his work *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*. Ferguson tried to give civilization a temporal dimension. Civil society develops on the basis of commercial and political refinement, and on the basis of this

⁵⁷ Ibid, p.323.

⁵⁸ Jan Ifversen, *The Meaning of European Civilization: A historical- Conceptual Approach*, pp.4-7.

ground becomes distinguishable from the 'rude nations'. Thus, civilization is the end product of the evolution of the history.⁵⁹

Albert Schweitzer, in his book, *The Philosophy of Civilization*, one of the main philosophers on the concept of civilization, outlined the idea that there are dual opinions within society; one regarding civilization as purely material and another regarding civilization as both ethical and material. He stated that the current world crisis was, then in 1923, due to a humanity having lost the ethical conception of civilization. In this same work, he defined civilization, saying:

It is the sum total of all progress made by man in every sphere of action and from every point of view in so far as the progress helps towards the spiritual perfecting of individuals as the progress of all progress.⁶⁰

Civilization- 'Living in Cities'

The word civilization is sometimes defined as "a word that simply means 'living in cities'".⁶¹ Civilizations have a more complex political structure, namely the state, while comparing with the other societies. In state societies, there is a greater difference among the social classes. In cities, power is concentrated in the hands of the ruling class and they exercise their power through the actions of a government or bureaucracy. Morton Fried, a conflict theorist, and Elam Service, an integration theorist, have classified human cultures based on political systems and social inequality. This system of classification contains four categories⁶²:

- *Hunter-gatherer bands*, which are generally egalitarian.
- *Horticultural/pastoral societies* in which there are generally two inherited social classes; chief and commoner.

⁵⁹ Ibid, pp.9-10.

⁶⁰ www.wikipedia.org/wiki/civilization, retrieved on 11.27.09.

⁶¹ Tom Standage, *A History of the World in 6 Glasses*, Walker & Company, New York, 2005, p.25.

⁶² www.wikipedia.org/wiki/civilization, retrieved on 11.27.09.

- *Highly stratified structures*, or chiefdoms, with several inherited social classes: king, noble, freemen, serf and slave.
- *Civilizations*, with complex social hierarchies and organized, institutional governments.⁶³

Civilization and Economy

In ancient India, people moved from one place to another never without settling at a particular place. But with the emergence of civilizations, people started living at a particular place and started acquiring land and property for their livelihood. This acquisition of property led the division of society into two groups – have and have not's and made the condition more complex as compared to the 'primitive' age. A man cannot think of living alone as he is not able to satisfy all his demands by himself. He has to depend on others for the fulfilment of his demands. In early period, there prevailed 'barter system', in which things were exchanged for things, but it led to lot of complications. And there was emergence of monetary system to remove various complications created through barter system and then trade was carried out fairly.

Writing developed and made the things easier. It helped the traders and bureaucrats to keep accurate records. Like money, writing was necessitated by the size of the population of a city and the complexity of its commerce among people who were not personally acquainted with each other.

Aided by their division of labor and central government planning, civilizations have developed many other diverse cultural traits. These include organized religion, development in the arts, and countless new advances in science and technology.⁶⁴

Civilization and Culture

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ www.wikipedia.org/wiki/civilization, retrieved on 11.27.09.

Both culture and civilization are derived from a Latin source. They were often treated as synonymous; and when distinction was drawn between the two, their intimate relation was seldom disputed. Till about the third quarter of the 19th century, civilization and culture often continued to be treated as synonymous concepts.

However, since the middle of the 18th century itself, there began a trend in Germany to make a rather sharp conceptual distinction between the terms, culture and civilization. In the writings of Kant and his fellow thinkers, culture came to be looked upon more and more as the spontaneous inner quality of man, a moral and spiritual urge seeking articulation and fulfilment. Civilization, on the other hand, came to signify only the refinement of the external behaviour and manner, a kind of an artifice devoid of natural spark of life.⁶⁵

But all German thinkers did not confirm to one single mode of distinguishing culture from civilization. In fact, Humboldt's formulation was radically different from the Kantian. 'Humboldt restricted culture to the control of nature by science and technology (*Kunst*), and civilization to the humanization of peoples (*vermenschlichung der volker*). This equation of culture with the human sway over the physical environment (outer nature) and civilization with the progressive improvement of basic human impulses (inner nature) was carried on in Germany by various other nineteenth century authors...'⁶⁶

While, examining the development of these concepts, Kroeber and Kluckhohn state:

Culture is said to be a particular state or stage of advancement in civilization. Civilization is called advancement or a state of social culture. In both popular and literary English the

⁶⁵ Wolf, Schafer, "Global Civilization and Local Culture", *International Sociology*, Vol.16, No.3, Sept, 2001, pp.307-310.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, pp.308-309.

tendency has been to treat them as synonymous, though civilization has sometimes been restricted to 'advanced' or 'high' cultures.⁶⁷

Equality between culture and civilization cannot, however, be accepted. All civilizations are cultures, but not all cultures are civilizations. Debate regarding the relation between culture and civilization is being carried from the old age and is still burning in today's modern world.

Thus, after focusing on the concept of culture, patterns of culture and debate between culture and civilization, I would like to bring this chapter to a close by reiterating the cognitive, connotative and evaluative aspects of Indian culture in terms of certain methodological issues related with Indian culture.⁶⁸

Firstly, the issue is related with contact, conflict and confluence. When two cultures come in contact with each other, then there is chance of conflict between them regarding the fundamental beliefs, practices, myths and rituals. ~~But there is no conflict so far as the notion of 'absolute' is concerned. It is confluence, which has prevailed and sustained all through the ages. Different religions have all preserved their identities, maintained their rituals, propagated their beliefs and value systems and cherished their culture.~~

Secondly, *Sanātana Dharma*- as a philosophy, as a way of life, is rather a kind of *Sanātana dharma* or 'Perennial duty'. *Sanātana dharma* represents a code of conduct and a value system that has spiritual freedom as its core.

Thirdly, plurality or *ekam sat viprāh bahudhā vadanti*, has been the fundamental act of philosophising in India. *Ekam sat viprāh bahudhā vadanti* means that 'reality' is one but wise people speak or talk of it differently in different linguistic garb.

⁶⁷ Lane, J.E. and Errson, S., *Culture and Politics: A Comparative Approach*, p.19.

⁶⁸ For details see, Singh R.P, "Knowledge- Centred Tradition in India: From Ancient to the Modern Times", *The Icfai Journal of History and Culture*, Vol 12, No.1, 2008, pp.9-14.

Fourthly, Indian Hermeneutics. Hermeneutics means the interpretation of a text. There are many statements in the *Upaniṣads* which are so symbolic that they cannot be understood without interpretation.

Fifthly, dialogue. A dialogue is a process of conversation, argumentation and mutual supplementation of ideas between two individuals. Method of dialogue has been continuously used in different *Upaniṣads*, such as, Yama and Nachiketa in *Chhāndogya*, Maitreyi and Katyayani in *Bṛihadāraṇyaka*, etc.

Sixthly, questioning as an act of enquiry, in which a dialogue takes place between a realized soul acting as a teacher, *Rishi* and a sincere seeker of truth who approaches him as his disciple. Some other issues related with Indian culture are – dialectic, deferring, analogical approach, synthesis and aphorism.

Through cognitive, connotative and evaluative aspects, a culture could be evaluated. The cognitive aspect consists of the worldview, the apparent plurality with internal coherence and identity and reflects a continuing conversation between its different traditions and strands of thought. Connotative means acting in a certain way within the culture, a way of life with meaning and significance. Normative means judging or evaluating in terms of majority and minority, mainstream and subaltern, high and low, etc, with the view of apprehending the crisis.

The cognitive, connotative and evaluative aspect of Indian culture proves that it (Indian culture) cannot be considered as barbarous as has been considered by some thinkers like Archer. The arguments given by Archer, shows that he admits a hierarchy between cultures. Benedict in her book '*Patterns of Culture*' talks of cultural relativism. The recognition of cultural relativity carries with it its own values, which need not be those of the absolutist philosophies. Ruth Benedict tries to show that no culture is absolute. A culture cannot be evaluated through the standard created by another culture. There are patterns to cultural phenomena. In a nutshell it can be said that culture consists of the aspects of religion/*dharma*, spirituality, philosophy,

ethics, aesthetics, and archaeology, etc. Every culture has its own importance and must be given due recognition. And this very notion lies at the root of multiculturalism.

Chapter 3

An Examination of Multiculturalism

I, in the present chapter, shall develop and examine the concept of multiculturalism in three phases – first from 1970 to 1990, second phase from 1990 to 1999 and the third phase of 21st century. Under these phases, multiculturalism is viewed as a perspective on or a way of viewing social nexus constructing historical, geographical and linguistic relationships. It is concerned with laws, ordinances and status to provide equal recognition to different cultural identities by the State. The term basically means the fusion of cultural diversities. In order to organize my discussion in this chapter, I propose to divide it into two parts –

Part I- Cultural Plurality vis-à-vis/ Multiculturalism since 1970.

Part II- Hermeneutic Dimension of Discourse on Culture.

I

Cultural Plurality vis-à-vis/ Multiculturalism since 1970

The word ‘multicultural’ is an adjective to culture which means, relating to, or including several cultures; whereas the word ‘multiculturalism’ is a noun.¹ The term ‘ism’ means –

1. Set of norms, ideas, principles, etc.
2. Programme of action based on those ideas.

¹ www.thefresedictionary.com/Multiculturalism, retrieved on 01.06.2010.

3. Values – (a) actual and (b) proposed.

During the deadliest, war of the deadly twentieth century; the term *multicultural* emerged as an antidote that had brought much suffering. The -ism was *Nationalism* (1844), the insistence that one nation was superior to all others and should impose its culture on the rest of the world. The antidote was named in a book review in the *New York Herald-Tribune*, July, 1941 applauding ‘a fervent sermon against nationalism, national prejudice and behavior in favor of a *multicultural* way of life.’ *Multiculturalism* (1965) meant “respect for the ways of all nations and peoples,” not just one's own.² For multiculturalists, the cultural diversity of a society should be recognized and translated into differentiated policies tuned to different groups. According to nationalists, the cohesion of society depends on the sharing of a common culture, which serves to sustain solidarity and a sense of communal fate.³

Multiculturalism and nationalism are based upon an identical rationale: culture, or cultural belonging, is a legitimate basis to design public policies and, moreover, is one of the premium objectives of a polity, if not the main. It is due to the value of culture.⁴ But nationalism was been politicized and this become the reason for its rejection.

The word *multicultural* advocated coexistence with various cultures. For example, Canadians used *multiculture* to describe their attempt to accommodate both English and French culture and language in their commonwealth. In the United States people began to expand the definition of culture beyond ethnicity, race, and religion to include gender and lifestyle, so that *multicultural* could mean

² www.answers.com/multiculturalism, retrieved on 01.07.2010.

³ www.politika.lu/topics/social-integration, retrieved on 01.07.2010.

⁴ Ibid.

'respect for different ages, sexes, physical or mental capabilities, and sexual orientations.'⁵

The term 'Multiculturalism' means –

1. Acceptance of cultural norms, beliefs, practices, etc. of all cultures by the State.
2. It recognizes series of practice or action based on norms, ideas and principles of all cultures.
3. Considering plurality and diversity as a perspective towards values, it also tries to overcome the conflicting situations.

Plurality of values has been given important place in all multicultural discourse. But, what is plurality? Plurality is a philosophical term involved in multiculturalism. 'According to cultural pluralism, many cultures can exist in the same society. It involves a process through which minority and majority culture members adopt some norms of the other group. Pluralism also means that members of a minority culture are encouraged to intact behaviors from an alternative culture as well as from the majority culture. They, therefore, are able to retain a sense of identity with their minority cultural group'.⁶ We may illustrate this point with an example of Indian society.

The initial characteristic of Indian society is that it is diverse, liberal, democratic and pluralistic in regulating and reconstructing the systems of Indian philosophy. The oldest of the Indian texts, the *Rigveda*, gives the key to understand the concept of plurality. *Ekam sat viprāh bahudhā vadanti* has been the fundamental idea of philosophizing in India. This short and simple sentence is profound in its implications. *Sat* means 'reality' which is one but wise men talk of

⁵ www.answers.com/multiculturalism, retrieved on 01.07.2010.

⁶ Patricia, L.Nemeth and Sendra, L.Christensen, "The Challenge of Cultural Diversity: Harnessing a Diversity of Views to Understand Multiculturalism", *The Academy of Management Review*, Vol.21, No.2, April, 1996, p.440.

it differently. The Reality admits of alternative approaches in terms of thought constructions and linguistic expressions. It is pluralistic in its expression.

Pluralism has been expressed in many ways in the later development of Indian philosophical systems; such as in the Vedānta philosophy, we go from one to many; in Vallabha Vedānta, we go from many to one; in Sāṅkhya and Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika systems, we go from many to many and in Śūnyavād, we go from nothing, i.e. *svabhāva śūnya* to many. The pluralistic notion of Indian society is manifested in various ethnic identities, community structure, linguistic identities, different nationalities, languages and so on. Behind the plurality in Indian philosophy, there is an underlying unity and collectivity which rejects individualism. In all Indian schools of Indian philosophy, one thing is common – all schools propound their own theory by criticizing the earlier school but do not repudiate their importance. So, in Indian system there lies a notion of collectivity and not fragmentation.

Multiculturalism claims of repudiating the hierarchical status of culture and accepting the universalistic features of culture. Hierarchy is related with the aspect of power. In hierarchy, one culture tries to dominate the other considering themselves as superior and the dominant class gets more privileges. For example, hierarchy was being created in Canada. The French speaking Canadians were being ignored by the English speaking people who were controlling Canada. Everyone in Canada such as Spanish and others were using English as the medium of communication. But only French people did not accept the English language. The French speaking Canadians were deprived from jobs, financial transactions, opportunities, etc. This resulted in the split of lower and upper Canada. And in 1971, for maintaining peace, Canada adopted multicultural policy based on cultural pluralism.

Multiculturalism also claims that the universalistic features of all cultures should be accepted. And the universalistic features are not only to be accepted but also be appreciated. Along with repudiating the hierarchical status within culture and accepting the universalistic features of all cultures, multiculturalism proposes civil and democratic rights, property and settlement, marriage and inheritance and above all citizenship so that people belonging to each cultural community could be recognized as valid participants in the civil society. And when these rights are given by the State then multiculturalism is established.

Multiculturalism is a philosophy that recognizes ethnic diversity within a society and that encourages others to be enlightened by worthwhile contribution to society by those of diverse ethnic backgrounds.⁷ It is a perspective on or a way of viewing social nexus, spatio-temporal frame, and earthly existence, historical, cultural and actual human life. As such multiculturalism involves a study of human life within historical and cultural framework, culturally derived system of meaning and significance.

Metapedia describes multiculturalism as a social theory which asserts that all cultures, races and religions are equal and able to live with harmony. Multiculturalists advocate the protection and recognition of cultural differences by the state. Multiculturalism is opposed to the idea of a dominant national culture as well as to the thought of a Melting Pot, which expect the assimilation into the dominant culture. In the words of Jimmy Carter: “We become not a melting pot but a beautiful mosaic with different people, different beliefs, different earnings, different hopes, different dreams”.⁸ The melting pot is a metaphor. The idea behind it is that every immigrant arriving at the coast of the United States has to give up his or her national identity, culture and language in order to be accepted as part of the American society. The process of cultural assimilation can be seen as

⁷ www.answers.com/multiculturalism, retrieved on 01.06.2010.

⁸ www.img.pf.bw.schule.de/faecher/english/./files/meltingbowl.doc, retrieved on 01.10.2010.

some sort of melting process, in which all immigrants from different origins melt together in a big pot; as they set out of it, their old identity is gone. But the melting pot imagery has been contested by the idea of multiculturalism, the “salad bowl theory”, or as it is known in Canada, the “cultural mosaic”, whereby the immigrants retain their own national characteristics while integrating into a new society.

The goal of multiculturalism is the multicultural society, in which there is no governmental or non-governmental incentive or pressure to assimilate. The ethnic and cultural groups should rather co-exist. The modal is based on the premise that the respective ethnic groups are mutually understanding, respectful, tolerant, and view each other as equals.⁹

According to Bhikhu Parekh, multiculturalism is best understood neither as a political doctrine with a programmatic content nor as a philosophical theory of man and the world but as a perspective on or a way of viewing human life. He suggests three central insights to multiculturalism¹⁰ –

- 1) Human beings are culturally embedded in the sense that they grow up and live within a culturally structured world and organize their lives and social relations in terms of a culturally derived system of meaning and significance.

Man is deeply connected with his culture. Culture has vast influence on one’s way of thought. It is not possible for a person to totally cut himself from his culture. He can overcome some of the influences of his culture but not all. He views the world either through the inherited and uncritically accepted or consciously adopted norms of his culture.

- 2) Different cultures represent different systems of meaning and vision of the good life. Since each culture realizes a limited range of human capacities and emotions

⁹ www.metapedia.org/wiki/Multiculturalism, retrieved on 01.06.2010.

¹⁰ Parekh, Bhikhu, *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory*, Palgrave, New York, 2000, pp.336-338.

and grasps only a part of the totality of human existence, it needs other cultures to help it understand itself better, expand its intellectual and moral horizon, stretch its imagination, and so on.

Every culture is partial and not complete. It is partial because of the limits involved in it and it needs the help of other cultures to understand it better. One can lead a good life within one's own culture, but a culture can become richer and complete when it comes in interaction with other. In today's world it is not possible for a culture to remain aloof. No culture is perfect, but at least every culture deserves some respect because of the qualities inherent in it.

- 3) Every culture is internally plural and reflects the continuing conversation between its different traditions and strands of thoughts. This does not mean that it is devoid of coherence and identity, but that its identity is plural, fluid and open.

It is not possible for a culture to appreciate the values of others unless it recognizes the plurality within it. A dialogue between cultures requires that each should be willing to open itself to the influence of and learn from others, and this presupposes that it is self-critical and is able to engage in a dialogue with itself.

After looking into the central insights of multiculturalism according to Bhikhu Parekh, I will further develop the dimensions and phases of multiculturalism.

A discourse of multiculturalism implies four dimensions –

1. Cultural dimension which in a way has theological lineages, it means that any analysis of multiculturalism implies an understanding of culture, plurality of culture and theological aspect of a culture.
2. Multiculturalism implies the diversity/plurality of values, norms, history, language and geography. In order to understand culture, we have to contextualize it in terms of language, history and geography. Multiculturalism takes all these features together and tries to elevate the narrowness of any culture.
3. Multiculturalism incorporates and even transcends secularism. An understanding of secularism implies a discussion on secular and secularization. Though in secularism, there is separation between the state and the church, in

multiculturalism, there is intervention from the states to provide equal rights to diverse cultures.

4. Multiculturalism provides a healthy fusion of cultural diversity/horizons.

Now I propose to distinguish multiculturalism into three phases –

- 1) From 1970 to 1990.
- 2) From 1990 to 1999 and
- 3) In 21st Century.

There are many factors that influenced the introduction of the multicultural policy. The mid 1960s was marked by increasingly troubled English-French relation in Canada. Multiculturalism basically addressed the rights of the French and English people. The immigrants since 1900 were not getting fair rights and the Natives and the French speaking Canadians were extremely frustrated. They were being ignored by English speaking people who were controlling Canada. This caused the split of lower and upper Canada. People started complaining that they were not paid the same amount or treated the same way as the other Canadians. The term multiculturalism was coined by a Canadian Royal Commission in 1965, this governmental use of “multiculturalism” is widely supported and endorsed by its proponents as both a progressive political imperative and an official article of faith – a term associated in principle with the values of equality, tolerance, and inclusiveness towards the migrants of ethnically different backgrounds. “Canadian multiculturalism is fundamental to our belief that all citizens are equal. Multiculturalism ensures that all citizens can keep their identities, can take pride in their ancestry and have a sense of belonging” (Government of Canada, 2001). Typically, multiculturalism here is a social doctrine that distinguishes itself as a positive alternative for policies of assimilation, connoting a politics of recognition of the citizenship rights and cultural identities of ethnic minority groups and, more generally, an affirmation of the value of cultural diversity.¹¹ In 1971 Canada became the first country in the world to adopt the multicultural policy based on

¹¹ www.blackwellpublishing.com, retrieved on 01.08.2010.

cultural pluralism. Canadians were accepted as a mosaic of people, which means that people from all different nations were equal. Multiculturalism affirmed English and French as the two official languages of Canada.

In the United States, continuous mass immigration had been a feature of economy and society since the first half of the 19th century. The absorption of the stream of immigrants became, in itself, a prominent feature of America's national myth. The idea of the Melting pot is a metaphor that implies that all the immigrant cultures are mixed and amalgamated without state intervention. The Melting Pot implied that each individual immigrant, and each group of immigrants, assimilated into American society at their own pace. As a philosophy, multiculturalism began as part of the pragmatism movement at the end of the nineteenth century in Europe and the United States, then as political and cultural pluralism at the turn of the twentieth century. The word appeared in the American press in the early 1970s, and multiculturalism became commonplace by the 1980s.¹²

The movement for multiculturalism was the culmination of a number of defining events. Challenges to inequality following World War II sparked the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, initiating the institutionalization of the principle of equality of all Americans, men and women. The 1968 bilingual act mandated that schools provide bilingual educative programme. The act provided federal funding to encourage local school districts to try approaches incorporating native-language instruction. *Lav v. Nichols* is the Supreme Court decision that launched the modern bilingual education movement that provides to the children of many different nationalities the ability to learn effectively and comprehensively in English and their native language. In July of 1972, Congress passed the Ethnic Heritage Studies Act. The new law authorized grants for the creation of the ethnic heritage studies programme in elementary and secondary schools, and for the

¹² www.wikipedia.org/wiki/multiculturalism, retrieved on 01.08.2010.

establishment of a National Council of Ethnic Heritage Studies. All these helped in bolstering the multicultural movement, awakening many groups to seek their cultural roots, proclaim the value of their cultures, and call for the inclusion of group histories and cultures in educational programs. The goals have been to overcome historic invisibility and to nurture group pride, and some have believed that schools have the obligation to help to preserve such cultures.

Multiculturalism became the focal point of the battles over group rights versus individual rights, ethnic cultures versus the common culture, pluralism versus assimilation, and particularly the diversity content in school curricula.¹³

Australia was the other country which fully adopted Canadian-style multiculturalism. Before 1973, there were certain policies which limited the degree of multiculturalism through immigration. The idea of multiculturalism became popular in Australia during the 1980s. It replaced the notion of assimilation where non-British migrants were expected to change their way of life and abandon their cultural traditions to fit in with existing Australian traditions. Organizations were formed to encourage immigrants to keep aspects of their original culture, and to share them with other Australians.¹⁴

Multicultural policy also emerged in the contemporary South-East Asian countries like – India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mauritius, Philippines, Singapore, etc. India promotes multicultural policies from very early age through its concept of '*sarva dharma sambhāv*'. *Sarva dharma sambhāv* is the corner stone of the Indian variant of secularism.

The term 'secularism' was introduced in the Preamble in 1976 through 42nd amendment. During the time of partition, Nehru declared India as a secular state. India as a state is secular but as a nation, it is communal. Indian society is diverse,

¹³ www.answers.com/multiculturalism, retrieved on 01.08.2010.

¹⁴ www.wikipedia.org/wiki/multiculturalism, retrieved on 01.08.2010.

liberal democratic and pluralistic in regulating and restructuring the features of secularism. The pluralistic nature of Indian society is manifested in various ethnic identities, community structure, linguistic identities, different nationalities, languages and so on. Because of these features India as a nation is communal. But as a state, India is secular.

At the time of partition, Nehru asserted that India would be a secular state in reaction against Jinnah's statement that Pakistan would be a religious country. On secularism, there are three words with different meanings – secular, secularization and secularism¹⁵. In India one is confused with the other.

The word 'secular' has a very old origin, 'secularization' originated in the 17th century and 'secularism' in the 19th century. The word 'secular' as an adjective goes back to the Latin culture. It is a Latin word '*saecularis*' and it comes as an adjective after the word '*saeculum*' which is pre Christian Latin meant "a long period of time". A long period is called *saeculum*. Then, *saeculum* meant 'century' or 'a hundred years'. In the time of Julius Ceaser i.e. 44 B.C., *saeculum* meant "belonging to the century". After the beginning of the Christian era, the word secular takes on a new meaning. It is distinguished from *saecularis* and religious. Religious means 'monastic' i.e., attached to a monastery i.e., community under a given set of rules. This is the meaning of religious till the 18th century. The word secular was opposed to it.

The word 'secularization' came up during 17th century. It was a period of transition from feudalism to capitalism. The ideologies of capitalism propagated the view that 'unless we defeat religion, we cannot defeat feudalism', as religion had a rigid control over every walk of human life in European feudalism. Religion possessed the control over the society in two ways – property and ideas. So, the

¹⁵ Paulos Mar Gregorios, "On Humanism, Secularism and Socialism", *Journal of Indian Council of Philosophical Research*, Vol 15, No 3, May-Aug 1997, pp.79-80.

first phase was to take away property that belonged to the Catholic Church and to give it to the public. After that not only property but also the institutions and the ideas should be taken away from the control of the Church and be given to public openness. In this way 'secularization' came into being.

Secularism is a peculiar nineteenth century word like all other 'ism' and has a specific meaning. G.J. Holyoake of England started a view of secularism and said, "All the religions belonged to the immature past of humanity".¹⁶ India has been declared as a secular state after independence. But now here a question arises – what do we mean by secular state? The working definition suggested by D.E.Smith¹⁷ is as follows:

The secular state is a state that guarantees individual and corporate freedom of religion, deals with the individual as a citizen irrespective of his religion, is not constitutionally connected to a particular religion, nor seeks either to promote or interfere with religion.

Upon closer examination it will be seen that the conception of a secular state involves three distinct but interrelated sets of relationships concerning the state, religion, and the individual. The three sets of relations are¹⁸:

1. Religion and the individual (freedom of religion);
2. The state and the individual (citizenship);
3. The state and religion (separation of state and religion).

Indian secularism is a peculiar thing. The formula of *sarva dharma sambhāva* (let all religions prosper) is the corner stone of the Indian variant of secularism. It has also become the guiding principle along with representative democracy in independent India. One of the basic principles of Indian secularism is the separation of religion and politics. But it does not really work. Religion is the heart

¹⁶ Ibid, pp.79-80.

¹⁷ D.E.Smith, "India as a Secular State", in *Secularism and its Critics*, (ed.) Rajeev Bhargava, Oxford University Press, New York, 1998, p.178.

¹⁸ Ibid.

of politics in India. The other principles are – state is not religious or anti-religious and that all religions are equal. India gives the theory of acceptance of all religion and so, provides the full space for multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism in India ensures that all citizens can keep their identities, can take pride in their ancestry and have a sense of belonging. Acceptance gives each Indian citizen a feeling of security and self-confidence, making them more open to, and accepting of diverse cultures. In India, multiculturalism came along with the inauguration of democracy. In this respect India is quite unique. Our Constitution, with great foresight, allowed for universal adult franchise, minority protection, etc.

Through multiculturalism, India recognizes the potential of all citizens, encouraging them to integrate into their society and take an active part in its social, cultural, economic and political affairs. There was multicultural society in India from very beginning and that became a beneficial factor. Citizenship gives us equal rights and equal responsibilities. By taking an active part in our civic affairs, we affirm these rights and strengthen India's democracy. The essence of inclusiveness is that we are part of a society in which language, color, education, sex and money need not, and should not divide us.

A multicultural society cannot be stable and last long without developing a common sense of belonging among its citizens. Although equal citizenship is essential for fostering a common sense of belonging, it is not enough. Citizenship is about status and rights; belonging is about acceptance, feeling welcome, a sense of identification. The two do not necessarily coincide. One might enjoy all the rights of citizenship but feel that one does not quite belong to the community and is a relative outsider. This feeling of being fully a citizen and yet an outsider is difficult to analyze and explain, but it can be deep and real and seriously damage the quality of one's citizenship as well as one's sense of commitment to the

political community. It is caused by, among other things, the manner in which the wider society defines itself, the demeaning ways in which the rest of its members talk about these groups, and the dismissive or patronizing ways in which they treat them. Although members of these groups are in principle free to participate in its public life, they often stay away from fear of rejection and ridicule or out of a deep sense of alienation.¹⁹

With the help of multicultural policies, India tries to encourage ethnic harmony and cross-cultural understanding and discourage hatred, discrimination and violence. This vision is based on Indian philosophy.

The second phase of multiculturalism has a reference to certain earth shaking events which took place during 1990s. It was marked by the collapse of socialism in Central Asia and Central Europe particularly the U.S.S.R and its allies of which People Republic of China just managed to escape. It was also followed by the fall of the Berlin Wall. In socialism in general and in U.S.S.R in particular, religion as an institution in the society was completely banned and the cultural outcome of religion was strictly prohibited. No function or festivity concerning religion was allowed. This was the kind of ideology on which socialism was based. Geoffrey Parrinder in his book *The World's Living Religions* has stated that religion according to Karl Marx is 'the opiate of the people, the sob of the oppressed creature, and the heart of a heartless world.'²⁰ No member of the communist party was allowed to go to the church or mosques. Since the October Revolution of 1917, until the collapse of socialism in 1990, religion and the cultural aspect of the religion was not recognized by the State. As socialism expanded during post Second World War to the Central European countries like – Bulgaria, Poland, Czechoslovakia, the same official position was upheld by all the countries.

¹⁹ www.helsinki.fi/iehc2006/papers/Mishra22, retrieved on 01.08.2010.

²⁰ Parrinder, Geoffrey, *The World's Living Religions*, Pan Books London and Sydney, London, 1964, p. 202.

With the disintegration of the U.S.S.R, we find that there was a strong revival and revitalization of religion and culture both in the former Soviet Union as well as in its allied countries. The 1990s was marked by certain struggles which were basically ethnic and linguistic in character. Serbs, Croats and Muslims, Czechs and Slovaks, orthodox Christians and Methodists, they all were involved in mutual clashes. Socialism believed in one ideology and when that ideology failed, socialism collapsed. People had faith in that ideology and with the failure of ideology, the faith of people shattered resulting in the collapse of socialism. But when socialism collapsed, cultural diversities again came up. When there was socialism only one language was recognized but because of its collapse, people speaking different languages came in conflict with one another. Everyone tried to prove his language as superior in front of other language speaking people.

Germany also faced the problems related with the clash among various cultures as a result of the fall of the Berlin Wall. Since 1945 Berlin has been the focus where the disagreements between East and West appeared more clearly. American, British and French forces have been in occupation of three-quarters of Berlin since July 1945 to "show the flag" far behind the Iron Curtain, the dividing line cutting Germany in two. The Berliners of the Western sectors quickly learnt to live according to the Western ideas, while the Russian occupied quarter became part of the German Democratic Republic – a Communist state. All traffic to the West Berlin must go through Russian-controlled territory; aircraft have to fly in a corridor policed by Russia. These regulations inevitably caused trouble and have occasionally led to serious international tension. In 1948 Russia closed the rail and road links from the West to drive the Western powers out of Berlin. The Allied answer was the airlift. For eleven months the people of Berlin were kept going by relays of British and American planes. In May 1949 the Russians ended the blockade as suddenly as they had started it. In June 1953 a serious rising of workers shook the East Berlin government and Soviet tanks were called out to

restore order. Until 1961 the inhabitants of Berlin could cross from one sector to the other without much difficulty; about 50,000 workers from its Eastern sector, in fact, worked in the more prosperous Western part. But in the middle of August of that year the East German government decided to end this contact and started to build the Berlin Wall.²¹

It was a force of Communism on the East and those of Democracy on the West. 'The history of the Berlin Wall originates from the end of World War II when Germany was split into four quarters to be overseen by the four world powers: the U.S, France, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union. Additionally divided into four was the city of Berlin- the formal capital of the Third Reich. Berlin Wall was created in 1961 and was destroyed in 1989, as people of both the sides of the wall wanted to come together'.²² East Germany met as a single free nation. Waves of democratization had been sweeping in Europe, toppling communist governments and, where communism still existed, the governments became distinctly more liberal.

When there was fall of Berlin wall, the Eastern and the Western Germany came up together once again. But after some time there were clashes between Turks, Christians and other communities. It is difficult to ascertain all the details of the fall of Soviet Union and that of the Berlin Wall, but it could be pointed out that the clash of different cultures, ethnics and identities took place.

The third phase of multiculturalism has a reference to the Metaphor of Art-World which emerged in the 21st Century. During the first two phases of multiculturalism, people were getting awakened to seek their cultural roots, proclaim the value of their cultures, and call for the inclusion of group histories and cultures in educational programs. The goals have been to overcome historic

²¹ Uden, Grant (ed.), *Longman Illustrated Encyclopedia of World History*, Ivy Leaf, London, 1989, p.91.

²² www.destination360.com/europe/germany/berlin-wall-museum, retrieved 01.17.2010.

invisibility and to nurture group pride. In early times people of different cultures were not given space and were regarded as inferior but with the rise of multiculturalism others started getting recognition. And then the State gave equal rights and recognition to all cultures under multiculturalism. Then comes the third phase of Art World which goes further than accepting the rights of others but also referred to the varieties involved in every culture either in form of their temples, church, mosques, festivity, cuisine, etc. There is no compulsion of accepting these things of other cultures like that in the case of rights or recognition. But if we accept and appreciate the art of other cultures then, definitely it is going to create a healthy atmosphere and provide a wide range for multiculturalism.

The clash of different cultures, ethnics and identities is a well known fact and it needs a solution. And the solution which is available comes from multicultural perspective. Multiculturalism tries to overcome many conflicting situations. Every situation is potentially conflictual – “The law of struggle is the first law of existence in the material universe because of which cultures are bound to come into conflict”.²³ There are certain cases when conflict can arise as:

- a) Values
- b) Economic crisis can result in the rise of the conflictual tendencies.
- c) Whenever there is political unrest in the country, then conflict arises.
- d) Law and order failure also results in the rise of the conflict.

Thus, multiculturalism gave the principle of a pluralistic society. A pluralistic society in which one is allowed to follow his own religion or culture and at the same time can live together with the people of different religion or culture. Multicultural society is that which opens its door for all, whether be Jews, Jains, Buddhists, Parsees, etc.

²³ Aurobindo, Sri, *The Foundations of the Indian Culture*, Sri Aurobindo Library Inc, New York, 1953, p.5.

II

Hermeneutic Dimension of Discourse on Culture

In philosophy, the term hermeneutics was first used by Dilthey (1833-1911) to denote the discipline concerned with the investigation and interpretation of human behavior, speech, etc. as essentially intentional. In existentialism, hermeneutics has been used to enquire into the purpose of human existence. Hans G. Gadamer turned the new philosophical hermeneutics around and carried it back to its traditional ground in the human sciences and to the problems which they faced. The so called “hermeneutic turn” is unquestionably one of the major events that took place in the contemporary philosophical scene, and its impact goes beyond the boundaries of any academic discipline, embracing the whole field of the human sciences. For this reason the word ‘hermeneutics’ refers today not only to a philosophical movement, but also to a cultural paradigm. So, the question immediately arises: what is the conception of culture that underlines this new philosophical and cultural paradigm? In order to answer this question, there is need to evaluate the significance of the work of Gadamer to a new theory of culture.²⁴ In the late twentieth century Gadamer (1900-2002) proposes fusion of cultural horizons by applying the method of hermeneutics. This method can help us to understand the role of culture in any multicultural society. It is all the more important because unless we understand a specific culture in terms of the meaning of the texts of the culture, we will not be in position to show its relevance to another culture. We are living in plurality of cultures but to say that a culture is relevant in the context of another culture will pave the way for the multiculturalism. Gadamer’s contribution lies on the one hand to create a horizon of culture in terms of history (effective-history), language and geography and on

²⁴ www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Cult/CultSamp.htm, retrieved on 03.15.2010.

Heidegger in *Being and Time* had fashioned hermeneutics into a philosophical tool for uncovering the ontological structure of human existence (*Dasein*). The project of philosophical hermeneutics developed by Hans G. Gadamer was to continue the philosophy of Heidegger but in different way.

the other hand with the help of the hermeneutic discourse he moves towards the fusion of cultural horizon and thereby helping the growth of multiculturalism.

Gadamer wanted to exceed the above conception and to discover the historicity of understanding. In order to contextualize a culture, we take into account history, geography and language as the contexts within which hermeneutic discourse can take place. He maintains the historical nature of understanding itself. The interpreter, Gadamer claims, is guided in his understanding of the past by his own particular set of prejudices. Act of understanding or interpretation – both are essentially the same for Gadamer – always involve two different aspects: namely, the overcoming of the strangeness of the phenomenon to be understood, and its transformation into an object of familiarity in which the horizon of the historical phenomenon and that of the interpreter become united. The historical object and the hermeneutic operation of the interpreter are both part of an over-riding historical and cultural tradition or continuum which Gadamer calls “effective history”. The effective historical continuum is the ultimate cause of the prejudices which guide our understanding because prejudices function as a necessary condition of historical understanding. To engage in such hermeneutic reflection and to determine our own hermeneutic situation is what Gadamer refers to in an almost untranslatable term as the development of one’s “effective-historical consciousness”, that is, of one’s consciousness of the historical continuum of which he is a part.²⁵

Gadamer’s main concern in his magnum opus, *Truth and Method*, has been to overcome the positivistic hubris of assuming that we can develop an ‘objective’ knowledge of the phenomena with which we are concerned. As a matter of fact, positivism from Auguste Comte to logical positivism of A.J Ayer beliefs that reality is the nature of “the” given, of existing facts or things or state of affairs and all these entities exist objectively. These facts are given to us by sense data or

²⁵ Gadamer, H.G., “The Historicity of Understanding”, in *The Hermeneutics Reader*, (ed.) Kurt Muller-Vollmer, Basil Blackwell, Great Britain, 1986, pp.38-39.

sense content and the truth of these facts lie in the principle of verification. However 'Gadamer's theory of philosophical hermeneutics holds that in understanding a text, historical event, cultural phenomena or perhaps anything at all, objectivity is not a suitable ideal because there does not exist any correct interpretation of the phenomena under investigation'.²⁶ He also tried to focus on the Enlightenment's rejection of authority and tradition. According to Gadamer, though many key Enlightenment thinkers reject tradition, claiming it an impediment to the progress of true Enlightenment e.g., Kant's essay, "What is Enlightenment?" and riddled with unjustified prejudices, Gadamer turns their critique back on them and shows that they in fact hold rather dogmatically to a "prejudice against prejudice". 'Gadamer explains that the negative of the word "prejudice" is so stressed by the Enlightenment that its positive meaning "pre-judgment" has been ignored'.²⁷

It goes to the credit of the eighteenth century European Enlightenment in which we find that humanity is making an attempt towards adulthood/maturity by repudiating any mentor in the fields of knowing, feeling and willing. The enlightenment helped the humanity to come to the stage of autonomy, freedom and sovereignty by repudiating the orthodoxy of religion and culture. It is in the enlightenment that texts are read in the light of scientific rationality, secular visions and placing humanism at the center of it. This was the process of re-reading the culture in a different contextuality. It can be formulated substantially in the light of Kant's brief article, "Answer to the Question: What is the Enlightenment?" Kant says²⁸:

Enlightenment is the coming out of man from his self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is the incapacity to serve one's own understanding without direction (*Leitung*) from another.

²⁶ Weberman , David, " A New Defense of Gadamer's Hermeneutics" , *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 60, No. 1, Jan, 2000, p. 45.

²⁷ <http://percaritatem.com/tag/fusion-of-horizons/>, retrieved on 03.12.2010.

²⁸ Kant, Immanuel, "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?" in (ed.) J. Schmidt, *What is Enlightenment? : Eighteenth-Century Answers and Twentieth-Century Questions*, University of California Press, California, 1996, p.58.

This immaturity is self-imposed; Reason itself languishes, not because it lacks understanding; what it lacks is resolution and courage; it is unwilling to serve itself (*Sapere Aude! Habe Mut*). Take courage to serve your own understanding! This is therefore the Motto (*Walspruch*) of the Enlightenment.

Until enlightenment, the integrating intellectual principle was the belief in God. It was in theology that all human problems in experience were integrated. Now the enlightenment threw out that integrating principle – the religion as the matrix of thought process. In that place enlightenment put the human reason which could integrate everything. This was the basic change which European enlightenment brought. But once you subscribe to enlightenment reason, you find that the integrating principle does not fully work. So you divide ‘experience’ into three compartments – science, ethics and art. In the new enlightenment thinking, technically it is human reason that reconciles the three. Immanuel Kant particularly was the one who was trying to distinguish between three kinds of reason – pure reason, practical reason and the judgment. In the one, you know the things (phenomena); in the other, you know how to act; in the third, you have to discern what is good. By making this separation, he held on the ‘idea of reason’, which was already divided in three compartments. But the enlightenment was able to assert on the ‘autonomy’ and ‘adulthood’ (maturity). According to the evolutionary ideology, which was going through that time, humanity has been developing into three phases; one is the religious stage, the second stage is metaphysics. These two stages are the stages of ‘immaturity’ of humanity. Humanity becomes ‘mature’ when its knowledge becomes ‘scientific’ which is the third stage. Science is the mature form of human dealing with reality. Both religion and metaphysics belong to the ‘childhood’ of humanity. Maturity means repudiating religion and metaphysics. The positive thing is that it affirms humanity. The attempt to get rid of ‘self-imposed immaturity’ is both self-critique and self-reflection with the aim to attain emancipation. Emancipatory self-reflection is dependent on giving a rational reconstruction of the universal conditions for reason. To use the Kantian analogy, only when we understand the

possibility, validity and limit of theoretical knowledge and the categorical imperatives, does it become intelligible to specify what must be done to attain autonomy and emancipation. This immaturity is self-imposed, because Reason itself languishes, not in lack of understanding, but only of resolve and courage to serve oneself without direction from another. That's why Kant says that *Sapere aude*, think boldly, take courage, and use your own understanding to serve. The attempt to get rid of 'self-imposed immaturity' is both self-critique and self-reflection with the aim to attain emancipation. Emancipatory self-reflection is dependent on giving a rational reconstruction of the universal conditions for reason. It is this vision of universal reason that has helped Gadamer to venture into the fusion of cultural horizon.

Gadamer's conception of *Bildung* is probably the touchstone of *Truth and Method*: it constitutes not only the nucleus of his account of the *Geisteswissenschaften*, but also of his entire philosophical project. Gadamer elaborates the humanist concept of culture (*Bildung*) which occurs as an independent Enlightenment concept of value.²⁹ Gadamer is not interested in studying humanity as it is, through empirical methods adopted from the physical science; he wanted to discover what humanity could be. Towards that end he drew on the concept of *Bildung*, defined by Herder as the rising up of humanity through culture. *Bildung* entails the proper cultivation of one's own innate capabilities in order to move progressively towards universal consciousness. Humboldt says that when in our language we say *Bildung*, we mean something both higher and inward, namely the disposition of mind which, from the knowledge and the feeling of the total intellectual and moral endeavor, flows harmoniously into sensibility and character. In this context Gadamer argues that the rise of the word *Bildung* evokes the ancient mystical tradition according to which man carries in his soul the image of God, (God created man in His own image) after whom he is

²⁹ Gadamer, H.G., *Truth and Method*, Second Revised Edition, trans. by Weinsheimer Joel C, and Donald G. Marshall, Continuum, London, New York, 2004, pp.8-17.

fashioned, and which man must cultivate in himself.³⁰ This can be pursued in the process of education and culture. It has three fundamental models³¹ which are as follows:

1. In the first place, Gadamer conceives of culture as a game. *Bildung*, he says, has not any purpose outside itself, evoking thus the Kantian definition of game as “purposiveness without purpose”. This conception of culture as a game reflects the radically non-teleological nature of the educative process; human edification (as Rorty would say) does not aim neither at the accomplishment of objective norms nor at the interiorization of some well-definite model, but rather at an endless fight against the limitations of our prejudices or, in equivalent terms, it consists only in an absolute openness to new hermeneutic experiences and fusion of horizons. Actually, we could add that the game works also as an excellent model for the fusion of horizons, as we can see in the pages that Gadamer dedicates in *Truth and Method* to the analysis of art: in the same way that a player has to submit himself or herself to the rules of a particular game, an interpreter must also integrate and recognize the validity of the perspectives offered by a particular cultural expression; and in the same way that a game exists only if it is played, the meaning of any work is not made of objective data, but is performed by and depends on the creativity of an interpreter. As Gadamer likes to say, understanding is understanding differently.
2. In the second place, culture is based on the model of translation. According to Gadamer, “being that can be understood is language”. Since all understanding has a linguistic character, the key concept of fusion of horizons is also a linguistic process or, more precisely, a translation process. Understanding consists in translating something said in another horizon or language game into our own horizon or language game. If all meaning is context-dependent, then translating, as a recontextualization process, involves inevitably a production of new meaning.

³⁰ <http://kismatics.wordpress.com/gadamer-and-bildung>, retrieved on 03.12.2010.

³¹ www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Cult/CultSamp.htm, retrieved on 03.10.2010.

For this reason, Gadamer declares that the situation of the translator and the interpreter is fundamentally same. So, in spite of being always limited by a particular horizon or context, our language can attenuate indefinitely its particularity and partiality by submitting itself to an interminable process of fusion of languages.

3. The third model of Gadamer's theory of culture is the metaphor. In *Wahrheit und Methode*, the author declares: “transference (*Übertragung*) from one sphere to another (...) corresponds to the fundamental metaphoricity of language.” This assertion is quite significative. The Gadamerian thesis that metaphoricity is a fundamental feature of language should not surprise us. Since Aristotle, the European culture defines metaphor as transference (*epiphora*) of a name from his usual context to a strange one, within which it acquires new expressive possibilities. This operation of recontextualization, characteristic of metaphor, constitutes the essence of translation and understanding. Therefore, we may easily conclude that both language and understanding have a metaphorical character. And given that the educative process, *Bildung*, consists in understanding the other, i.e., in fusions of languages and horizons, the consequence is obvious: the *Bildung* itself is a metaphorical process. From a Gadamerian perspective, we could compare each individual to a literal word locked in a particular context and define the cultivated (in the sense of *gebildet*) person as someone who makes a permanent effort to recontextualize itself through an indefinite process of fusions of horizons, along which it expands and broadens its existential possibilities. To be a metaphor of oneself — here is the essence of *Bildung*.

Understanding consists in a process of fusion of horizons. “Fusion of horizons” is a dialectical concept which results from the rejection of two alternatives: objectivism, whereby the objectification of the other is premised on the forgetting of oneself; and absolute knowledge, according to which universal history can be

articulated within a single horizon. We exist neither in a closed horizon, nor within a horizon that is unique.³²

Therefore, it argues that we exist neither in closed horizon, nor within a horizon that is unique.

People come from different backgrounds and it is not possible to totally remove oneself from one's background, history, culture, gender, language, education, etc. to an entirely different system of attitudes, beliefs and ways of thinking. People may be looking for a way to be engaged in understanding a conversation or dialogue about different cultures and the speaker interprets texts or stories based on his or her past experience and prejudice. Therefore, hermeneutic reflection and determination of one's own present life interpretation calls for the unfolding of one's 'effective-historical' consciousness. During the discourse, a fusion of "horizons" takes place between the speaker and listener.

Gadamer defines Horizon³³:

Every finite present has its limitations. We define the concept of "situation" by saying that it represents a standpoint that limits the possibility of vision. Hence essential to the concept of situation is the concept of "horizon". The horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point. A person who has no horizon does not see far enough and hence over-values what is nearest to him. On the other hand, "to have a horizon" means not being limited to what nearby but being able to see beyond it. A person who has a horizon knows the relative significance of everything within this horizon, whether it is near or far, great or small. Similarly, working out the hermeneutical situation means acquiring the right horizon of inquiry for the questions evoked by the encounter with tradition.

Gadamer states that it is possible to speak of the "narrowness of horizon or the possible expansion of horizon, of the opening of new horizons, and so forth". The horizon is "...something into which we move and which moves with us". Thus to speak of closed horizon or a fixed horizon is a mere abstraction, for as we live and

³² Ricoeur, Paul, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, edited and trans. by John, B. Thomson, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981, p.75.

³³ Gadamer, H.G., *Truth and Method*, Second Revised Edition, pp. 301-302.

participate in the hermeneutical conversation with the events that occur in our lives our horizons can be transformed.

But Gadamer also speaks of those who have no horizon. Noel expands the concept and speaks of those who do not move but remain stationary. This individual does not see beyond his limited perspectives and does not understand that there are multiple perspectives about the same event. This situation can occur when an individual is isolated, associating along with people of his region, race, culture or social class.³⁴

When applying hermeneutics to the human process of interpretation, Gadamer talks of “horizon” as a way to conceptualize understanding. One’s horizon is as far as one can see or understand. Both patient and doctor go into a consultation with a horizon and out of this encounter both will leave with their new horizon. Gadamer describes a horizon as ‘the totality of all that can be realized or thought about by a person at a given time in history and in a particular culture’³⁵. Gadamer states that:

The concept of horizon suggests itself because it expresses the superior breadth of vision that the person who is trying to understand must have. To acquire a horizon means that one learns to look beyond what is done at hand-not in order to look away from it but to see it better.³⁶

There are several ideas to explore on the way of developing our horizon as detailed by Gadamer. These are³⁷ – pre-understanding, prejudices, fore-conceptions, ‘*bildung*’ or openness to meaning, language, and imagination.

1. Pre-understanding – Whenever we enter an encounter we already have performed ideas. Essentially, we have a history and an understanding of the world before we begin to think about it.

³⁴ www.readingmatrix.com/articles/rees/article.pdf, retrieved on 03.12.2010.

³⁵ <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2148246>, retrieved on 03.10.2010.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

2. Prejudices – We all take ideas and attitudes into a situation. Gadamer calls these ‘prejudices’ not in a negative sense, but: ‘a judgment that is rendered before all elements that determine a situation have been finally examined’.
3. Fore-meanings – During an encounter we are always assuming that it has meaning and completeness unless it is completely unintelligible. We are constantly trying to look ahead to find a meaningful understanding. This happens before we settle on our final view. But in view of Gadamer we cannot stick blindly to our own fore-meaning, if we want to understand the meaning of the other and goes on to state that ‘all that is asked is that we remain open to the meaning of the other person’. This leads us to the next stage of understanding.
4. ‘*Bildung*’ or openness to meaning – For the purpose of application to an encounter it means we must be open to reforming, open to meaning and change. With *Bildung* one moves from the all-too-familiar and learns to allow for what is different from oneself. This process is vital if we are to gain insight into a patient's concerns and help them to change their horizon. We must be open to their understanding.
5. A fusion of horizons – ‘Understanding’ is the fusion of our past and present horizon. Indeed, the present cannot be formed without the past. Past and present cannot exist without each other and ‘understanding is always the fusion of these horizons supposedly existing by themselves’.
6. Language – Gadamer says that ‘understanding itself has a fundamental connection with language’. In Gadamerian terminology, one’s own language forms the horizon of one’s relation to other languages and thereby incorporates openness to other worlds.
7. Imagination – The scope of imagination is described by Einstein: ‘logic can take you from A to B, but imagination can take you everywhere.’ Gadamer points out, ‘the differentia between methodological sterility and genuine understanding is imagination that is the capacity to see what is questionable in the subject matter and to formulate questions that question the subject matter further’.

The two terms – familiar and strange, describes how we situate ourselves in relation to the events that occur. The familiar is defined existentially as that which brings us the feeling of comfort and security. The strange, as on the other hand, is that which brings us the feeling of loss and disorientation. The task of hermeneutics is to encounter and deal with the unfamiliar, and the rupture that it (the strange) brings. Nevertheless, it is out of the familiar that comprehension takes place. Only through the support of familiar and common understanding there is possibility to venture into the alien, the lifting up of something out of the alien, and thus the broadening of our own experience of the world.

At the moment when there is comprehension, Gadamer speaks of the fusion of horizons. This fusion is dynamic and self-transcendent, and creates new perspectives and rules that are used to make up a new horizon. Fusion is not the same as empathy for the other, nor is it synthesis with the other. The different or, in other words, the voice of the other is respected in the fusion of horizons. In empathy, one speaks for the other; in fusion one speaks with the other. Synthesis is based on a one-voiced discourse; the fusion of horizons is based on a multi-voiced discourse. The fusion of horizon is continuous. It is not a progression through various steps to a complete knowledge, but it is a state of being open to new experiences.

There is need for the prejudice to be challenged for the fusion of horizons. Some prejudices can be considered true and can lead us on to comprehension; others are false and lead to misunderstandings. As the prejudices are foregrounded, they are put at risk and can then be valued. As the prejudices are brought into full play, it is possible to experience the other's claim to truth and thus allow him to have full play as well. 'It is necessary to work with our prejudices interpretively, not to put them aside and ignore them. In this way, an

integral part of comprehension is understanding oneself, one's culture, and one's biases'.³⁸

The "fusion" comes about when one (or both) undergoes a shift; the horizon is extended, so as to make room for the object that before did not fit within it. Our horizon is extended as we are ready to accommodate the beliefs of quite different culture.

This can be better seen as a fusion rather than just as an extension of horizon, because at the same time, we are introducing a language to talk about their beliefs, which represents an extension in relation to their language. Presumably, they had no idea of what we speak of a "personal opinion", at least in such areas as religion, for instance. They would have had to see these as rejection, rebellion or heresy. So the new language we are using, which place "opinions" alongside other modes of believing, as possible alternative ways holding thing true, opens a broader horizon, extending beyond both the original one's, and in a sense combing them.³⁹

The fusion of horizons is the main text of hermeneutics because by that the interpreter cancels the distance between tradition and the present in which he is living. The communication as fusion of horizon is possible because of the language which belongs to the both interlocutors and makes the understanding of the meaning possible which we must clear up. All understanding is interpretation and all interpretation takes place through the medium of a language which would allow the object to come into word and yet is at the same time the interpreter's own language⁴⁰. In this case language reveals itself as a universal ontological structure because it is one which opens up the meanings of being and language of anything that can be understood, 'Being that can be understood is language'⁴¹.

Each language presents no more nor less than a view of the world itself and therefore a partial view. Yet each of the many language-worlds implies then one

³⁸ www.readingmatrix.com/articles/rees/article.pdf, retrieved on 03.12.2010.

³⁹ Taylor, C, "Gadamer on Human Sciences", in *The Cambridge Companion to Gadamer*, (ed.) Dostal, J. Robert, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2002, p.134.

⁴⁰ www.international-journal-of-axiology.net/articole/nr7/art11.pdf, retrieved on 03.14.2010.

⁴¹ Ibid.

common world, independent of that particular language; each implies the unity of the one world understood from whatever point of view and whatever it is called. Every language world implies this totality not only negatively, because it is partial, but positively as its own possibility. The plurality of language world cannot be conceived of as relativities opposed to the one absolute world because they cannot be opposed to each other, 'each of them contains in it potentially all others, that is, each can expand itself into every other'.⁴² Nothing essentially is beyond the horizon of what can be understood in language.

According to Gadamer, the possibility for understanding rests ultimately on language itself. The peculiar function of language is to bring about the fusion of horizon of the interpreter and of the historical object, which characterizes the act of understanding.

Gadamer employed his notion of the fusion of horizons to his theory of the reading of historical texts and argued that reader can never get into the mind of the author so as to know his true intention. But the reader can only understand the subject matter from one's own stand point and with the help of the author. This led Gadamer to a kind of finite "perspectival" view of truth in which the most one can do is to develop one's own perspective and self knowledge while being open to the views of the others. Critics often claim that this view leads Gadamer down the wayward path of relativism. Gadamer defends his position by arguing that the recognition of historically conditioned perspectives does not cancel any notion of truth but simply denies that any perspective is absolute. In the view of Gadamer one can be able to grasp the truth, not by trying to transcend or rise above one's historical context, culture, and tradition but by becoming more self-aware of one's own context, culture, and tradition.⁴³

Gadamer criticizes the teleological conception of *Bildung*. In Werner Jaeger's influential classic *Paideia*, for instance, education and human formation are the

⁴² Weinsheimer, Joel.C, *Gadamer's Hermeneutics- A Reading of Truth and Method*, Yale University Press, London, 1985, p.246.

⁴³ www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Hans-Georg-Gadamer, retrieved on 03.15.2010.

elevation of the individual towards a true human nature. In such a perspective, *paideia* pre-supposes a pre-established model that each individual must interiorize and accomplish. Gadamer considers the educative process as an unpredictable and endless series of fusion of horizons; in his perspective, human formation is simply human transformation.⁴⁴

The main aspect of his theory of culture is the passion for the other. Gadamer through his concept of 'fusion of horizon' has tried to show that no one meaning or culture is to be considered as absolute. He through his concept tries to provide the space where the voice of the other is heard and a strong pluralistic perspective is upheld.

The 'fusion of horizons' along with *bildung* helps us to accept the other in full recognition and respect. This is what lies at the roots of multiculturalism. Thus we can say that multiculturalism has been in the process of making for a long time perhaps a very long time. It evolved out of the multicultural society or society with cultural pluralism. The history of such a society goes back to several millennium but multiculturalism as some kind of social reality with pluralism as its philosophical basis emerged during 1970's. There have been attempt to understand multiculturalism on the basis of secularism on the one hand and the hermeneutic dimension leading to the fusion of the cultural horizon on the other. This is an ongoing process without any finality or inherent teleology. It is closer to the cliché of the time 'purposiveness without purpose'.

⁴⁴ www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Cult/CultSamp.htm, retrieved on 03.10.2010.

Chapter 4

An Examination of the Status of Plurality in Multiculturalism

I, in this chapter, shall develop the doctrine of multiculturalism in the context of the concept of pluralism in the philosophical system of India and the West. Pluralism is the most operative term in the formulation of discussion on culture and multiculturalism. Every culture is deeply rooted in the sense of affinity and diversity. We develop the affinity for a culture because we are born and brought up with that. It is the aspects of language, symbols, values, cuisine, festivity, celebrations of birth, marriage and even the concept of death that create the cultural affinity. By virtue of affinity, a culture creates diversity with other languages, values etc. It implies that the moment a culture emerges and creates affinity; it simultaneously gives rise to diversity. It can therefore be said that plurality implies an understanding of affinity and diversity. The philosophical basis of affinity and diversity lies in the concept of identity and difference. This notion can be traced in Aristotle's logic with its three laws¹-

1. The Law of Identity – This law asserts that if any statement is true, then it is true, e.g. S is S. The principle of identity asserts that every such statement is a tautology.
2. The Law of Contradiction – This law asserts that no statement can be both true and false at the same time. The principle of contradiction asserts that every statement of the form $p \sim p$ must be false, that every such statement is self-contradictory.

¹ Copi, I.M. and Cohen, C., *Introduction to Logic*, 10th edition, Pearson Education Asia, Delhi, 1998, p.389.

3. The Law of Excluded Middle – This law asserts that every statement is either true or false. The principle of excluded middle asserts that every statement of the form $p \vee \neg p$ must be true, that every such statement is a tautology.

What lies at the centre of Aristotle's logic is that identity and contradiction/difference cannot be true at the same place. They must therefore be kept separate from each other. This philosophical insight can be found to be deeply rooted in the plurality of cultures, i.e. different culture can exist and flourish at different places at the same time or at different time. But multiculturalism advocates the notion of identity and difference. Identity lies in giving equal rights and recognition to all cultures but even then these cultures have their own existence as they differ from one another in regard to their norms, values, practices, etc.

In the context of multiculturalism it is to be noted at the outset that plurality is the most operative term. Immanuel Kant is the first philosopher who introduced the concept of plurality under the judgment, Particular in quantity in the *Transcendental Analytic of Critique of Pure Reason*². The judgment goes as follows 'Some S is P' (Some policemen are soft spoken). Quantity, there are three judgments; namely, Universal, Particular and Singular which are having three concepts – unity, plurality, and totality respectively. Quantity, here, means Number (or Scope). Unity refers to *this* one, indicated single (thing); plurality refers to an *unspecified* number of units, i.e. many, more than one (thing); and totality to *all* (things of a certain group). The key point to draw from the category of plurality is that apart from being collected together, the units of a plurality share no internal relations with one another beyond being collected together. In this respect, pluralities are unstructured sets. It is this that allows us to distinguish between the category of plurality and totality. If there is a difference between plurality and totality, it lies in the fact that there are no relations of dependency among the elements of the former category, while in

² Kant, Immanuel, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by N. K. Smith, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2003, pp.118-119.

the latter category the unities falling under the totality stand in relations of dependency with one another. It is in this sense that the third category is a combination of the first two categories. Totalities are pluralities that are unities.³

The above insight constitutes the discourse on culture during the eighteenth and early nineteenth century in Europe. This discourse is rooted in the plurality of cultures, plurality of cultivation of values and rituals and the recognition of these pluralities.

Though we have discussed the status of plurality in Indian culture in Chapter 2, now we will deal with those arguments in detail in order to pursue the theme further.

Indian society is diverse and pluralistic in regulating and reconstructing the systems of Indian philosophy. The oldest text, the *Rigveda*, gives the key to understand the notion of plurality. *Ekam sat viprāh bahudhā vadanti* has been the fundamental idea of philosophizing in India. *Ekam sat viprāh bahudhā vadanti* means that 'reality' is one but wise speaks or talks of it differently. This short and simple sentence is profound in its implications. The 'reality' admits of alternative approaches in terms of thought constructions and linguistic expressions. It is pluralistic in its expression.

Pluralism has been expressed in many ways in the later development of Indian philosophical systems; such as in the Vedānta philosophy, we go from one to many; in Vallabha Vedānta, we go from many to one; in Sāṅkhya and Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika systems, we go from many to many and in Śhūnyavādins, we go from nothing, i.e. *Svabhāva- śhūnya* to many.

In the Vedānta philosophy, we go from one to many. Ultimate Reality, according to Shaṅkara, is *Ātman or Brahman*. *Brahman* is the identity of pure

³ www.larvalsubjects.wordpress.com, retrieved on 04.15.2010.

intelligence, pure being, and pure blessedness. According to Shaṅkara, the world has no real existence at all, but is only an illusory imagination which lasts till the moment when true knowledge dawns. The world-appearance as experienced by us is thus often likened to the illusory perception of silver in a conch-shell; for the moment the perception appears to be true and the man runs to pick it up, as if the conch-shell were a real piece of silver; but as soon as he finds out the truth that this is only a piece of conch-shell, he is no longer deluded by the appearance or again attracted towards it. The illusion of silver is inexplicable in itself, for it was true for all purposes so long as it persisted, but when true knowledge was acquired, it forthwith vanished. This world-appearance will vanish when the true knowledge of reality dawns.⁴

The manifested world of experience is the effect; the highest *Brahman* is the cause. And the effect has no independent existence apart from the cause. Plurality of effects is only a creation of Ignorance. This world is only phenomenally existent as mere objects of name and form, but the cause, the *Brahman*, is alone the true reality.⁵ So, reality is one, but due to ignorance appears as many. In this way, Vedānta philosophy proceeds from one to many. But when ignorance is sublated by knowledge then there remains only one Ultimate Reality i.e. *Brahman*.

In Vallabha Vedānta, we go from many to one. *Brahman* has a mysterious power, through which it can create anything. There is no difference between the creator and the created, for there is no difference between cause and effect. Yet the cause undergoes transformation to produce the effect. Then if the *Brahman* undergoes transformation to produce the world, how can it remain perfect? It can remain perfect, because transformation is only manifestation; it is rendering an already existent object capable of being experienced. The world is not different from the *Brahman*; the former is the latter's quality, attribute. There is no difference between substance and attribute. The *ātman* issues out of the

⁴ Dasgupta, S., *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Motilal Banarsidas Publishers, New Delhi, 2006, p.441.

⁵ *Ibid*, p.439.

Brahman like a spark out of fire. It is the same as the *Brahman*, just as the spark is the same as the fire. It is universally and unconditionally pervaded by *Brahman*.⁶

In Vallabha's philosophy, ignorance is the absence of the knowledge of one's identity with the *Brahman*. Because of ignorance the devotee remains away from the God and does not realise his true nature but once knowledge dawns ignorance vanishes. In fact, as the *Upaniṣads* say, *Brahman* is everything. We can realize this identity through absolute surrender to God and love of him. In this way this journey from many to one takes place.

In the philosophy of Sāṅkhya and Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, we go from many to many. Sāṅkhya accepts the two realities – *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa*. *Prakṛti* is absolutely unconscious whereas *Puruṣa* is pure consciousness. Somehow *Puruṣa* comes into contact with *Prakṛti* and throws the reflection of his consciousness into it. Although *Prakṛti* is one, the *Puruṣas* are many and infinite in numbers; there is, therefore, an infinite number of reflections in the same *Prakṛti*. As soon as the reflections are thrown into it, *Prakṛti* begins to evolve the world. And since *Prakṛti* is the same and has its own structure, the objective world it evolves for all the *Puruṣas* is the same.⁷

Vaiśeṣika accepts seven padārtha while Nyāya accepts sixteen. The word vaiśeṣika is derived from the word 'viśeṣa' which means particularity or distinguishing feature or distinction. The theory of Vaiśeṣika is a kind of atomism, holding that the basis of physical reality is a plurality of infinitesimal atoms⁸. The atoms are indivisible and eternal; it can neither be created nor destroyed. Each (atom) possesses its own distinct (individuality)⁹.

⁶ Raju, P.T., *Structural Depths of Indian Thought*, South Asian Publishers, New Delhi, 1985, p.507.

⁷ Raju, P.T., *Structural Depths of Indian Thought*, p.309.

⁸ www.answer.com/Vaishesika, retrieved on 06.08.2010.

⁹ www.reference.com/Vaishesika, retrieved on 06.08.2010.

So, in this way Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika accepts the notion of pluralism. They accept numerous atoms which lead to the creation of further many more which proceeds in the direction of many to many.

According to the philosophy of Śhūnyavād, we move from *svabhāva-śūnyata* to many. Nāgārjun wants to show that ultimate reality cannot be described either in positive or negative terms. It cannot have any characteristics. Not only ultimate reality, but the phenomenal world also cannot be described, because none of the categories we use in describing the world has its own nature. He attacked the view that everything has its own character or nature. If everything can be shown to have only relative existence, then which thing can have its own nature? And if everything is devoid of its own characters and is, therefore, void, and there is nothing that is not void, then the absolute reality must be the Void. If everything in the world is essentially a void, the world itself is void. What we see then is only an appearance of the Void, the Absolute. Appearance is the empirical truth, the Void the Ultimate or the Absolute Truth. So everything that belongs to this world is only an empirical truth. We cannot characterize the Ultimate reality in any way. It is, therefore, devoid of all characterizations, all determinations. It is the Void (*śūnya*).¹⁰

Everything in this world is changing and conditional and so relative but has various manifestations. For example, first there is seed, and then it becomes plant and then tree. It is changing from time to time but still appears in various forms. So, in this way we move from *svābhava-śūnya* to many.

With these arguments in view assimilated from Western and Indian philosophy, we will proceed to analyse the status of plurality. In order to organise my discussion, I propose to divide the chapter into three parts –

Part 1 – Secularism: An Approach towards Multiculturalism.

Part 2 – Liberalism: An Approach towards Multiculturalism, and

¹⁰ Raju, P.T., *Structural Depths of Indian Thought*, pp. 157-158.

I

Secularism: An Approach towards Multiculturalism

Religion may have been originally derived from the Latin word “*religo*” which means “good faith”, ‘ritual”, and other similar meanings or it may have come from the Latin “*religare*” which means “to tie fast”. The concept of God is central to the definition of religion. In words of James Martineau–

“Religion is the belief in an ever living God, in a Divine Mind and Will ruling the universe and holding moral relations with mankind”.¹¹

Moral codes, practices, values, institutions, tradition, rituals, and scriptures are often traditionally associated with the core belief associated with religion. Religion is also often described as a "way of life" or a life stance. One of the features of all culture is that it is somehow related to the religion of a particular community. Religion has generally three functions to perform –

1. To give an explanation of the world in terms of it's coming to be and ceasing to be, myth of the creation, God as the creator etc. The religion encompasses the sense of holy and the conviction that human existence stems from the experiences of the holy. Humans have a sense that there is an unseen environment and therefore there is a faith in the fact that there is something holy and greater than the ordinary existence. Humans seek the meaning of life through holy experience.
2. Every religion has given rise to the values of love, compassion, sacrifice, fraternity, etc. According to Durkheim, religion was historically and everywhere the source of morality, law, science, and much else. And he puts it as, ‘If religion gave birth to all that is essential in society that is so because the

¹¹ www.veda.wikidot.com/dharma-and-religion, retrieved on 06.07.2010.

idea of society is the soul of religion'¹². He views the importance of religion to the human condition in terms of what it does for it. According to Durkheim, 'It's true function is to make us act and help us live', not only routinely but, more significantly, in the face of 'the trials of existence' and in enabling us to be 'lifted above the human miseries'¹³. Religion unites people on the ground of following moral ways¹⁴ –

- a) The group affirms its belief in the central values through its commitment to the religious system.
 - b) Durkheim saw society as a moral community, whose members were socialised into accepting appropriate patterns of behaviour over time. This is an unending process since people are always integrated into new groups, adopting new norms, absorbing new values and adopting new patterns of behaviour.
 - c) An orderly social life is only possible when people share moral values; in this way, society becomes embedded in the individual.
3. In every religion we find that the sense of aesthetics has been developed.

These three features created an atmosphere of cultivation of human values, norms, practices, etc in certain manner which in turn gave rise to certain features of a culture.

Sometimes religion is translated as *dharma* in Hindi but that is not the correct translation as both are not same. *Dharma* is an ordinary principle which is independent of one's faith or methods of worship or what is understood by the term 'religion'. It transcends the narrow boundaries of religion. It offers limitless freedom of choice of methods as well as goals. The notion of tolerance and plurality does not find space in the concept of religion whereas tolerance

¹² Madan, T.N., *Images Of The World-Essay on Religion, Secularism, and Culture*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2006, p.6.

¹³ Durkheim, Emile, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, trans. by Swain Joseph Ward, George Allen and Unwin Ltd, London, 1976, p.416.

¹⁴ www.coombegirlschool.org/sixth/sociology/.../DurkheimReligion.doc, retrieved on 04.27.2010.

and plurality are inherent in *Dharma*. Religion is a restrictive canvas related to the modes of worship of a divinity called by a variety of names.¹⁵

Religion does not accept plurality and hence does not provide space for other which results in conflict between the two religions in regard to their position. With the emergence of secularism the dominance of religion started fading as in a secular state religion was not allowed to dictate political decisions.

The word “secular” is often misunderstood. It doesn’t mean being “anti-religious”, though some people who describe themselves as “secularists” are anti-religious while many Christians support a secular state. It doesn’t mean being value-free, in terms of morality or ethical behaviour. A secular society is one where religion does not dictate political decisions – where the state and religion are separate and where freedom of religion is possible, as no one religion dominates the society.

In general, secular societies are modern and liberal societies. They may have become so through the gradual erosion of old-fashioned religious authority, the modernization of government, and the development of ethnic mingling through migration. Secular states allow freedom of religion or the freedom not to be religious which makes them different from repressive totalitarian states, including communist states, which forcibly suppress religious expression.¹⁶

A secular society is one where religion doesn’t dictate political decisions – where the state and religion are separate – and where freedom of religion is possible, as no one religion dominates the society.

The term ‘secularism’ is to be understood from two perspectives. First, it implies the separation of state activities and religious affairs that is neither the state interferes in religious matters nor it permits religious interference in matters which are within the jurisdiction of the state. The state upholds no

¹⁵ www.veda.wikidot.com/dharma-and-religion, retrieved on 06.07.2010.

¹⁶ www.suffolkhands.org, retrieved on 06.06.2010.

religion, pursues no religious goals, and religiously-defined goods have no place in the catalogue of ends it promotes. According to another view, secularism means giving equal respect and support to all religions. It implies that while the public life may or may not be kept free of religion, it must have space for a continuous dialogue among religious traditions and between the religious and the secular – that, in the ultimate analysis, each major faith in the region includes within it an in-house version of the others faiths both as an internal criticism and as a reminder of the diversity of the theory of transcendence¹⁷.

‘Secularization’ is nowadays generally employed to refer to, in words of Peter Berger, ‘the process by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols’¹⁸.

What are the criteria for calling a state to be secular? For some, the secularity of the state requires that no support in any form be given to religion. It entails, for others, support to the same degree to all religions. There are still others who find a mixed strategy morally admissible, not in any way diluting the secularity of the state.¹⁹

D.E. Smith observes that the conception of a secular state involves three distinct but interrelated sets of interrelationships concerning the state, religion, and the individual. The three sets of relations are²⁰:

- a) Religion and the individual. (Freedom of Religion)
- b) The state and the individual. (Citizenship)
- c) The state and religion. (Separation of state and religion)

Let us analyse these issues:

Freedom of Religion

¹⁷ Nandy Ashis, “The Politics of Secularism and the Recovery of Religious Toleration”, in *Secularism and its Critics*, (ed.) Rajeev Bhargava, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1998, p.327.

¹⁸ Madan, T.N., *Images of the World-Essay on Religion, Secularism, and Culture*, p.57.

¹⁹ Bhargava, Rajeev, “Introduction”, in *Secularism and its Critics*, (ed.) Rajeev Bhargava, p.7.

²⁰ Smith, D.E, “India as a Secular State”, in *Secularism and its Critics*, (ed.) Rajeev Bhargava, p.178.

Religion, as the word is used here, refers to organized religious groups and also to religious beliefs and practices that may or may not be associated with such groups. Freedom of religion means that the individual is free to consider and to discuss with others the relative claims of differing religions, and to come to a decision without any interference from the state. He is free to reject them all. If he decides to embrace one religion, he has freedom to follow its teachings, participate in its worship and other activities, propagate its doctrines, and hold office in its organization. The individual if later decides to renounce his religion or to embrace another; he has the liberty to do so.

The state is excluded from this relationship. The state cannot compel the individual to follow a particular religion or any religion. It cannot force him to contribute financially towards the support of religion by taxation. However, the state can legitimately regulate the manifestation of religion, in the interest of public health, safety or morals.

As till now, freedom of religion from the point of view of the individual was dealt. The collective aspect of this right is the freedom of two or more individuals to associate for religious purposes and to form permanent organizations to carry out these purposes. All religious groups have the right to organize, to manage their own affairs in religious matters, to own and acquire property, and to establish and administer educational and charitable institutions.²¹

Citizenship

This indicates the relationship between the state and the individual, and the exclusion of religion is essential. The secular state views the individual as a citizen, and not as a member of a particular religious group. Religion becomes entirely irrelevant in defining the terms of citizenship; its rights and duties are not affected by the individual's religious beliefs.²²

²¹ Ibid, pp.178-179.

²² Ibid, pp.178-179.

The closer the connection between the state and a particular religion, the greater the danger that – (1) Religious qualifications will distort the principle of democratic citizenship, and that (2) the state will interfere with the freedom of religion, both individual and corporate.²³

Separation of State and Religion

According to this conception religion and the state function in two basically different areas of human activity, each with its own objectives and methods. It is not the function of the state to promote, regulate, direct, or otherwise interfere in religion. Similarly, political power is outside the scope of religion's legitimate aims. Under the principle of separation, both religion and the state have freedom to develop without interfering with one another. Religious groups can organize, frame their own creeds and regulations, choose their own ecclesiastical officers, find their own educational institutions, and finance their own activities, all without interference from the state.

The state, on the other hand, is free from the financial responsibility of supporting an official religion, from the troublesome problem of deciding religious questions. The state is free to devote itself to the temporal concerns that fall within its proper sphere of activity with which it is equipped to deal.²⁴ The decline of religion was peculiarly a Western development. The historical process of secularization, which had created separate domains of the sacred and secular in the Western society, confining the former to the privacy of human lives, had been subsequently presented as a thesis of historical inevitability, that is, a precondition of modernity everywhere.²⁵

The relationship of religion to the public square and more fundamentally to modernity itself must be redefined²⁶. In the words of Charles Taylor²⁷ – a complementary relationship of the secular (non-discriminatory) state and a

²³ Ibid, p.180.

²⁴ Ibid, pp.180-181.

²⁵ Madan, T.N., *Images of the World-Essay on Religion, Secularism, and Culture*, p.23.

²⁶ Ibid, p.134.

²⁷ Taylor, Charles, *Varieties of Religion Today*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 2003, pp.111-112.

religiously plural society is envisaged, as is in India. Doubts will persist whether citizens who actively affirm particular religious beliefs and adhere to the related religious practices will be truly neutral in their capacity as functionaries of the state. The only assurance can come from the strength of secular institutions that will retain individual proclivities.

Taylor has another formulation also²⁸: secularity should mean 'the disappearance of an ontic dependence on something higher', and its replacement by a strong presence of God in our political identity, just as God's presence survives in our personal life in which 'devotion' is immune to the inroads of disenchantment. It is obvious that Taylor's use of the phrase 'presence of God' is here to be construed in abstract non-denominational terms, as an awareness to which one bears witness in both one's private and public lives. The possibility of religion being a 'defining constituent in political identities' is, on this view, always present, 'virtually everywhere', but carries with it the risk of 'a reinvasion of the political identity by the confessional'. What is obviously indicated here is the possibility of an alternative kind of religiousness rather than the total displacement of religion from the public sphere; it is the view that 'religion occupies a different place, compatible with the sense that all social actions take place in profane time'.

The process of secularization during 17th century was an attempt to develop the institutions of education, science and technology, industry and market free from the dominance of religion. In the course of time 'secularization' became a perspective to look at cultural phenomenon and recognized the cultural aspect as distinct from the religious aspects. For instance, Latin was the language of the church and was understood as a language through which religious matters were explained. Due to the process of secularization, dominance of religion was repudiated. During the 18th and 19th century in Europe languages like English,

²⁸ Taylor, Charles, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2004, pp.193-194.

French, German, Spanish etc., all evolved from Latin but have repudiated the religiosity of the Latin language as the result of the process of secularization.

Thus, in this way it can be said that, in a multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-lingual country, mutual tolerance of each other's faith, culture and traditions is necessary for a harmonious and peaceful life. Multiculturalism incorporates and even transcends secularism. Though on the one side, in secularism there is separation between the state and the church and in multiculturalism, there is intervention from the state to provide equal rights to diverse cultures. On the other hand, secularism is the core of integration. It implies a sense of belonging, or feeling of togetherness and unity. It means creating social and religious respect among the people of the country. Being secular is an approach towards multiculturalism as it provides equal respect to all religions.

II

Liberalism: An Approach towards Multiculturalism

The word 'liberal' is derived from the Latin word '*liber*', which means 'free'. The Oxford Encyclopedia English Dictionary defines the word liberal as "regarding many traditional beliefs as dispensable, invalidated by modern thought, or liable to change"²⁹.

Liberalism – both as a political current and an intellectual tradition—is mostly a modern phenomenon that originated in the 17th century, although some liberal philosophical ideas had precursors in antiquity³⁰. Liberalism (from the Latin *liberalis*, "of freedom") is the belief in the importance of liberty and equality. Liberalism's most honoured slogan says this: 'Individuals must be left unimpeded to pursue their own conceptions of the good life'. Property qualified

²⁹ www.wikipedia.com/wiki/Liberalism, retrieved on 05.07.2010.

³⁰ Ibid.

and refined, this stands as the most general defining mark of liberal doctrine, subsuming specific instances of it that specifically mention one or other domain of application, such as that of speech and thought, of religion and worship, of ownership of property, and so on.³¹

Liberalism has been branded as meta-ideology which means that it encompasses many principles, values and elements within its fold. The following are the main elements of liberalism³² –

1. Individualism – Individual has been given immense importance in liberalism. Liberalism believes that the welfare of the individual should be given primacy over all other values and principles. It is the chief objective of the political system to protect the interests of the individual.
2. Freedom – To the liberals, it is the value of supreme importance because without it the individual will simply be a unit without any dignity. But the liberals do not advocate for absolute or unrestricted freedom because absolute freedom/liberty will do more harm.
3. Reason – Liberalism and Reason are inseparable from one another. Liberalism is partially the product of Enlightenment which strongly emphasises that man is rational being and guided by reason and rationality. Since individuals are rational and reasonable they are quite capable of taking any decision and to judge what is good and what is bad for them. In that case there is no necessity of imposing any decision by any outside authority. ‘Rationalism is the belief that the world has a rational structure and that this can be disclosed through the exercise of human reason and critical enquiry’³³.
4. Toleration – It is another element of liberalism. In any society there is availability of different opinions, religious sects or communities of belief and

³¹ Bilrami, Akeel, “Secularism, Liberalism and the Moral Psychology of Identity”, in *Multiculturalism, Liberalism and Democracy*, (ed.) Rajeev Bhargava, Amiya Kumar Bagchi and R. Sudarshan, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2007, p.173.

³² Das, P.G., *Modern Political Theory*, New Central Book Agency (P) Ltd, New Delhi, 2009, pp.318-21.

³³ Das, P.G., *Modern Political Theory*, p.319.

faith. All of them must live side by side peacefully and for this toleration is required. Liberalism believes that all these diversities must exist side by side. It attempts to accommodate all the beliefs, faiths, ideologies and opinions.

5. Consent – Consent is another value of liberalism. The idea of consent though very old, its modern appearance took place in the hands of the contractualists, such as Thomas Hobbes and John Locke. Both of them assertively argued that the members of the state of nature assembled together to take a decision about the setting up of a body politic and behind this decision there was the consent of all.
6. Constitutionalism – Constitutionalism is a basic principle of liberalism. It states that government's business never specifies that it has the unlimited freedom to do anything without considering the advantages or disadvantages of the common people. It must follow certain basic rules and procedures laid down in the basic laws.
7. Equality – Liberalism is based on another principle and that is equality. Equality as a principle asserts that none will be allowed to enjoy special privileges ignoring the common minimum privileges to which everyone has legitimate claims.
8. Justice – The very basis of liberalism is justice. 'Liberals, fiercely disapprove of any social privileges or advantages that are enjoyed by some but denied to others on the basis of factors such as gender, race, colour, creed, religion or social background. Rights should not be reserved for any particular class of persons. The most important forms of equality are legal equality and political equality'³⁴. According to liberal conception of justice, door of opportunity should be open to all.

Locke has been credited for the rise of liberalism as a distinct philosophical tradition. The core of Locke's individualism is the assertion that every man is naturally the sole proprietor of his own person and capacities – the absolute

³⁴ Ibid, p, 321.

proprietor in the sense that he owes nothing to society for them – and especially the absolute proprietor of his capacity to labour. Every man is therefore free to alienate his own capacity to labour³⁵. He employed the concept of natural rights, right to life, right to property, concept of consent, constitutionalism, people's right to dislodge a government for its failure to act in accordance with the terms and conditions of contract.

All men, since, had identical faculties including and specifically reason, and since they were all ontologically dependent on their creator and hence independent of one another, they were all equal. For Locke equality implied that all human beings had equal dignity and rights, that no authority was legitimate unless it was based on their uncoerced consent, that each should exercise his rights with a due regard for others and so on. As rational beings humans are expected to govern their affairs rationally. A rational society was governed not by customs and traditional practices but by general and 'positive laws' enacted by the supreme legislature.³⁶

The function and the purpose of Locke's civil society is protection of life, liberty, and possessions. And this purpose can be made possible through a trust between the governments in the community and who are in place of a ruler who fails to secure the public good. So the ruler's authority is conditional rather than absolute. Each man establishes his right to property by "mixing his labour". So when everyone contributes to the community they in turn are given the fruits of everyone else's labour. He has the right to expect political power to be used to preserve his property in his own person and in his possessions, and the right to freedom of thought, speech and worship.³⁷

His political philosophy emphasizes individual rights, mainly the right of one's person not to be interfered with the right of justly acquired property. He

³⁵ Macpherson, C.B., *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke*, Oxford University Press, London, 1962, p.231.

³⁶ Parekh, Bhikhu, *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory*, Palgrave, New York, 2000, pp.36-37.

³⁷ www.directessays.com, retrieved on 05.06.2010.

holds that people can acquire rights to unoccupied property that did not require the agreement of government. He argued that the purpose of government is to protect those rights.³⁸

The question arises whether Locke was an individualist or a collectivist? Locke's notion of individualism is necessarily collectivism (in the sense of asserting the supremacy of civil society over every individual) for it asserts an individuality that can only fully be realized in accumulating property, and therefore only be realized by some, and only at the expense of the individuality of the others. To permit such a society to function, political authority must be supreme over individuals; for if it is not, there can be no assurance that the property institutions essential to this kind of individualism will have adequate sanctions. Locke does not have hesitation in allowing individuals to hand over to civil society all their natural rights and powers including specifically all their possessions and lands. The wholesale transfer of individual rights was necessary to get sufficient collective force for the protection of property. Locke could afford to propose it because the civil society was to be in control of men of property. In these circumstances individualism must be, and could safely be, left to the collective supremacy of the state.

Thus, Locke's individualism does not exclude but on the contrary demand the supremacy of the state over the individual. It is not the question of the more individualism, the less collectivism; rather, the more thorough-going individualism, the more complete collectivism.³⁹

Locke was primarily concerned to show the necessity and value of civil society and explore the kind of moral qualities and virtues individuals needs to sustain it; that is, he began with civil society and defined and structured moral life in terms of it.⁴⁰

³⁸ www.wikipedia.org/wiki/John-Locke, retrieved on 05.06.2010.

³⁹ Macpherson, C.B., *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke*, pp.255-256.

⁴⁰ Parekh, Bhikhu, *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory*, p.40.

The thought of Locke, displays a strange blend of moral egalitarianism and political and cultural inegalitarianism: equality of human beings but inequality of cultures, respect for persons but not their ways of life, rejection of racism but advocacy of cultural domination, equal concern for all as individuals but as self-determining collective subjects.⁴¹

Liberalism first became a powerful force in the age of Enlightenment, rejecting various foundational assumptions that dominated earlier theories of government, such as hereditary status, established religion, absolute monarchy, and the Divine Rights of King.⁴² Another great liberal thinker after Locke was Immanuel Kant. His Essay “What is Enlightenment?” starts out with the programmatic declaration:

Enlightenment is man’s emergence from his self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is man’s inability to make use of his understanding without direction from another. This immaturity is self-imposed when its cause lies not in lack of understanding, but in lack of reason and in lack of resolution and courage to use it without direction from another.⁴³

The over-all ideal and goal of the Enlightenment was rational self-determination. On a personal level it was the idea that every individual had the right to determine for him or herself how to live and what to live for; a person’s own reason and conscience was the ultimate arbiter of right and wrong. On a social and political level it was the idea of democratic self-government: the citizens of an enlightened society do not feel that they need monarch or some other father figure to do thinking and governing for them⁴⁴.

For Kant, a truly moral person cannot passively accept the customs and values of any society. A moral person has to determine rationally what is right and what is wrong; a moral person has to be “autonomous”. Autonomy is the ability to live by one’s own laws. According to this notion of autonomy, person is only bounded by his personal idea of right and wrong. So, in such a case,

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p.47.

⁴² www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberalism, retrieved on 05.06.2010.

⁴³ Kant, Immanuel, “An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?” in (ed.) J. Schmidt, *What is Enlightenment? : Eighteenth-Century Answers and Twentieth-Century Questions*, University of California Press, California, 1996, pp.58.

⁴⁴ http://faculty.frostburg.edu/Phil/forum/Rita_Works.htm, retrieved on 05.06.2010.

how ethical relativism is avoided? Kant avoids the anti-social implications of certain kinds of individualism by designing a system of ethics which emphatically defines human beings as rational beings, and which explicitly makes the consideration of the interests of others as an integral part of being rational⁴⁵.

It is basically due to the faculty of reason that people are able to think as social beings, and not just as isolated individuals with their one-sided desires and goals. It is reason that, most plausibly, connects human beings with each other, and which turns a merely natural society of competing individuals into a human community with common ground. An autonomous person thinks of himself or herself as a social being, not just as a solitary individual. Kant's moral philosophy is thus both individualistic and communitarian. It is individualistic because it falls on the individual to decide what is right and what is wrong. It is communitarian in so far as that decision is not made with respect to one's own interests alone, but by way of a rational deliberation which involves consideration of others. It is an individualism that is embedded in a community of other individuals who are all equally autonomous and beholden to the consideration of the interests of others. Kant insures that there is no contradiction between individual liberty and social responsibility. In a community of reason the two are not only compatible, but essentially the same⁴⁶.

John Stuart Mill was another liberal philosopher who through his work 'On Liberty' provided a rational justification of the freedom of the individual in opposition to the claims of the state to impose unlimited control, and has become a classic of libertarian philosophy.⁴⁷

Mill aimed to show the kind of life human beings ought to lead and exploring the type of the society conducive to it. For Mill, man is the highest

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ http://faculty.frostburg.edu/Phil/forum/Rita_Works.htm, retrieved on 05.06.2010.

⁴⁷ www.serendipity.li/jsmill, retrieved on 06.09.2010.

being on earth and should lead a life worthy of his status. His 'destiny' and 'comparative worth as a human being' consists in perfecting himself, in becoming the 'highest' or the 'best thing' he is capable of becoming. Two components are related for such a fully human life⁴⁸ –

1. It involves all-round development of his intellectual, moral, aesthetic and other capacities and growing up to his full stature. A person whose life is a 'complete and consistent whole' has a fullness of life, is both a 'noble and beautiful object of contemplation', makes the human race 'infinitely worth belonging to'. Mill calls this the Greek ideal of self-development and thinks that it is not only better than but includes all that is worthy and valuable in others.
2. A fully human life involves individuality, self-determination or autonomy. It involves making one's own choices and decisions, forming one's own desires, beliefs, opinions and values, making sure that they are 'properly , one's own', critically examining the rationale of inherited beliefs, and revising them where necessary. 'One whose desires and impulses are not his own has no character, no more than a steam-engine has a character'.

The most important point made by Mill, is that, "Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign".⁴⁹ He maintained that civil society must always guarantee the civil liberty of its citizens – their protection against interference by an abusive authority. This is true even when the government itself relies upon the democratic participation of the people.⁵⁰ The tyranny of the majority is dangerous as it is difficult to be protected against the tyranny of the prevailing opinion and feeling. The opinions which are prevailing in the society will be considered as the basis of all rules, and hence there is no way to safeguard oneself against the tyranny of the majority. But for Mill, it is not necessary that the majority opinion shall be correct.

⁴⁸ Parekh, Bhikhu, *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory*, pp. 40-41.

⁴⁹ Mill, J.S., *Utilitarianism, Liberty, Representative Government*, J.M. Dent and Sons LTD, London, 1910, p.73.

⁵⁰ www.philosophypages.com, retrieved on 06.09.2010.

There is only one legitimate reason for the exercise of power over individuals, according to Mill:

“The only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others.”⁵¹

At this point, Mill divides human liberty as⁵² –

1. The liberty of thought and feeling; absolute freedom of opinion and sentiment on all subjects; and includes the freedom of expressing and publishing opinions.
2. The liberty of tastes and pursuits, even if our conduct are considered perverts, and only, as long as they do not cause harm to others.
3. The ‘freedom to unite’, for any purpose not involving harm to others. The persons combining being supposed to be of full age, and not forced or deceived.

In the view of Mill, no society in which these liberties are not, on the whole, respected, is free whatever may be its form of government; and none is completely free in which they do not exist absolute ad unqualified.⁵³

In his treatise ‘On Liberty’ he argues that in the past the danger had been that monarchs held power at the expense of the common people and the struggle was one of gaining liberty. But now that power has largely passed into the hands of the people at large through democratic form of government, the danger is that the majority denies the liberty to individuals, whether explicitly through laws or more subtly through moral and public opinion.

Mill is in favour of liberty and governmental action is legitimate only when demonstrably necessary for the protection of other citizens from direct harm caused by the conduct in question. On every other contingency, the liberty of

⁵¹ Mill, J.S. *Utilitarianism, Liberty, Representative Government*, p.73.

⁵² *Ibid.* p.75.

⁵³ *Ibid.* p.75.

the individual should remain inviolate.⁵⁴ For Mill, human beings are equal as they share a common nature and the good life is the same for all.

On the account of the above description of the concept of liberalism, according to above mentioned philosophers, it is apparent that in liberalism individual is given more importance than anything else whereas in multiculturalism we talk of collective rights. It shows the incompatibility between these two concepts. Hence, the question arises, how liberalism can go along with that of multiculturalism?

According to this approach, 'equal recognition of cultural groups must be compatible with the requirements of basic individual liberties and perhaps even with individual autonomy'⁵⁵. In liberalism there is notion of plurality. By pluralism, liberals refer to the proliferation of opinions and beliefs that characterize a stable social order. Liberals do not see conformity and homogeneity in the way that people think; in fact, their efforts have been grown towards establishing a governing framework that harmonizes and minimizes conflicting views, but still allows those views to exist and flourish. For liberal philosophy, pluralism leads easily to toleration⁵⁶.

Liberals rejects the idea that groups can legitimately restrict the basic civil or political rights of their own members in the name of preserving the purity or authenticity of the group's culture and tradition. However, a liberal conception of multiculturalism can accord groups various rights against the larger society in order to reduce the group's vulnerability to the economic or political power of the majority. Such 'external protections' are consistent with liberal principles although they too became illegitimate if, rather than reducing a minority's vulnerability to the power of the larger society; they instead enable a minority to exercise economic or political dominance over some other groups⁵⁷.

⁵⁴ www.philosophypages.com, retrieved on 06.09.2010.

⁵⁵ Bhargava, Rajeev, "Introduction", in *Multiculturalism, Liberalism and Democracy*, p.12.

⁵⁶ www.wikipedia.com, retrieved on 05.05.2010.

⁵⁷ Kymlicka, Will, *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Introduction*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2002, p.342.

In liberalism individuals are given more importance. But in words of Kant, 'It is an individualism that is embedded in a community of other individuals who are all equally autonomous and beholden to the consideration of the interests of others. Kant insures that there is no contradiction between individual liberty and social responsibility'⁵⁸. In liberalism, there is notion of freedom, autonomy, sovereignty, equality, individualism, etc. but in multiculturalism the notions like freedom, equality, etc. are taken but with little different interpretation. In liberalism, there is acceptance of freedom and recognition of the other at the level of individuals only. But at the level of multiculturalism, individual's rights are elevated to the level of collective rights of the cultural community.

III

Communitarianism: An Approach towards Multiculturalism

The existence of community is central to the discourse of culture. Plurality implies communitarian life in society.

Kant in the *Transcendental Analytic* in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, under the table of judgments introduces a judgment as disjunctive in the Relation. The judgment goes as follows – for instance, judgment can be taken, 'The world exists either through a blind chance, or through an inner necessity, or through an external cause'. Each of these propositions occupies a part of the sphere of the possible knowledge concerning the existence of the world in general; all of them together occupy the whole sphere. To take the knowledge out of one of these spheres means placing it in one of the other spheres, and to place it in one sphere means taking it out of the others. There is, therefore, in a disjunctive judgment a certain community of the known constituents, such that they mutually exclude each other, and yet thereby determine in their totality the true

⁵⁸ <http://faculty.frostburg.edu/Phil/forum/Rita Works.htm>, retrieved on 05.06.2010.

knowledge. For, when taken together, they constitute the whole content of a given knowledge⁵⁹.

Through disjunctive judgment Kant explains the notion of ‘community’. In all disjunctive judgments the sphere (that is, the multiplicity which is contained in any one judgment) is represented as a whole divided into parts (the subordinate concepts), and that since no one of them can be contained under any other, they are thought as co-ordinated with, not subordinated to, each other, and so as determining each other, not in one direction only, as in a series, but reciprocally, as in an aggregate – if one member of the division is posited, all the rest are excluded, and conversely. Now in a whole which is made up of things, a similar combination is being thought; for one thing is not subordinated, as effect, to another, as cause of its existence, but, simultaneously and reciprocally, is co-ordinated with it, as cause of the determination of the other, (as, for instance, in a body the parts of which reciprocally attract and repel each other). This is quite different kind of connection from that which is found in the mere relation of cause to effect (of ground to consequence), for in the latter relation the consequences does not in its turn reciprocally determine the ground, and therefore does not constitute with it a whole- thus the world, for instance, does not with its Creator serve to constitute a whole. The procedure which the understanding follows in representing to itself the sphere of a divided concept it likewise follows when it thinks a thing as divisible; and just as, in the former case, the members of the division exclude each other, and yet are combined in one sphere, so the understanding represents to itself the parts of the latter as existing (as substances) in such a way that, while each exists independently of the others, they are yet combined together in a whole.⁶⁰

So in this way it can be said that the experience of a world of co-existing things not only requires the experiences of each individually but also the presumption of their mutual interaction. For example – In order to believe that

⁵⁹ Kant, Immanuel, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p.109.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, pp.117-118.

the Sun, the Moon and the Earth co-exist in a common solar system, there is need of not only estimating the mass of the each but also must take into account the reciprocity of the gravitational forces between them.⁶¹

Kant explains the notion of community in such a way that every part is excluded from one another but overall together they give a complete picture of whole. For example – Christians, Jews and others exclude one another but together as a whole they provide a complete picture.

It may be pointed out that though the concept of community was introduced by Kant in the field of epistemology, he could not develop communitarian ethics. His ethical vision was known as private morality contrasting with the public morality of the utilitarian's (Bentham and Mill). Kant could develop certain principles of morality which are to be followed by all individuals under all circumstances. These are as follows –

1. The first maxim: “Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law”.⁶²

This maxim implies, “I ought never to act except in such a way that I can also will that my maxim should become a universal law”.⁶³ Every moral action ought to be in conformity with the universal law which “serves the will as its principle...”⁶⁴

Kant states that while willing a maxim on the basis of the universal law, it has to be maintained that the willing of this kind is always to be considered also as an absolute end and never simply as means; because, “... every rational being, exists as an end in itself, not merely as a means for arbitrary use of this

⁶¹ www.philosophypages.com, retrieved on 04.10.2010.

⁶² Paton, H.J., *The Moral Law: Kant's Groundwork of Metaphysic of Morals*, London, Hutchinson University Library, 1969, p.84.

⁶³ Ibid, p.67.

⁶⁴ Ibid, p.67.

or that will; he must in all his actions, whether they are directed to himself or to other rational beings, always be viewed at the same time as an end”.⁶⁵

2. The second maxim: “Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end”.⁶⁶

To regard every rational being as an end and never as means is indeed a great contribution of Kant in the history of moral philosophy. The maxim of end-in itself is related to the maxim of universal law in the sense that while the latter states that one ought always to act on a maxim which can be willed, as a universal law; the former states that the willing of this kind is always to be considered as an absolute end and never simply as a means.

3. The third maxim: “So act as if you were through your maxim a law making member of a kingdom of ends”.⁶⁷

Kant defines kingdom as a “systematic union of different rational beings under common laws”.⁶⁸ Every rational being derives his actions from the maxim of universal law and in all his actions, he regards himself and other rational beings always as ends. In doing so, “there arises a systematic union of rational beings under common objective laws – that is a kingdom”.⁶⁹ Through the maxim of kingdom of ends, Kant attempts to bring out complete harmony between the maxim of universal law and the maxim of end-in itself. The union of rational beings as an end and governed by universal laws is regarded by Kant as a kingdom of ends.

It goes to the credit of Hegel to advocate the communitarian ethics (*sittlichkeit*), morality derived from customs or traditions. In his book *The Philosophy of Right*, he advocates Ethical Life. Kant’s emphasis on mere

⁶⁵ Ibid, p.90.

⁶⁶ Ibid, p.91.

⁶⁷ Ibid, p.34.

⁶⁸ Ibid, p.95.

⁶⁹ Ibid, p.95.

formalism in moral laws and duty for duty's sake are the issues of divergence in Hegel. Hegel criticizes Kant for the latter's emphasis on formalism and duty for duty's sake. Hegel says:

"...if duty is to be willed simply for duty's sake and not for the sake of some content, it is only a formal identity whose nature it is to exclude all content and specification".⁷⁰

To substantiate this point, Hegel illustrates:

The absence of property contains in itself just as little contradiction as the non-existence of this or that nation, family, etc., or the death of the whole human race. But if it is already established on other grounds and presupposed that property and human life are to exist and be respected, then indeed it is a contradiction to commit theft or murder; a contradiction must be a contradiction of something, i.e. of some content presupposed from the start as a fixed principle. It is to a principle of that kind alone, therefore, that an action can be related either by correspondence or contradiction⁷¹.

To elucidate this, let's take the example given by Kant himself of 'promise keeping'. Kant held that the maxim whenever I believe myself short of money, I will borrow money and promise to pay it back, though I know this will never be done, could never rank as a universal law and be self consistent, but must necessarily contradict itself; if everyone were to act on this principle, then promising and the very purpose of promising would become impossible. We may agree that in these circumstances the whole institution of giving and accepting promises would collapse without possibility of revival. What Kant attempts to demonstrate here is that you cannot both accept the institution of promise-keeping and people making false-promises. His primary mistake in formulating a categorical imperative is its abstract character; being the product of reason alone, it could represent only one side of ought circumstances. Kantian universalization test, as thus interpreted, is purely negative: if applied successfully, it will state what ought not to be done, but it will not give us an insight into what we positively ought to do. When Hegel complains in the

⁷⁰ Hegel, G.W.F., *Philosophy of Right*, trans. by Knox, T.M., Oxford University Press, London, 1967, p.90.

⁷¹ Ibid.

above passage that Kant's standpoint involves no imminent doctrines of duties, he perhaps has this point in mind. Kantian duty for duty's sake is nothing but an abstract indeterminacy stabilised from which no transition is possible to specification of particular duties.⁷²

Notion of community has been discussed with the help of Kantian formulation of disjunctive judgments. Construction of community is possible on the basis of certain symbols which are the marks of the identity of a particular community. It is followed by certain belief systems, rituals and conventions of that particular community. The symbol, the ritual, the belief system and the values embodied in them create the moment of affinity, concern, inclination and thus they give rise to the emergence of culture. Plurality of cultures emerges because of the plurality of the communities.

What are the claims made by Communitarians for equal rights and how they view multiculturalism?

Communitarians view people as 'embedded' in particular social roles and relationships. Such embedded selves do not form and revise their own conception of the good life; instead, they inherit a way of life which defines their good for them. In the opinion of communitarians, individuals are the product of social practices. For them the interests of communities is higher than the interests of any other. A healthy community maintains a balance between individual choice and protection of the communal way of life, and seeks to limit the extent to which the former can erode the latter.⁷³

Communitarians view multiculturalism as an appropriate way of protecting communities from the eroding effects of individual autonomy, and of affirming the value of community. Ethno cultural minorities in particular are worthy of

⁷² Singh R.P., *Kant and Hegel-Methodology: Ontology, Epistemology, Dialectic and Ought*, Galaxy Publications, New Delhi, 1990, p.97.

⁷³ Kymlicka, Will, *Contemporary Political Philosophy-An Introduction*, p.337.

such protection, partly because they are most at risk, but also because they still have a communal way of life to be protected.⁷⁴

In every country there are various communities and it is impossible to think of a country where just a single community resides. And since there are many communities living together, so, there is need for the open space where people from all communities should be given due recognition. Communitarians talk about collectiveness at the level of community. In India there is a very healthy tradition of collectiveness. In all Indian schools of philosophy, one thing is common – all schools propound their own theory by criticizing the earlier school but do not repudiate their importance. In India we find collectiveness at the level of community.

Multiculturalism incorporates all the three approaches in one or the other way. It implies a sense of belonging, or feeling of togetherness and unity. Secularism talks of creating social and religious respect among the people of the country and multiculturalism also moves in the direction of providing equal respect to people of all culture. In liberalism, there is notion of freedom, autonomy, sovereignty, equality, individualism, etc. but in multiculturalism the notions like freedom, equality, etc. are taken but with little different interpretation. In liberalism, there is acceptance of freedom and recognition of the other at the level of individuals only whereas at level of multiculturalism, individual's rights are elevated to the level of collective rights of the cultural community and in this way multiculturalism also includes communitarian approach. Thus, in this way we see that multiculturalism incorporates all the three approaches i.e. secularism, liberalism and communitarianism under its inclusive policy.

⁷⁴ Ibid, p.337.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

I, in the present work have tried to deal with the notion of plurality in multiculturalism. Philosophically speaking, plurality is the most operative term in the discourse on multiculturalism. This is based on the fact that there are plurality of cultures representing different visions of good life, values and convictions. Multiculturalism involves a study of human life within historical and cultural framework, culturally derived system of meaning and significance. It proposes to study diversity of cultures in terms of civil and democratic rights, property and settlement, marriage and inheritance and above all citizenship so that people belonging to each cultural community could be recognized as valid participants in the civil society. It stresses the importance of cultural belonging and legitimizes the desire to maintain differences.¹

But before going on to any issue related with multiculturalism, we must first be in a position to know about the aim or purpose of multiculturalism. And this could be easily understood in the words of Roger Kimball- 'The multiculturalists notwithstanding, the choice facing us today is not between a 'repressive' western culture and a multicultural paradise, but between culture and barbarism. Civilization is not a gift, it is an achievement – a fragile achievement that needs constantly to be shaped up and depended from besiegers and out'.²

Here, there are four stages of the evolution/development of the human society, and these are- barbarians, cultural, civilizational and multicultural. In first stage the language is not systematized in terms of grammar and basic stock of words. Language is taken only in terms of sign, symbols, and phonetics. The same

¹ Bhargava, Rajeev, "Introducing Multiculturalism" in *Multiculturalism, Liberalism and Democracy*, (ed.) Rajeev Bhargava, Amiya Kumar Bagchi, R. Sudarshan, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1999, p.1.

² Taylor, C., "The Politics of Recognition", in *Multiculturalism*, (ed.) A. Guttman, Princeton University Press, 1994, p.72.

language develops in the form of culture comprising of values, tradition of knowledge, architecture, religion, philosophy etc. When these religion, philosophy, etc get institutionalized it becomes civilizational aspects. When cultural embeddedness of humanity get due recognitions in the civilizational institutions of the society it becomes multiculturalism. Kimball argues that, there may be occasions when there may be conflict between cultural people and barbarians. This generally happens when modernization of the society takes place. But this would be overcome with multicultural approach.

A particular emphasis within multiculturalism is placed on the role and significance of culture. In a broader sense culture has been described as the way of life of people. The role of culture, from the multiculturalist's perspective, is that it shapes the values, norms and assumptions through which individual identity is formed and the external world becomes meaningful. A pride in one's culture, and especially a public acknowledgment, even celebration, of one's cultural identity, thus gives people a sense of social and historical rootedness.³

Since there is plurality of cultures and each culture is geographically constrained and people from one culture move to another culture where the other culture is prevalent, there is bound to be a conflict, then in such a trivial situation how multicultural discourse is able to address such conflicting situations and try to resolve it.

This question can best be answered in the Gadamer's term of 'fusion of horizons'. His contribution lies on the one hand to create a horizon of culture in terms of history (effective-history), language and geography and on the other hand with the help of the hermeneutic discourse he moves towards the fusion of cultural horizon and thereby helping the growth of multiculturalism.

³ Heywood, Andrew, *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2007, p.316.

The main aspect of Gadamer's theory of culture is the passion for the other and through his concept of 'fusion of horizons' has tried to show that no one meaning or culture is to be considered as absolute. He through his concept tries to provide the space where the voice of the other is heard and a strong pluralistic perspective is upheld. The 'fusion of horizons' helps us to accept the other in full recognition and respect. That is what lies at the root of multiculturalism.

Now the issue of plurality seems little bit problematic. In India particularly accepting the plurality of cultures has been the basic ethos of the society. And it was on this general ethos that India has been regarded as democratic, pluralistic and liberal society. These features would be conducive to multiculturalism. In West, plurality leads to fragmentation but in India in spite of plurality, it does not lead to fragmentation and refers to collectivity. So, there are two different views regarding the concept of plurality between India and the Western countries. And hence there is need to focus in this problematic notion of plurality.

The initial characteristic of Indian society is that it is diverse, liberal, democratic and pluralistic in regulating and reconstructing the systems of Indian philosophy. The oldest of the Indian texts, the *Rigveda*, gives the key to understand the concept of plurality. *Ekam sat viprāh bahudhā vadanti* has been the fundamental idea of philosophizing in India. This short and simple sentence is profound in its implications. *Sat* means 'reality' which is one but wise men talk of it differently. The Reality admits of alternative approaches in terms of thought constructions and linguistic expressions. It is pluralistic in its expression.

The pluralistic notion of Indian society is manifested in various ethnic identities, community structure, linguistic identities, different nationalities, languages and so on. Behind the plurality in Indian philosophy, there is an underlying unity and collectivity which rejects individualism. In all Indian schools of Indian philosophy, one thing is common – all schools propound their own

theory by criticizing the earlier school but do not repudiate their importance. So, in Indian system there lies a notion of collectivity and not fragmentation. In India there is a very healthy tradition of collectiveness. In all Indian schools of philosophy, one thing is common- all schools propound their own theory by criticizing the earlier school but do not repudiate their importance. In India we find collectiveness at the level of community whereas in the West, collectiveness is found only at the level of institutions.

Secularism, liberalism and communitarianism are three different approaches to view the plurality in multiculturalism. The term 'secularism' is to be understood from two perspectives. First, it implies the separation of state activities and religious affairs that is neither the state interferes in religious matters nor it permits religious interference in matters which are within the jurisdiction of the state. The state upholds no religion, pursues no religious goals, and religiously-defined goods have no place in the catalogue of ends it promotes. According to another view, secularism means giving equal respect and support to all religions. On one side secularism talks of the separation between the state and the church whereas in multiculturalism there is intervention of the state to provide equal rights to different cultures. But on the other hand secularism implies a sense of belonging and unity. It means creating social and religious respect among the people of the country and multiculturalism also every culture has been given due recognition and are treated equally.

In liberalism individual is given more importance than anything else whereas in multiculturalism we talk of collective rights. Then how the notion of liberalism can go along with that of multiculturalism?

Liberalism is an approach, and this approach is called liberal as according to it 'equal recognition of cultural groups must be compatible with requirements of

basic individual liberties and perhaps even with individual autonomy'⁴. In liberalism there is notion of plurality. By pluralism, liberals refer to the proliferation of opinions and beliefs that characterize a stable social order. Liberals do not see conformity and homogeneity in the way that people think; in fact, their efforts have been grown towards establishing a governing framework that harmonizes and minimizes conflicting views, but still allows those views to exist and flourish. For liberal philosophy, pluralism leads easily to toleration⁵.

'It is an individualism that is embedded in a community of other individuals who are all equally autonomous and beholden to the consideration of the interests of others. Kant insures that there is no contradiction between individual liberty and social responsibility'⁶. Thus, in liberalism, there is acceptance of freedom and recognition of the other at the level of individuals only. But when it comes to the level of multiculturalism, individual's rights are elevated to the level of collective rights of the cultural community.

Community is a reality everywhere. Communitarians view multiculturalism as an appropriate way of protecting communities from the eroding effects of individual autonomy, and of affirming the value of community. Communitarians view people as 'embedded' in particular social roles and relationships. In the opinion of communitarians, individuals are the product of social practices. For them the interests of communities is higher than the interests of any other. Then here arises a problem that in such a situation where the individual choice is based? This problem can be answered in the communitarian view according to which a healthy community is that which maintains a balance between individual choice and protection of the communal way of life.

⁴Bhargava, Rajeev, "Introducing Multiculturalism", in *Multiculturalism, Liberalism and Democracy*, p.12.

⁵www.wikipedia.com, retrieved on 05.05.2010.

⁶<http://faculty.frostburg.edu/Phil/forum/Rita Works.htm>, retrieved on 05.06.2010.

Now after dealing with the notion of plurality and multiculturalism separately, there is need to look at the close relation between them through the words of Parekh⁷ – not all values that are important to us can be realized in one form of life. On the basis of this contention, he makes a case of pluralism of cultures. Multiculturalism looks upon other forms of life as possessing internal values. Each of us ought to be aware, hence, that other forms of life embody values which are important to us and valourised by us but cannot be realized in our own form of life or at least to the same degree. Values that are realizable by other forms of life are important not only to people who belong to that form of life but also to us who do not belong to that form of life. Thus, plurality of values is not a necessary evil to be somehow tolerated for the sake of the conflict free world but is something to be desired and nurtured. In fact, it is an existential necessity since more than one form of life must exist in order for values we consider worthwhile to be realized.

Multiculturalism asserts that many cultural communities that are present in the society must live as equals in the public domain. It speaks of equality of cultures and argues that, all cultural communities must be entitled to equal status in the public domain. This is fair treatment as an equal citizen is a matter of right. The public domain must be open to differences and it must create room for the expression of cultural differences.

Throughout my work, I have tried to find out that – what role not only culture but also ideologies and perspectives like secularism, liberalism and communitarianism have played in the emergence and development of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism was in the process of making for a long time perhaps a very long time. It evolved out of the multicultural society or society with cultural pluralism. The history of such a society goes back to several millennium but multiculturalism as some kind of social reality with pluralism as its

⁷ Kumar C. Bharath, Bhikhu Parekh: *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory* (Book Review) in *Journal of Indian Council of Philosophical Research*, (ed.) Mrinal Miri, Vol xxvi, 2009, p.168.

philosophical basis emerged around 1970's. Multiculturalism claims of repudiating the hierarchical status of culture and accepting the universalistic features of cultures. Multiculturalism also claims that the universalistic features of all cultures should be accepted. And the universalistic features are not only to be accepted but also to be appreciated. Along with repudiating the hierarchical status within culture and accepting the universalistic features of all cultures, multiculturalism proposes civil and democratic rights, property and settlement, marriage and inheritance and above all citizenship so that people belonging to each cultural community could be recognized as valid participants in the civil society. And when these rights are given then multiculturalism is established. From the pluralist perspective the good society cherishes the diversity of cultures. And there is scope of dialogue between different cultures. This is an ongoing process without having any finality. This lies at the root of multiculturalism.

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