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Recasting Karbala in the Genre of Urdu *Marsiya*¹

Syed Akbar Hyder

The genre of Urdu marsiya is a mode of religious, social, intellectual, and artistic discourse in South Asia. This paper reflects upon the imagery, themes, motifs, and culturally-nuanced language that recasts the story of Islam's hero, Hussain, for a South Asian audience.

Urdu *marasi*,² or elegies, have not only rendered to the Urdu language literary and poetic beauty, but also a medium of religious, cultural, and intellectual expression. Although some Urdu *marasi* deal with topics other than the seventh-century battle of Karbala, most of them have focused on the events that paved the path to this battle and the agonizing aftermath of this event. In this paper, I will discuss the salient characteristics of the genre of *marsiya* and the variations of the Karbala theme within this tradition according to changing social, cultural, and political contexts.

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¹I dedicate this paper to my maternal grandmother, my first teacher: *Jo ham pe guzri so guzri magar shab-e-hijraan; hamaare ashk teri aaqibat sanvar chale* (Faiz Ahmad Faiz). In working on this paper, I have incurred many debts in forms of constructive criticism and suggestions from Gail Minault, Sagaree Sengupta, Ali Asani, C.M. Naim, Jeruj Striedter, Valerie Turner, Manu Bhagavan, and Nilofur Sheikh. Annemarie Schimmel's scholarship remains indispensable and a source of inspiration for any such study. None of these people are, of course, responsible for the errors and omissions that might remain in this limited study.

²*Marasi*, in Urdu language, is plural for *marsiya*. For a discussion of the form and structure of *marsiya*, see C.M. Naim, "The Art of Urdu *Marsiya*," *Islamic Society and Culture*, eds. N.K. Wagle and M. Israel (New Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1983), pp.101-116.

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In order to comprehend Urdu *marasi*, it is essential to glance briefly at the historical and social milieu that nourished this genre. The tradition of *marsiya* has its roots in the pre-Islamic Arab and Persian worlds, where human sentiments and pathos were expressed in form of elegiac poetry.³ This tradition continued after the advent of Islam, with many companions of the Prophet Muhammad, such as Umar, arranging for elegies to be written about their deceased family members.⁴ In 680 C.E., on the bank of the river Euphrates, Hussain, a grandson of Muhammad, along with his seventy-one companions, was killed in a deserted place, Karbala, for refusing to pay allegiance to the Ummayyad ruler, Yazid. This event became a major theme for the *marasi* of the ensuing centuries. According to some traditional beliefs, the first *marasi* were recited by Hussain's sister, Zainab, and son, Zain-al-Abedin, in the aftermath of Hussain's martyrdom. There were, however, severe restrictions imposed on such mourning ceremonies since the Ummayyad rulers could not afford to foster empathy for the family of the Prophet.⁵

When Shi'ism⁶ became the official religion of Iran in the fifteenth century, Safavid rulers such as Shah Tahmasp, patronized poets who wrote about the tragedy of Karbala, and the genre of *marsiya*, according to Persian scholar Wheeler Thackston, "was

³Reynold A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), p.126.

⁴Shibli Nomani, *Mawazana-e-Anis o Dabir* (Allahbad: Narayan Lal Udan Kumar, 1987), pp.7-10.

⁵Mahmoud Ayoub, *Redemptive Suffering in Islam: A Study of the Devotional Aspects of Ashura in Twelver Shi'ism* (Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1978), pp.158-166.

⁶Islam has two major sects: Shi'is and Sunnis. The Shi'is believe that the leadership of the Islamic community should have passed down to the family of the Prophet instead of his companions. The Shi'is thus have an intense emotional relationship with the Prophet's immediate family through his daughter Fatima, and, therefore, this genre of poetry is more popular among the Shi'is. Shi'ism itself has several branches. Most Shi'is belong to the *Ithna-i ashari*, or the Twelver branch, and *marsiya* has been an essential part of the commemorative rituals of the Twelver Shi'is. For an excellent discussion of this genre in the context of contemporary Shi'i devotional rituals, see Vernon Schubel, *Religious Performance in Contemporary Islam: Shi'i Devotional Rituals in South Asia* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1993), pp.118-122.

particularly cultivated by the Safavids."⁷ The most well-known fifteenth-century Persian *marasiya* writer was Muhtasham Kashani (d. 1587), whose works consequently became a source of elegy emulation for Iranians as well as Indian poets of ensuing generations.⁸

Persian and Arabic languages and literatures had a momentous influence on Indo-Muslim culture in general and on the evolution of Urdu language and literature in particular. The Adil Shahi and Qutb Shahi dynasties of South India (Deccan), predominantly Twelver Shi'is in religious persuasion, patronized *Dakhni* (an early South Indian dialect of Urdu) *marasi*. Although Persian *marasi* of Muhtasham Kashani were still recited, the Adil Shahi and Qutb Shahi rulers felt the need to render the Karbala tragedy in the language of common Muslims. In the Adil Shahi and Qutb Shahi kingdom of Deccan, *marasi* flourished, especially under the patronage of Ali Adil Shah and Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah,⁹ *marasiya* writers themselves, and poets such as Ashraf Biyabani.¹⁰ Urdu *marasi* written during this period are still popular in South Indian villages. One such *marasiya* expresses the pathos of the moment when Imam Hussain's loved ones bid him farewell:

Farewell, O King of martyrs,
Farewell, O Ruler of both worlds,

.....

Mustafa [the Prophet] mourns for you in Paradise,
like Yaqub mourned in the aftermath of his separation
with Yusuf.¹¹

⁷Wheeler Thackston, *A Millennium of Classical Persian Poetry* (Bethesda: Iranbooks, 1994), p.79.

⁸Zehra Eqbal Namdar, "Elegy in the Qajar Period," *Ta'ziyeh: Ritual and Drama in Iran*, ed. Peter Chelkowski (New York: New York University Press, 1979), pp.193-208. An account of the royal patronage for *marasiya* writing can also be found in Edward Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, Vol. 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953).

⁹Sayadah Jafar, *Kulliyat-i Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah* (New Delhi: Tarraqi-yi Urdu Bureau, 1985), pp.746-756.

¹⁰H.K. Sherwani & P.M. Joshi, *History of Medieval Deccan (1295-1724)* Vol. 2 (Hyderabad: The Government of Andhra Pradesh, 1974), pp.21, 28.

¹¹Mir Saadat Ali Rizvi, *Adil Shahi Marsiye* (Hyderabad: Abulkalam Azad Oriental Research Institute, 1959), p.103.

The Yaqub-Yusuf motif,¹² which by no means is restricted to *marsiya*, recurs over and over in this genre since the son of Imam Hussain, Ali Akbar, was supposedly as handsome as the Qu'ranic Yusuf, and since the Imam's distress after the martyrdom of his son was analogous to Yaqub's sorrow after his son parted from him. The North Indian *marsiya* writers used similar motifs and metaphors when the centre of Urdu literature moved to the North after the kingdoms of the Deccan were annexed by the Mughals.

As Mughal power began to wane in the aftermath of the rule of Aurangzeb (1706), other autonomous Muslim powers sprung up in India. The Navabs of Avadh, Twelver Shi'is and patrons of Urdu literature and poetry, provided auspices for the sublimation of the *marsiya* genre in North India.

Contrary to popular perceptions, Urdu *marasi* are not confined to the gatherings of Muharram¹³ but are recited throughout the year in ceremonies preceding weddings¹⁴ and death anniversaries. However, in the kingdom of Avadh, during the months of Muharram and Safar, *marasi* were recited on a daily basis in the *majalis* (gatherings to commemorate the tragedy of Karbala) held twice a day in *imambareh* (places of gathering for the *majalis*). The *adab* (etiquette) of these *majalis* was such that the audiences would sit facing the *taziyah* (models of the shrines of the martyrs of Karbala), and listen to the narration of the popularly

¹²Yusuf, according to the Qu'ran, was a beautiful prophet whose brothers threw him in a well out of jealousy of his beauty and of the intense love Yaqub, Yusuf's father, had for Yusuf. Yusuf was later discovered and ultimately ended up in the court of Egypt where the queen, Zulaikha, fell in love with him. Meanwhile, Yaqub lost his sight by incessantly crying for his son. For a more detailed analysis of this motif in various genres, see Annemarie Schimmel, *A Two-Colored Brocade: The Imagery of Persian Poetry* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), pp.64-67.

¹³Muharram and Safar, the first two months of the Islamic lunar calendar, are considered by the Shi'is as the months of mourning. Hussain was martyred on the tenth day of Muharram, *Ashura*; many of Hussain's relatives were martyred the following month, Safar, while in Ummayyad captivity. Shi'is mourn for these members of the Prophet's family during these months.

¹⁴Many Twelver Shi'is believe that all happy occasions must begin with the remembrance of the martyrdom of Imam Hussain. This is the reason that the first ceremony of a traditional Shi'i wedding is a *majlis*, in which it is customary for *marasi*, especially with the theme of Qasim's doomed wedding, to be recited.

perceived events of Karbala in Persian; they would then hear the Urdu *marasiya* written for that particular day. The recitation of *marasi* was also considered an art, and the writers were not always considered the best orators to generate pathos among the audiences. The Navabs thus invited effective reciters (*marasiya khwan*) who had a considerable following themselves.¹⁵ After the recitation of *marasi*, the family of the Prophet was praised and the enemies of this family rebuked. The *majlis* would close with self-flagellation.¹⁶ Keeping this historical and cultural background of Urdu *marasiya* tradition in mind, it is apposite to delve into the salient characteristics of this genre.

The main purpose of Urdu *marasi* is to praise the heroes of Islam, who fought on the side of Imam Hussain in Karbala, and to induce empathy for the family of Ali and Fatima. The metaphors utilized in Avadh, Delhi, and the surrounding vicinity to glorify the accomplishments of early Islamic heroes in Urdu *marasi* were similar to the metaphors and similes used in *qasaid*, or odes, written in praise of Indian rulers. Mirza Ghalib (1797-1869) described the "King of Martyrs," Imam Hussain, by using metaphors, similar to the ones he used in his odes:

The glory and jewel of faith, Hussain Ibn-e Ali,
who shall be called the candle of the gathering of
grandeur.

.....
The fountain of paradise [*Salsabil*] is in the path of those,
who call him the thirsty martyr of Karbala.

.....
It is a strange occurrence that an enemy of Islam,
battles with Ali and is considered only to be mistaken.
After Ali there is Hassan, and after Hassan there is
Hussain,

How can I exonerate any person who has mistreated
them.¹⁷

Ghalib, in his *marasi*, not only praised the family of Ali, but expressed loyalty to the family of Muhammad by rebuking their

¹⁵S.A.A. Rizvi, *A Socio-Intellectual History of the Isna'Ashri Shi'is in India* Vol. 2 (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1986), p.359.

¹⁶Akbar Hyder Kashmiri, *Avadh mein Urdu Marsiye ka Irtiqā* (Lucknow: Nizami Press, 1981), p.159.

¹⁷Mirza Ghalib, *Diwan-i Ghalib Urdu*, ed. Imtiaz Arshi (Aligarh: Anjuman Taraqi-e-Urdu Hind, 1958), pp.285-286.

opponents. It is difficult for Ghalib to comprehend how the enemies of the Prophet's family can be exonerated by Muslims. Ghalib's criticism could have been aimed at the belief of many Muslims that the judgment of the companions of the Prophet should be left to Allah. Ghalib considered Imam Hussain to be the ideal king; the precepts of loyalty demanded aversion toward any enemy of the king.

While Ghalib used regal imagery to underscore the virtues of Imam Hussain, Mirza Dabir (1803-1875) described the Imam as also being the paragon of a true lover. Dabir used ascetic and mystical imagery, commonly implemented in Urdu and Persian poetry, to describe Imam Hussain. Imam Hussain is depicted as the ideal lover due to his penchant for suffering in order to attain Allah:

For the sake of thirst, he [Hussain] fasted in youth,
 For the sake of thirst, he turned away from Zehra's
 [Fatima's] milk,
 For the sake of thirst, he never accepted the Euphrates'
 favor,
 For the sake of thirst, he abnegated water from the Seventh
 of Muharram.¹⁸
 The world remembers the story of his slaying,
 and his utterance of 'thirst, thirst' while biting the
 tongue.¹⁹

Dabir interpreted the Imam's thirst as if it were a means to unite the Imam with Allah. It was as though Allah tested his beloved by depriving him of water in the sweltering desert of Karbala. But Imam Hussain was not the only one put to the test of Allah; each and every person on the side of the Imam—from the six month old child, Ali Asghar, to the seventy-one-year-old companion of the Prophet Muhammad, Habib Ibn-e Mazahir— was subjected to the agony of thirst. The mystical imagery of forbearance was utilized by Dabir to make his view of the suffering side of the Imam more fathomable to an audience attuned to mystical poetry.

¹⁸According to popular Shi'i perceptions, Hussain and his companions were deprived of water from the seventh day of Muharram. Mirza Dabir implies in this stanza that the Imam purposely remained thirsty and fought in the way of Truth to show his beloved, Allah, that he would go to any extent to safeguard Islam. Many *marsiya* writers have reflected upon the last moments of the Imam in mystical language.

¹⁹Zahir Fatchuri, *Muntakhab Marasi-yi Dabir* (Lahore: Majlis Taraqi-yi Adab, 1980), p.55.

The *marasi* of Mir Taqi Mir (1722-1810) and Muhammad Rafi Sauda (1713-1780) are similar to those of Ghalib and Dabir in that they perform their panegyric function for the martyrs of Karbala; but these poets also wrote *marasi* in which the narration of the Karbala tragedy was saturated with cultural and ceremonial imagery of North India. The North Indian Muslim cultural terminology used by Mir and Sauda includes *sehra*—the veil of flowers that the groom and the bride wear on their wedding day in India, *arsi mushaf*—the moment when the bride and the groom cast first glances at each other through the mirror placed on the Quran between them, and *naig*—the demand of the groom's sister for money before allowing her brother to approach his bride.²⁰

It was the wedding of Imam Hussain's daughter, Fatima Kubra, and Imam Hassan's son, Qasim, moments before the battle of Karbala, that spawned the incorporation of this event into the narratives of Karbala, giving the tragedy characteristics of an ill-fated romance.²¹ Sauda embellished his *marasi* by characterizing the wedding of Qasim in terms of the weddings of Delhi and Avadh:

Friends, listen to the affliction wrought by the oppressive
celestial sphere,²²
it has planned a strange wedding for the son of Hassan.
In such a way has it joined the bride and the groom,
that the [inauspicious] thread of the shrouds has been tied
to the [auspicious] *lagan*.

.....
How should I describe the *naubat* played at this
wedding,

²⁰See, for example, Mir Taqi Mir, *Kulliyat-i Mir*, Vol. 2 (Allahbad: Ram Narang Lal Beni Madhu, 1972), p.336.

²¹There is some debate within the Shi'i community regarding this wedding. This wedding supposedly took place on the night before the battle of Karbala. Many Shi'is totally refute this tradition. In South Asia, however, the majority of Shi'i community is quite sensitive to this tradition and few religious scholars dare to publicly question it.

²²The oppressive, grinding celestial sphere is another pervasive motif that remains common in Persian and Urdu poetry as a metaphor for fate. Firdawsi has also used this motif in his *Shahnama*. See Wheeler Thackston, *A Millennium of Classical Persian Poetry* (Bethesda, Iranbooks, 1994), p.6; Annemarie Schimmel believes that this motif "is used time and again by poets to suggest that life crushes everything mercilessly." Annemarie Schimmel, *A Two-Colored Brocade: The Imagery of Persian Poetry* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), p. 413.

It was the perpetual self-flagellation, day and night,
of the men and women of this household.
Instead of lighting, the house has been set on fire.

.....
The strange color-play of the wedding,
had left nothing but blotches of blood on the clothes.
The Bride's gift for *sachaq* was the severed head of the
groom,

.....
Say, what country has the tradition of such a *sachaq*?²³

Sauda's utilization of *lagan* (the brazen or copper pan used for cooking sweet rice before weddings), *naubat* (the music played outside the house during cheerful ceremonies), lighting of the houses, traditional color-play prior to the wedding, and the ceremony of *sachaq* (the ceremony a few days before the wedding when the groom's family brings gifts, including the wedding garments, for the bride),²⁴ give the seventh century wedding of Karbala a North Indian cultural touch.

Sauda also incorporated the beliefs and superstitions prevalent in his days:

The bride's mother would lament and say:
'a sorrow heavier than my daughter's widowhood,
are the remarks of our acquaintances,
that the feet of the bride were inauspicious for the
groom...
The view of the bride's face set his [the groom's] destiny
for heaven...
How can I look in the eyes of the groom's mother?
When this wedding has taken the light of her eyes.'²⁵

Sauda discussed the mother of Qasim's bride as if she were an Indian woman, overpowered by the pangs of remorse, and concerned with the reputation of her family due to the doomed wedding of her daughter and the embarrassment of bearing the culpability of her son-in-law's death. This kind of imagery

²³Mirza Rafi Sauda, *Intikhab Marasi-i Mirza Sauda* (Allahbad: Ram Narang Lal Beni Madhu, 1962), p.39.

²⁴Muhammad Umar, *Hindustani Tahzib ka Musalmanon par Asar* (New Delhi: Publication Division of the Ministry of Information, 1975), pp.135-156.

²⁵Sauda, op. cit., p.41.

appealed to the thousands of *marsiya* listeners and readers in India who understood the tragedy of Karbala by placing themselves in the context of this story. For many Indians, the death of a groom just moments after his wedding conjured up images of the widespread stigma associated with an "inauspicious" bride, as it was common in that context to cast the blame for a groom's misfortune on his bride.

In addition to the wedding of Karbala, other parts of the Karbala tragedy were painted with Indian colors. Mir Anis' (1802-1874) description of the women of the Prophet's household embarking on the journey to Karbala and the protocol that was followed was quite similar to the protocol followed by the *begmat* (ladies) of Lucknow:

Even if there is a young boy on the roof,
 he must get down,
 If he is coming this way, he must stop.
 No stranger should travel on this road,
 For God has made her [Zainab, sister of Hussain]
 nobler than Mary,
 Even the male angels have closed their eyes.²⁶

This part of Anis' *marsiya* echoes the rigidity with which *pardah* (veiling) was observed in nineteenth-century Avadh.

The *marasi* of Anis were also heavily laced with *darbar* imagery, which registered in the mind of the readers and listeners the manner in which Imam Hussain and his companions must have eagerly awaited their martyrdom:

On the right side of the camp were the relatives of the
 Imam,
 their glowing faces brightened the dark desert of Karbala.

.....
 Like beads in a rosary, they were all united.

.....
 They anxiously waited for their death.

.....
 They would desire neither food nor water,
 their aim was to offer their heads to Allah.
 The young boys pleaded to be the first martyrs,
 and the older ones left this decision up to the Imam.
 In the middle of this assembly was the King of the world,

²⁶Saleha Abid Hussain, "*Kalam e Anis mein Hindustani Tahzib*," *Urdu aur Mushtarakah Hindostani Tahzib*, ed. Kamil Qureshi (Delhi: Urdu Academy, 1987), p.181.

like the sun amidst the stars.²⁷

The foregoing verses create images similar to those associated with the Mughal *durbars*, or the Navabs of Avadh sitting in the *Diwan-e-Khas* (hall of the private audience) while being praised by their loyal friends and advisers.

In the *marasi* of Mir Ishq (d. before 1890), the farewell of Imam Hussain to his friends and family in Medina is also similar to that of a North Indian king before he commenced on a course of war: crowds gathering to bid farewell, subjects praying for the master's health, and so on.²⁸ The farewell of Imam Hussain's son Ali Akbar, who was eighteen years old during the battle of Karbala and allegedly bore a striking resemblance to his great grandfather, the Prophet Muhammad, is similar to the farewell any beloved son of Avadh would receive before he went to war: the family comes to bid him farewell and prays for his well-being; sisters express their aspirations for his wedding; and mothers give *sadqa* (alms that are supposed to remove any curse that might afflict a person) to the poor.

The *marasi* of Mir Anis reflect the popular prayers of women of Lucknow. When an unmarried son departs for the battlefield, his mother expresses her desire to see his *sehra*; when a brother leaves the house, his sister prays that the brother's wife always has sandal-wood powder in her hair and children in her lap; and when a slave joins his master in the war, the slave's wife prays for her husband's death in exchange for his master's life. The ideals of brother-sister and mother-son love, fertility of a woman, and loyalty to the king, were aspirations of the Muslim culture of North India and were channeled through literary genres like the *marsiya*.

Images associated with the 1857 uprising against British rule were also incorporated into *marasi*. As Intezar Hussain states in his study of Mir Anis' poetry, Urdu *marasi* were shaped by the political situation of their day. The tumultuous events that afflicted Avadh in the mid-nineteenth century were juxtaposed with the tragedy of Karbala, generating emotional catharsis as well as consoling North Indian Muslims by associating their plight with the travails of Imam Hussain.

²⁷Mir Anis, *Anis ke Marsiye*, ed. Saleha Abid Hussain (New Delhi: Taraqi Urdu Bureau, 1990), pp.220-223.

²⁸Jafar Raza, *Dabistan-i Ishq ki Marsiya goi* (Allahbad: National Kitab Ghar, 1973), pp.205-208.

Marasi would also induce catharsis when families in Avadh lost their beloved members. *Marsiya* writers would narrate the family's agony by comparing it to various events of Karbala. When the Navab of Patna, Sayid Ahmad Hussain Khan, lost his sixteen-year old son to smallpox, Mir Anis was asked to write a *marasiya* in honor of the youth. The *marasiya* written by Anis opened with a prayer in which the poet asked Allah to spare parents the grief of their children:

Oh God, give no parent the sorrow of their child.
 May no inauspicious being be the victim of the scar of
 their son,
 May this wealth, even of the enemy, be preserved,
 and may any agony, but this, afflict your people.²⁹

The poet moves on to discuss the virtues of Ahmad Navab, the son of the Navab of Patna:

Alas! Ahmad Navab was lively and young,
 he did not get to enjoy the bliss of the garden of youth.
 Fate turned away from him in the spring of his life,
 like a bubble, he vanished from this world.³⁰

This grief, however, is insignificant compared to that of Imam Hussain. Anis consoles the mother of Ahmad Navab by reminding her that the women of Karbala had to endure similar grief:

You [mother of Ahmad Navab] are a devotee of the
 children of the Prophet,
 Every year You listen to the narration of their martyrdom,
 It is necessary for you to think about the agony of Shaher
 Bano,
 She had lost Akbar in his youth.

.....
 Think about the mother of Qasim,
 may no mother in this world see such a wedding,
 it is a pity that he was a groom in the evening,
 but when the morning came, he was martyred.
 The mother of Qasim saw her son's body wounded by
 swords,
 and she saw his bride of one night lamenting for her
 groom.
 Widowhood is a calamity in this world,

²⁹Mir Anis, *Dabistan-e Anis Rawlpindi ka Yadgar Majla-e Anis* (Lahore: Nasim Printing Press, 1974), p. 343.

³⁰Anis, *Dabistan-e Anis Rawlpindi ka Yadgar Majla-e Anis*, p. 344.

but the wife of Qasim bore this grief with forbearance.
 She would mourn, yet thank God
 for any fate that was bestowed upon her.³¹

Anis is asking Ahmad Navab's mother to emulate the mothers of Ali Akbar and Qasim. No grief, according to the poet, can equal the suffering of the family of Imam Hussain.

Marsiya writing was not confined to Muslims. Several Hindu *marsiya* writers wished that Imam Hussain had come to India instead of going to Karbala. They used imagery of the Indian landscape, such as the river Ganga, to provide evidence of Indian hospitality, as opposed to the "betrayal of the Euphrates."³² If Imam Hussain had come to India, these *marsiya* writers asserted, he would have been welcomed by the Ganga and not subjected to the afflictions of the Euphrates. The river Ganga, in several Urdu *marasi*, was given a benevolent mien of a noble host.³³

By recasting the events of Karbala in local imagery, *marsiya* writers were also able to infuse their poetry with intellectual concerns, such as the ideal manner in which a king should rule. Mirza Dabir, in his *marsiya* which was recited in the palace of Navab Ghazi Uddin Hyder, warned the ruler of Avadh to avoid the snare of injustice:

When the day of judgment will arrive,
 tyrant kings will be the first ones to be called (by Allah),
 they will be asked about fairness and justice.³⁴

Ghaziuddin Hyder, according to some accounts, was so moved by these didactic verses, which have the resonance of the "Mirror for

³¹Ibid., pp. 347-349.

³²According to a weak tradition, the river Euphrates was the property of Fatima, the mother of Imam Hussain. Imam Hussain's inability to get water from this river due to the Ummayyad blockade was thus considered a betrayal of this river.

³³Mujawar Hussain Rizvi, "*Urdu Marsiye ke ghayr Muslim Shuara*" in *Urdu Marsiya*, ed. Sharab Radalvi (Delhi: Urdu Academy, 1991), p. 127. Rizvi believes that such desires were buttressed by various traditions that stated Imam Hussain's willingness to migrate to India moments before the battle. The forces of the Ummayyads, according to this tradition, did not allow the Imam to take this step.

³⁴Kashmiri, *Avadh Mein Urdu Marsiye ka Irtiqa*, p.547.

Princes" tradition,³⁵ that he instructed his minister to heed Dabir's advice. The Indianized story of Karbala thus had a moral for the Indian rulers: follow the virtuous, selfless path of Imam Hussain and avoid the quagmire into which the family of Yazid sunk.

If the rulers and their subjects did not see their present lifestyles compatible with the ideals of Islam, there was a message of hope articulated through Urdu *marasi*. The embodiment of hope was Hur, a general in Yazid's army, who realized the iniquitous aspects of Yazid's rule and underwent a remarkable transformation within one night. Hur joined Imam Hussain in his battle against the forces of Yazid, and the Imam bestowed upon him the status of the "diamond in the crown of heaven."³⁶

In the twentieth century, the number of Muslim socio-religious reformers who capitalized on the Indianized version of Karbala to channel their concerns for the society increased. Many twentieth century Urdu *marasi* were given a solid intellectual dimension by the incorporation of issues—the Khilafat movement, India's independence, and the plight of the Indian Muslims, and so on—into the frame story of Karbala. Among the modern *marsiya* writers who have appropriated the events surrounding Karbala as the underpinnings of their socio-religious reform ideology are Josh Malihabadi and Vahid Akhtar.

Josh Malihabadi (1898-1982), renowned as "*Shair-i inqilab*," or the Poet of revolution, used the medium of *marsiya* as a means to propagate the view that Karbala is not a pathos-laden event of a bygone era, but a prototype for contemporary revolutionary struggles. Josh's writings during the late 1930's and the early 1940's, when nationalist feelings were running high in South Asia, had a momentous impact upon his generation. Josh attempted to galvanize the youth of his day by intertwining their contemporary struggle of liberation from colonization with Hussain's battle:

O Josh, call out to the Prince of Karbala [Hussain],
cast a glance at this twentieth century,
look at this tumult, chaos, and the earthquake.
At this moment there are numerous Yazids, and
yesterday there was only one.

³⁵This is a literary genre that was popular in Iran and India, through which intellectuals expressed their views of ideal governments and hoped that their patrons (usually the rulers) heeded the advice. See Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975), p.304.

³⁶Anis, op. cit., p.180.

From village to village might has assumed the role of
truth,
Once again, Human feet are in chains.³⁷

By interlacing his *marasi* with metaphors that had nuances of a revolutionary struggle and depicting the 'anti-Muslim' forces as being on a par with the tyranny of Muawiya and Yazid, Josh gave the impression that the state of the Muslim community was imminently threatened by a massive, ideologically-based assault upon everything Islam valued. As far as most Muslims are concerned, Yazid's rule had been the 'Other' of the true Islamic state for centuries. To identify one's enemy in terms of Yazid was the ultimate demonization that conjured up the most horrific images of opponents, whether the opponents were the British colonizers and their indigenous collaborators, or the corrupt, hypocritical politicians who were about to replace the British colonizers.

Josh is a good example of the colonized intellectual who uses nostalgic paradigms to enable his audience to conceptualize the potential for an ideal society. His *marasi* fit into the Fanonian category of "literature of combat." As Frantz Fanon has pointed out, the strategies of resistance used by intellectuals like Josh were common in several other colonized cultures:

There is a tendency to bring conflicts up to date and to modernize the kinds of struggle which the stories evoke, together with the names of heroes and types of weapons. The method of allusion is more and more widely used. The formula 'This all happened long ago' is substituted with that of 'What we are going to speak of happened somewhere else, but it might well have happened here today, and it might happen tomorrow.'³⁸

Josh, through his *marasi*, reinterprets Karbala so that it corresponds to his ideals of the future. By explaining contemporary issues through references to past Islamic heroes, Josh enabled his audience to conceptualize the potential for a pure Islamic society. The extensive use of the images of the family of the Prophet was destined to have a special resonance with readers who had been

³⁷Zamir Akhtar Naqvi, *Josh Malihabadi Ke Marsiyeh* (Karachi: Idara-yi Faiz-i Adab, 1980), p. 121.

³⁸Frantz Fanon, "National Culture," in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, eds. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin (London & New York: Routledge, 1995), p.155.

reared to regard this household as the apotheosis of virtue. The nobility of thought and action of the heroes of Karbala is poetically pitched at a level which makes striving for the characteristics of these early Islamic heroes a contemporary necessity.

Vahid Akhtar, Professor of Philosophy at Aligarh Muslim University, has been crucial in keeping the tradition of *marsiya* dynamic in present-day South Asia. His *marasi* rely on the images, metaphors, and nuances inherited from nineteenth century masters like Anis and Dabir, and on the values invested in this genre by socio-religious reformers like Josh. On the back cover of his recently-published *marsiya* anthology, for example, is the famous Arabic saying: "Every place is Karbala; every day is *Ashura*." By positing a similarity between Hussain's historic battle and the present day struggle of human kind against renewed forms of Yazidian oppression, Akhtar deflects the interpretation of the martyrs of Karbala as mere insignia of Islamic history; they are instead posed as the sinews for the revival of an ideal Islamic state of being.³⁹

The genre of Urdu *marsiya* is a fitting example of a spiritually-exalted literary enterprise imported into the subcontinent from the Arab and Persian world which evolved in conjunction with 'Indian culture'. *Marasi* remain important socio-religious texts, permeated by emotional undercurrents, in the cultural repertoire of South Asia. Through these texts, the events surrounding the battle of Karbala were emplotted in a myriad of ways congruent with changing political and cultural milieus. Urdu *marasi* thus furnish a literary landscape which reflects the underlying social, religious, and intellectual bonds of South Asian cultures.

³⁹Vahid Akhtar, *Karbala ta Karbala* (Aligarh: Vahid Akhtar, 1991), p.27.

GENDER IDEOLOGIES AND PRACTICES AMONG SOUTH INDIAN IMMIGRANTS IN PITTSBURGH

Aparna Rayaprol

This paper is based on doctoral dissertation research which involved about three years of participant observation at the Sri Venkateswara temple in Pittsburgh; the author also conducted interviews with South Indian women and men who frequented this temple. In order to gain an understanding of the gender ideologies and practices of the members of this temple community, the author goes beyond the immigrants' activities at the temple and probes their attitudes toward various aspects of domestic life.¹

Immigration and the subsequent reconstruction of communities has often been described in terms of "transplantation," evoking images of people who neatly pack their roots and "transplant" them later in an orderly manner in the new society.² Such a representation glosses over the fact that immigration constitutes an epistemological crisis of great magnitude, involving changes in legal and political status, ruptures in families, struggles for economic mobility, and the tensions between older social and cultural values and the norms and values of the new society. The renegotiation of gender relations in the community is a significant

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²See John Y. Fenton, *Transplanting Religious Traditions: Asian Indians in America* (New York: Praeger, 1988).

aspect of the epistemological crisis that accompany the complex process of immigration. In this paper, I describe and analyze the varied gender ideologies that co-exist among South Indian immigrants in Pittsburgh and relate those ideologies to actual behavior patterns. Among the South Indian immigrants in Pittsburgh, there is no visible trend either toward complete egalitarianism or toward the perpetuation of traditional patriarchy.³ An understanding of the gender ideologies and the gaps between ideology and practice will help clarify the direction of changes in gender dynamics among the immigrants in my study.

Gendered behavior among the immigrants in my study is rooted in a gender ideology that they have brought with them to the new society. When the patriarchal gender ideology predominant in Indian social life has been internalized by the immigrants, there is a tendency to conform to the norms that are associated with that ideology. Even though many of the Indian immigrant women have made inroads into male-dominated occupations, their primary identification is with their own families and their surrogate extended families. The renegotiation of gender relations in the community is a significant aspect of the epistemological ruptures that accompanied the complex process of immigration. Traditional gender roles and relations have been perpetuated in some cultural practices, but transformed in others, often resulting in greater egalitarianism among the South Indian immigrants.

The tendency among the Indian immigrants in my study, toward what I characterize as egalitarianism, must be understood within a cultural context that is specific to their situation. I have come to the conclusion that a number of women in Pittsburgh's South Indian community experience greater freedom in comparison to their lives back home or with the lives of their

³This paper is based on my doctoral dissertation research which involved about three years of participant observation at the Sri Venkateswara temple in Pittsburgh, and on interviews with South Indian women and men who frequented this temple. I interviewed 40 people, including 15 couples and 10 other women. The respondents were between 23-55 years of age and have lived in Pittsburgh between two and thirty years. All of them had children, between the ages of one and 28. Almost all the women were in professional or other jobs outside the home, some students and a few homemakers, with most of them having at least a bachelor's degree. All the men had at least a masters or a professional degree and were employed in and around Pittsburgh. In order to gain an understanding of the gender ideologies and practices of this community, I go beyond the immigrants' activities at the temple and probe their attitudes toward various aspects of domestic life.

mothers. These women are educated, economically secure, fairly autonomous in decision-making, religious, and family-oriented. They not only confound the "Third World" stereotype constructed by some western feminists, but they are also participants in transforming certain patriarchal practices in their families and communities.⁴ The lived experiences of these women and the level of gender consciousness among them may not appear to be adequately feminist (as the term is understood in the West). But I contend that rather than applying gender as a universal construct, women's experiences must be understood in terms of the concrete historical and political practices within which they are embedded. The assumption that women are a coherent group with a homogeneity of interests, problems and desires, regardless of differences in class, ethnic and racial origins, or religion, implies the notion that gender as a category can be applied universally.⁵ Recently, some feminists have been calling for greater specificity in studies of gender, emphasizing that gender is a multi-faceted category open to change and variation.⁶ Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing suggests that particular forms of "female marginality" must be examined "in relation to the conditions of women's lives — as immigrants, minorities, wealthy, poor, black, white, sex workers, maids, or academics."⁷

In this context, Donna Gabaccia's point that immigrant women in most cultures generally identify with their families and communities, and do not think of themselves primarily as

⁴In a valuable critique of feminist scholarship, Chandra Mohanty points out that much of western feminist writings construct the "Third World" woman as "ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, religious, domesticated, family-oriented, victimized, etc." (See Chandra Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," *Feminist Review* 30 (Autumn 1988): 65.) The Western woman, on the other hand, is represented as educated, modern and having the freedom to make their own decisions. Mohanty emphasizes the need to move away from such monolithic analytic constructs of the "Third World" woman.

⁵This notion of universality is expressed, for example, in book titles such as *Sisterhood is Global*. See Robin Morgan, ed. *Sisterhood is Global: the International Women's Movement Anthology* (Garden City: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1984).

⁶Faye Ginsburg and Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing (eds.) *Uncertain Terms: Negotiating Gender in American Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1990).

⁷Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *In the Realm of the Diamond Queen* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), p.18.

individuals, is significant.⁸ There is a tendency on the part of some Western feminist scholars to assume that once women identify with their families they are left with little or no power. Gabaccia warns that Western feminists' tendency to dismiss massive evidence of immigrant women's identification with their families as "false consciousness" ignores the roots of feminist consciousness in other societies. Although Hindu immigrant women in the late 20th century are not confined to the domestic sphere, as were many Jewish immigrant women in the early 20th century in the United States, they too identify with their families and define themselves according to traditional value systems into which they were socialized prior to immigration.

However, this does not necessarily mean that immigrant women are continuing to lead an existence that keeps them within the clutches of traditional patriarchy. Sydney Stahl Weinberg notes that early Jewish immigrant women "sought and found meaning for their lives within the framework of their own system of values and culture."⁹ Similarly, the women in my study find empowerment within the very traditional structures of patriarchy which they subtly change in the immigrant context. I am not forwarding a proposition that there is some kind of a "feminist movement" in the South Indian community. I am merely attempting to gain some understanding of the gender consciousness of these immigrants through their own reflections on life in the U.S. and the comparisons they make with life back in India. When immigrants begin to live in the new society and imbibe that society's values and norms through acculturation, the dominant ideology carried from their countries of origin undergoes a transformation. In this paper, using an analytical framework borrowed from Arlie Hochschild, I map out the varied gender ideologies and practices among the South Indian immigrants in my study and examine the gaps between the ideologies expressed and the actual practices.¹⁰

⁸Donna Gabaccia, "Immigrant Women: Nowhere at Home?," *Journal of American Ethnic History* (Summer 1991): 61-88.

⁹Sydney Stahl Weinberg, *The World of Our Mothers: The Lives of Jewish Immigrant Women*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), p.xx.

¹⁰Arlie Hochschild with Anne Machung, *The Second Shift* (New York: Avon Books, 1989).

Typology of Gender Ideologies and Practices

In order to examine gender ideologies of the Hindu immigrants in my study and analyze how their gender strategies and practices are often at variance with their ideologies, I have adapted the conceptual framework used by Arlie Hochschild in *The Second Shift*.¹¹ The ways in which people reconcile their gender ideology with their actual behavior is what Hochschild calls a “gender strategy.”

A gender strategy is a plan of action through which a person tries to solve problems at hand, given the cultural notions of gender at play. To pursue a gender strategy, a man draws on beliefs about manhood and womanhood, beliefs that are forged in early childhood and thus anchored to deep emotions. He makes a connection between how he thinks about his manhood, what he feels about it, and what he does. It is the same way for a woman.¹²

Hochschild divides the ideologies of marital roles into “traditional,” “transitional,” and “egalitarian.” A woman with a “traditional” ideology is described as someone who identifies more with her home than her work place; and a man with a similar ideology would be one whose primary identification is with his work rather than with his home and family. Such a woman wants less power than her husband and is willing to make him feel that he is the boss. A person with an “egalitarian” ideology is one who identifies with the same spheres as his or her spouse and wants equal power in the marriage. A person with a “transitional” ideology seeks a blending of the two ideologies and identifies with both the public as well as the domestic spheres. The “transitional” woman, unlike the “traditional” woman, identifies with her role in the workplace as well as at home. But, unlike the “egalitarian” woman, she expects her husband to focus on bringing home a regular salary rather than on caring for the home. Most of the couples interviewed by Hochschild adhered to a transitional

¹¹Hochschild's study is about housework and gendered division of labor within the family. Although my study is not limited to housework, this framework can be gainfully employed to understand, more broadly, gender ideologies and practices among the immigrants in my study.

¹²Hochschild, op. cit., 15.

ideology. However, there were contradictions between what people said about their ideology and what they actually felt and did.

Hochschild's typology of ideologies can be applied broadly to the South Indian immigrants in my study, but with the understanding that there are cultural factors that make the experiences of the Hindu immigrants quite distinct from Hochschild's respondents.¹³ A second, and broader, qualifier to my adoption of Hochschild's typology is that it is being used only as a valuable heuristic tool and not to precisely label each of my respondents as "traditional," "transitional," or "egalitarian" women and men. I do not use these labels to classify individuals, but to describe the ideas they espouse. Further, even when used to describe ideas, these different types of ideology should be seen only as tendencies rather than as rigid categories. Such a categorization is confounded by the reality of people espousing different ideologies for different aspects of life. For instance, a particular respondent who articulates an egalitarian ideology with respect to domestic work and marital roles, supports a traditional ideology with regard to socialization of male and female children.

Among my respondents, there are contradictions between the gender ideologies they articulate and their actual practices, as there were among those in Hochschild's study. But, more significantly, as I sought to apply Hochschild's typology beyond marital roles, I discovered that individuals in my study did not necessarily have a uniform ideological position towards all aspects of life. I present the ideologies and practices of the South Indian immigrants in Pittsburgh with respect to two central areas of their lives: marital roles and aspirations for their children.

Ideologies of Marital Roles Among South Indian Immigrants

I will characterize immigrants as tending toward a "traditional" ideology with regard to marital roles if they espouse patriarchal beliefs and feel that men should have greater power than women. "Traditional" practices would be a translation of this ideology into actions such as men having greater power in decision-making over household finances, and adopting a rigidly

¹³Hochschild's study included dual-earner couples, most of them middle class, their friends, neighbors, day care workers and baby sitters in the Berkeley, California area. The immigrants in my study can be broadly characterized as middle and upper-middle class, but they have been socialized in a different cultural milieu.

gendered division of labor at home. Those with a “transitional” ideology of marital roles lean toward gender equality, but accept the fact that men could have greater power than women. Those couples adhering to this ideology share in the decision-making, but ultimately it is the woman who is primarily responsible for childcare and household chores. Finally, those who espouse an “egalitarian” ideology are those who tend to believe in equality in all spheres. “Egalitarian” practices would include equally sharing in decision-making as well as in housework and child care.

Among the 40 South Indian immigrants I interviewed for my study, 16 articulated a traditional gender ideology with respect to marital roles. Interestingly, an equal proportion of the men (six out of 15) and women (10 out of 25) interviewed subscribed to such an ideology. An equal number of women and about a third of the men also had a transitional ideology of marital roles. Only nine out of the 40 respondents espoused an egalitarian ideology, with a slightly greater proportion of men than women identifying with it. However, as in Hochschild’s study, there is a clear discrepancy between the respondents’ stated ideological positions and their practices. Based on my observations as well as interviews, it seems that only about a quarter of the 16 respondents with a traditional ideology actually engaged in traditional practices. In fact, about half of my respondents with varied ideologies follow transitional practices (see Table 1).

Ideology-Practice	Traditional	Transitional	Egalitarian	N
Traditional	4	4	0	8
Transitional	7	8	5	20
Egalitarian	5	3	4	12
N	16	15	9	40

Table 1. Ideologies and practices of respondents with respect to marital roles

Having given this overall picture of my respondents’ ideologies of marital roles and practices, I will show how these dynamics between ideology and practice are played out in their lives.

DOMESTIC DIVISION OF LABOR

In my study, eight of my 40 respondents (four couples), especially those who are in upper-middle class, dual-career households, employ domestic help on a regular basis as they would

have done in India. In addition, there are 10 other respondents (five couples) who hire help occasionally. But unlike their counterparts in India, the Indian immigrant women in my study are not solely responsible for supervising household help since both spouses share the task. In India, women rely on domestic help as well as on relatives rather than expect men to become involved in these activities.¹⁴ In my study, however, many of the spouses of women with demanding careers are involved in managing the household and taking care of children. As a result, one can see men with traditional or transitional ideologies participate in an egalitarian domestic division of labor. Two of my women respondents, Satya and Praveena, who are doctors, said that their husbands are primarily responsible for driving their children to dance and religious classes at the temple and contribute to household tasks.

Eleven of the 15 immigrant men I interviewed share domestic work and attribute this to the fact that in India there is easier and cheaper access to domestic help, while in the U.S. their wives cannot do everything on their own without the men's "help".¹⁵ Secondly, the use of electrical appliances redefines the nature of household work and the men with traditional gender ideologies do not consider the use of a vacuum cleaner to be taboo.¹⁶ However, a majority of the men who do share domestic labor still tend to characterize their part of the work as only assisting the women, thereby reinforcing the idea that transitional or egalitarian practices need not necessarily suggest a corresponding ideology. For instance, Arun, a 50-year old male scientist, describes his part at home in these words:

I have accepted some changes willingly or unwillingly, and I am aware of these changes. My wife started working also and I cannot expect the same kind of service [as] from the non-working wife. If she is cooking, I wash the dishes or cut the

¹⁴See Uma Sekaran, *Dual-Career Families* (San Francisco: Josey Bass, 1992).

¹⁵I did not measure the actual number of hours that each of the husbands and wives put into household work, like Hochschild did. While her study centered around housework, in my study it is only one of the ways to understand any existing gaps between gender ideology and practice.

¹⁶In a traditional Hindu home it is considered ill-fortune to have the "master of the house" even touch a broom, let alone use it.

vegetables or some other kind of help. I kind of share the responsibility.

Arun's use of the word "service," and his reluctant acceptance of a changed situation with respect to the division of labor indicate that his ideology is traditional while his practices are egalitarian.

FREEDOM AND CONFORMITY

About 20 out of 25 women I interviewed in the South Indian community in Pittsburgh had either traditional (10) or transitional (10) ideologies. They tended to advocate patriarchal values and acknowledged the superior role of the man in a marriage. However, their practices were not all traditional. In fact, many of them expressed the feeling that they enjoyed greater freedom after immigration.

For 35-year old Shalini, who came to the U.S. as a new bride at the age of 19, life as a homemaker in the U.S. has been quite an empowering experience. By driving to the temple, about 40 miles away from her suburban home, thrice a week she has reached out to the South Indian community and is an integral part of it. She said that she is independent without the constraints of living in an extended family with her mother-in-law and other relatives. In India, the life of a daughter-in-law in a typical patriarchal extended family is quite constrained and her position is rather low in the domestic power hierarchy. Shalini feels that in India she would not have had the freedom to play tennis, avoid cooking when she was not "in the mood," or socialize to the extent that she has grown accustomed to in the United States.

Forty-eight-year old Shanta, who works in a hospital, was one of the women who said she felt more "liberated" after coming to the U.S. She said she was now quite "adventurous:"

I was raised to think that I will grow up, have kids, be a wife, a housewife, a mother. When I first came here, I took up a job because it was an economic necessity but later I began to like it and enjoyed being with company. There have been 75% changes in my life after coming here. If I had stayed in India I would have slowly become a housewife as my mother did, and not do any of the things I do now. I go on holidays all over the world on my own.... Also I must say that Arun is

quite good in *allowing* [emphasis mine] me to go on these trips.

From the above, it is obvious that some of my respondents attribute changes in their attitudes and behavior to immigration to the United States. Shanta, for instance, had not visualized having a career and being economically independent while she was in India.

Thirty-seven-year old Anita, who came to the U.S. 15 years ago and works as a computer programmer, said she also started experiencing, like Shanta, a sense of “liberation” after coming to the United States. If she had lived in an extended family in India she would not have had the autonomy which she has as an immigrant. This autonomy is particularly evident for her in the performance of religious rituals:

I enjoy religion here more because I have greater freedom. In India, it becomes a ritual, you do it only because you *have* to, here you do it because you *want* to. There, I have to get up early and do all the things that our mothers used to do and then feed everyone. Here, I can wake up at 9 and still do the puja and I enjoy the flexibility.

She feels more in control of her home in the U.S. and experiences a sense of empowerment. From my observations of Anita’s family on different occasions, Anita and her husband, 43-year old Satish, seem to have adopted egalitarian practices. In her interview, however, Anita gave me the impression that her autonomy in the decision-making process was because of her husband’s “broad-mindedness:”

I don’t feel that my role is less or his role is more, because of the equal opportunity that *he gives me* [emphasis mine]. ...he gives me the opportunity to decide for myself and that is how I have become very confident.

In spite of their egalitarian practices, the traditional ideology of both Shanta and Anita is obvious when they describe the power hierarchy in the household. Their respective spouses “allow” them to do certain things and “give” them the opportunities. Espousing a traditional ideology is a common gender strategy adopted by many Indian women even when power

and control within the family are more or less equitably distributed. This is quite similar to some of Hochschild's couples who have a traditional ideology but maintain egalitarian practices. Many of the Indian women in my study seem to feel that they should not give people in the community the impression that they are the ones in control. They feel that a man who is "dominated" by his wife is not a respected member of the community. But it will be a mistake to assume that all those women who have traditional ideologies follow egalitarian practices or that they are entirely content with their life situation.

TRADITIONAL IDEOLOGY AND ITS DISCONTENTS

Ten of the 25 female respondents I interviewed are homemakers, out of whom three have previously been students in the U.S. All of the homemakers as well as over half of those who work outside the home have traditional or transitional ideologies with respect to male and female roles within the family. However, while homemakers tend to have traditional or transitional practices, more women who work outside tend to have egalitarian practices.

Most of the immigrant homemakers I interviewed take care of almost all the chores themselves. They have a clear sense of the gendered division of labor — the women took care of the home, while the men earned their living. When some of the homemakers go to India for a long vacation, they cook and freeze food for their husbands who "cannot" cook for themselves and do not like to eat out. Some male and female respondents also felt that women, both homemakers and those who have jobs, do more work outside the home when compared with their lives back in India. They drive their kids to school, to the temple for dance and music classes, or for piano and ballet lessons and other activities.

Thirty-five-year old Lavanya, one of the homemakers I interviewed, considers her upbringing to have been extremely traditional. Her gender ideology is traditional and so is her practice. She said that once a woman is married then "we (women) do whatever they (men) want us to do." She wants her daughter to be raised as a "proper" Indian girl and even observed the traditional puberty rituals for her.¹⁷ These rituals, primarily

¹⁷For example, among the Telugus, when a girl reaches puberty (soon after her first period) the occasion is observed as a rite of passage. She is considered to have "matured" (*Pedda Manishi* in Telugu literally means a "grown-up"). Female relatives and friends are invited to the girl's home to perform the ritual.

because of the acute embarrassment they cause to the girls involved, have been given up not only by most immigrants, but also by many families in urban India.

Lavanya attributed her participation in the Indian community to her husband's motivation. It was apparent to me that she had a number of friends and was active in the social circle in Pittsburgh, and it was not entirely on her husband's initiative that she came to be an important part of the Indian community. But Lavanya was modest and unwilling to admit in the interview that she has a primary role to play in determining her family's collective activities and reiterated that she merely followed her husband's wishes. She preferred to be seen as a follower of her husband rather than as someone who is an initiator.

However, Lavanya did admit to experiencing some uneasiness with her situation as she ends up taking care of her home almost single-handedly without much help from her husband. She said that she would have liked her husband to take care of some of the chores or at least offer her a glass of water when she was tired. She said that before she got her driver's license, her husband would do grocery shopping and chauffeur the kids but that changed after she learned how to drive. Once she started driving she became responsible for not only the work at home but, like many American homemakers, also for things outside the home.

Although driving allowed immigrant women to become more independent of their spouses, it made them fall into another form of gendered labor, one in which many American women are already embedded. Immigrant women's ability to drive brings with it additional responsibilities associated with the traditional homemaker role in the U.S., such as shopping for the home and driving children around. Lavanya's attitude might seem to be in complete harmony with her socialization, but her immigrant situation made her share some of the additional burdens that American homemakers' experience.

A male respondent, Satish, said that immigrant Indian women are burdened with responsibilities outside the home that the men usually took care of in India. According to Satish, the women are actually doing more work (like taking care of bills and insurance problems) which in India were part of the man's contribution to the home. There is thus the danger of falling into the "breadwinner/homemaker" trap of the industrialized world.¹⁸

¹⁸Kingsley Davis, Kingsley, "Wives and Work: A theory of the Sex-Role Revolution and Its Consequences." In *Feminism, Children and the New*

So changes have not necessarily been totally liberating for the Indian immigrant women and there is the danger of falling from one kind of subjugation and dominance into another.

These ideologies of marital roles articulated by my respondents are only to a small extent reflected in their aspirations for their children and the way they socialize them. Whatever their beliefs may be with respect to the position of women and men in a marriage, they don't necessarily seem to apply the same standards to their daughters and sons.

Gender Ideologies in Aspirations for Children

I will characterize the immigrants in my study as tending toward a "traditional" gender ideology with respect to the aspirations they have for their children if they have differing expectations for their male and female children. Parents according greater priority to the education of a son over that of a daughter is an example of "traditional" gendered practice. Those with a "transitional" gender ideology with respect to their children believe in gender equality, but have greater expectations for a son's success than that of a daughter. Parents who get both their sons and daughters educated, but seek to channel their sons' energies toward a professional career while they encourage their daughters to settle for more "feminine" occupations are engaged in transitional practices. An egalitarian gender ideology in this case would be a belief in gender equality for their children in all areas of life. Such an ideology is reflected in practices such as providing boys and girls equal opportunities to pursue career goals.

Ideology-Practice	Traditional	Transitional	Egalitarian	N
Traditional	0	2	2	4
Transitional	1	11	18	30
Egalitarian	0	4	2	6
N	1	17	22	40

Table 2. Gender ideologies and practices of respondents with respect to aspirations for children

Among the South Indian immigrants in my study, 22 of the 40 parents I interviewed expressed an egalitarian gender

ideology, while 17 others espoused a transitional ideology. It is remarkable that only one of the respondents offered a traditional ideology with respect to aspirations for children, while as many as 16 identified with a traditional ideology of marital roles. As far as practices are concerned, 30 out of my 40 respondents engaged in transitional practices regarding their children. Perhaps as a mark of their middle- and upper-middle class composition, the discrepancy between ideology and practice with respect to their aspirations for children is not as glaring as it was for marital roles (see Table 2). My findings on this issue are similar to those of Naidoo and Davis whose study revealed that South Asian women in Canada have a "dualistic attitude," one that is "traditional" with regard to marriage, family and religion, but "contemporary" on values related to education and careers outside the home.¹⁹ In order to further understand this "dualistic" attitude, I examine the connection between the gender ideologies and practices as they appear in the lives of my respondents and their children.

ASPIRATIONS FOR CHILDREN'S SUCCESS

In Rao and Rao's study among college students in India, it was found that the attitudes of people are gendered as far as children's success was concerned.²⁰ Men seem to think that parents derive more satisfaction from a son's success than a daughter's and that girls should not be granted as much freedom and independence as boys. Few people in the Indian community in Pittsburgh, however, expressed such views in my interviews. Parents seem to derive equal satisfaction from their daughters' as well as their sons' successes and spent a great deal of time, money and energy in training their children for a bright future.

This becomes manifest especially in relation to children's education. Since all of them belong to a class of professionals they believe that their children should be given the best opportunities regardless of their gender. Venugopal, a 42-year old male physician, articulated an egalitarian ideology when he said that he hopes to send both his son and daughter to Ivy League schools for professional education. Even if the girls learn a classical dance like

¹⁹Josephine C. Naidoo and J. Campbell Davis. "Canadian South Asian women in transition: a dualistic view of life," *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 19 (1988): 311-327.

²⁰V.V.P. Rao and N.Rao, "Sex Role Attitudes of College Students in India." In *Women in International Development Series*. Working Paper No. 72, Michigan State University, 1984.

Bharata Natyam, they are not expected to make a career of it, rather they are encouraged to become physicians themselves.

However, even though many of my respondents have egalitarian ideologies with regard to children's education, they engage in transitional practices when it comes to their children's career choices. About 18 of my 40 respondents have voiced an egalitarian ideology, but engage in transitional practices. For instance, within the medical profession a number of parents feel strongly that their daughters should keep away from surgery as it would disrupt their family life. My respondents, Shanta and Arun, in separate interviews, said that they discouraged their daughter from going to medical school as it was not necessary for a girl to have a high-pressure career which will affect her "biological clock" and her family life; as a result, their daughter is now majoring in business management. Shanta felt that a woman's income is secondary and only supplements the man's. She is more worried about the career of her son who she expects will be the primary wage earner for his family. This shows a transitional gender ideology since she has different expectations for her son and her daughter. I say "transitional" because they do believe that their daughter should have a career but not something as demanding as medicine.

Interestingly, even those respondents who espoused a traditional ideology of marital roles and engage in traditional practices at home showed a strong inclination toward an egalitarian or transitional gender ideology with respect to their aspirations for children. One such respondent was Lavanya, who herself grew up in an orthodox Brahmin household where it was considered inappropriate for teenage girls to even go out of the house unaccompanied. She said that her desire for education was nipped in the bud by her father who was a conventional patriarch and did not believe in girls' education. She said that although she no longer has an interest in returning to school, she wants her daughter to have a well-rounded education and be given opportunities that she herself was deprived of.

But, this tendency toward greater egalitarianism with respect to children's education does not manifest itself uniformly in other areas of life, particularly in terms of marriage and dating.

MARRIAGE AND DATING

Thirty-one of my 40 respondents have children who are teenagers or younger, but when their children get older they seem to want them to marry within the community irrespective of

whether they have sons or daughters. Many parents in the Indian community in Pittsburgh have arranged marriages for their children. However, there have been a few cases where young Indian American women have married white American men of their own choice. Since few of the Indian immigrants in Pittsburgh have children who are of "marriageable age," I do not have enough data of my own to comment upon their practices in this area.²¹

However, in a study about conflicts and communication gaps between the first and second generation Indian immigrants in Southern California, Priya Agarwal described the feelings of a young Indian-American woman who is frustrated with the traditional expectations parents have for her because of her gender.

...the second generation Indian woman feels that old-world gender roles are still rigidly being upheld for her.... 'Throughout my life, society told me I could be whatever I wanted because I was smart and worked hard. Then, suddenly I become of 'marriageable age,' and I am told I have limits because I am a woman and should marry young. It makes me sick that women are still so defined by men'.²²

Many of Agarwal's respondents attributed the gap in gender ideology (particularly, with regard to issues of marriage and dating) between parents and children to the fact that for the parental generation, India is a "pure space" untouched by change. The rapid changes, particularly, in urban India are ignored by most immigrants and they construct an imaginary world where gender ideology is at its patriarchal zenith.

Agarwal found that Indian parents are more concerned about their girls dating than they are about their sons. Although my respondents expressed a transitional ideology, their practices and strategies are often traditionally gendered in this regard. One of my male respondents, Vaman Rao said that it was important to have an open relationship with children, especially girls, as they are

²¹I have not interviewed the children of the immigrant generation for this study to get their side of this complex social issue.

²²Priya Agarwal, *Passage from India: Post 1965 Indian Immigrants and their Children* (Paolo Verdes, Ca: Yuvati Publications, 1991), p.52.

more vulnerable to the problems of American society.²³ This discriminatory attitude toward daughters and sons does not seem to surface much in the way parents divide household tasks among their children.

HOUSEHOLD TASKS

As far as household chores are concerned, almost all my respondents said that boys and girls have similar chores to do. For example, children, irrespective of their gender, are expected to take care of their own rooms and do other small chores in the house. However, six of my 15 male respondents pointed out that girls are given more feminine chores like dish-washing, while boys took out garbage and mowed lawns. One of my respondents, Vishnuvardhan, said that he does not differentiate between his boy and girl at this stage as the children were young (13 and 11), but that he can visualize asking his son rather than his daughter to join him in playing tennis or working on his car. His wife, Lavanya, said that she is trying to make her daughter more aware of her femininity by telling her to be soft-spoken and training her to perform domestic religious rituals. These examples reflect the fact that while a majority (22) of my respondents espoused an egalitarian ideology with respect to their children, most of them (30) engaged in transitional practices.

ACTIVITIES AT THE TEMPLE

My respondents' attitudes towards their children could also be seen in the organization of children's activities at the temple as well as in the nature of participation by boys and girls in those activities. There was universal agreement among both male and female respondents about girls having more to do in the temple than boys. Dance is one of the mechanisms through which Indian tradition is transmitted outside India and it is mostly women and girls who are the transmitters of this tradition.²⁴ Most of my

²³Many Indians believe, like parents in most other cultures, that girls should be protected more than boys from the outside world. This is because girls are more vulnerable to the ills of society, such as violence and sexual harassment.

²⁴For more information on this topic, please see my forthcoming article, "Gender Dynamics in Cultural Practices among South Indian Immigrants" in *Women, Communities, and Cultures: South Asians in America*, eds. Jyotsna Vaid and Sucheta Mazumdar.

respondents' daughters are either learning or have learnt *Bharata Natyam* or *Kuchipudi* in the temple. This means that they spend at least two to four hours a week learning classical dance, dressed in traditional Indian attire. The parents feel happy that they are able to provide something "traditional and Indian" for their girls. The result is that in the process boys are being alienated from the temple.

Respondents who have either occupied key administrative positions at the temple in the past or do so currently have expressed their desire to create something for the boys to do at the temple. In making this distinction, they are assuming that boys and girls need different activities to sustain a commitment and feel an attachment to the institution. The temple recently introduced ping pong to attract the boys on Friday evenings, under the assumption that girls will be kept busy with dance.

Learning classical Indian dance is considered as much a feminine trait as learning ballet in the West. In spite of such feelings in the community and against the initial reservations of his own parents, one boy has been studying *Kuchipudi* at the temple for the past few years. This non-conformity has disturbed the boy's parents, but as his father Vaman Rao said, "we have learnt to live with it." This is clearly a case of egalitarian ideology (because they believe their son and daughter to be equal), but transitional practice. Similarly, another woman, Satya, told me that her son wanted to learn dance along with his sister but she and her husband decided that his time was better spent taking tennis lessons. They discouraged him from learning *Bharata Natyam*, she said, but without making him feel that they are doing it because he is a boy. I would classify this kind of behavior as traditional practice emerging from a transitional ideology.

It was only in the last thirty years in India that classical dance has become almost exclusively a women's art form. Prior to that, girls, especially of upper castes and upper classes, were discouraged from performing on stage as it was compared to the *devadasi* system in which the temple dancers were seen also as prostitutes. In fact, in certain dance forms, such as *Kuchapudi*, men dressed up as women and performed in public. However, in post-independence India, upper class and upper caste families began sending their daughters to learn this relatively exclusive and expensive art form. In the last twenty years, India's "high culture" has also been transported to the West mainly by immigrant women and girls, as well as by touring performers from India. Boys learning classical dance in contemporary times is, thus, seen as subverting an important traditional gender practice even though it could be legitimated on the basis that it was an ancient

practice. These varied gender ideologies and practices among the South Indian immigrants in my study should be seen against the cultural backdrop of representations of the 'ideal' Hindu woman and the role of the mass media in fostering and/or reinforcing these cultural representations.

Cultural Representations of the 'Ideal' Hindu Woman

THE WOMAN AS PATIVRATA

The Indians in my study were largely socialized into a patriarchal and patrilocal society in which the woman typically has power only as a mother of a son. People who have been socialized into a traditional Hindu culture believe that the woman must either be protected by the male and even worshipped, or else must be controlled. For instance, identification with an epic figure such as Sita contributes to the Hindu woman's adaptation to married life in her husband's extended family and prepares her for her obligatory participation in the family's patriarchal rituals. Many of these ideals seem to be fully incorporated into the lives of most Hindu wives and daughters-in-law. The traditional ideology of marital roles articulated by respondents like Lavanya in my study illustrates the extent to which this ideology has been internalized by women. Others who continued to espouse a traditional ideology as a strategy in spite of transitional practices, did so because of their socialization into a culture in which the woman is expected to follow the wishes of her husband. There is some empirical evidence to show the prevalence of the *pativrata* ideology among Hindu women in India.

Vanaja Dhruvarajan, in a qualitative study of a small village in southern India, found the ideology of *pativrata* to be widely prevalent among her respondents. She summarizes this ideology as it is expressed vividly by some of her respondents:

The wife as *pativrata* should be his true helpmate by helping him in every possible way to achieve his goals in life. She should never think that she has an existence apart from her husband.... A *pativrata* always eats whatever is left after her husband has eaten.... Obeying the command of one's husband without question is a mark of virtue and good conduct... He does not have to pay attention even when she is in pain. It does not matter whether he is true to her or not.... She believes *Pati*

pratyaksha devatha (Husband is the Living God)...
A true *pativrata* has extraordinary powers which she accumulates by doing austere services to her husband... She should listen to stories of great *pativratas* in her spare time so that she is inspired by them .²⁵

Dhruvarajan reports that many of her respondents actually suggested that it might be destructive to give women equal freedom as men. The purity of a woman's body is extremely important, so a man must protect her and she should maintain ritual purity at the cost of her freedom and autonomy.²⁶

Dhruvarajan found that women who live in extended families are more likely to follow the ideology of *pativratya* with great deference than those who are part of a nuclear family. To be a good wife signifies being a good woman. She also found that the Hindu epics and mythologies continue to provide models of the ideal woman, reinforcing the ideology of *pativratya*. These values are transmitted from one generation to the other, not only informally at home, but also through folk culture, including village concerts and dramas, and the mass media.

REINFORCING TRADITIONAL ROLES: MEDIA IMAGES

In recent times, the most popular shows on Indian television have been serialized episodes from the Hindu epics, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. In 1988, the *Ramayana* was on television every Sunday morning and millions of people stayed glued to their sets and empathized with the trials and tribulations of many of its central characters. Sita's image as the *pativrata* was once again resurrected as a character with whom women ought to identify. In 1989, after the *Ramayana* completed its run, the other major epic, *Mahabharata*, took over television drama and enjoyed even greater popularity.

Popular culture in India is replete with notions of ideal womanhood and especially now, at a time when the country is witnessing the rise of a Hindu fundamentalist movement, images of

²⁵Vanaja Dhruvarajan, *Hindu Women and the Power of Ideology* (Massachusetts: Bergin and Garvey, 1989), p. 9.

²⁶Ritual purity for a traditional Hindu woman involves among other things maintaining physical distance from others during her menstrual periods. She is supposed to mingle with people only after she has "purified" herself with a ritual bath on the fourth day of her period.

women like Sita and Savitri have become a part of everyday discourse. When asked what her concept of a liberated Indian woman was, one of the spokespeople of the Bharatiya Janata Party, the right-wing Hindu fundamentalist party, said: "She is a combination of Sita and Savitri. We need to fight against the atrocities committed on women, but fight without rebelling or upsetting the family".²⁷ Many Indian feminists are now concerned that the resurgence of fundamentalism might well mean the further perpetuation of patriarchal practices.

The power of the media to create, select and convey particular kinds of images about women cannot be underestimated. Participants at India's first National Women's Studies Conference held in 1981 blamed the media for promoting stereotypes of women. The traditional roles of the subservient female and the dominant male are repeatedly reinforced on the Indian screen. A woman is considered to be a goddess by society because of her readiness to sacrifice for her family members.²⁸ Indian movies represent the ideal woman as one who revels in suffering and sacrifice. An analysis of the mistreatment of women in society as portrayed in films shows that films follow the existing male dominant ideology.²⁹ According to the authors, such portrayals reaffirm the patriarchal order and perpetuate the existing dichotomy of sex roles.

Even movies and television shows which claim to portray progressive women asserting their individuality rarely help promote positive attitudes about women. Rebellious female characters are shown to eventually succumb to dominant patriarchal ideologies, and those who overcome them are shown to be doing it at some cost.³⁰ Women are portrayed as facing a large number of insurmountable obstacles and by the time a divorced woman pulls her life back together she undergoes traumatic experiences. Because of their easy accessibility, film and television, reach out both to the educated as well as the illiterate, and to urban

²⁷Parvathi Menon, "The Woman's Question," *India Alert Bulletin*, 6:3 (1993): 16.

²⁸R. S. Hegde and S. D. Dasgupta, "Convergence and Divergence from 'Devi': The Model of Ideal Woman on the Indian Screen." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Western Speech and Communication Association, Seattle, 1984.

²⁹S. D. Dasgupta and R.S. Hegde, "The Eternal Receptacle: A Study of Mistreatment of Women in Hindi Films." In *Women in Indian Society*, ed. Rehana Ghadially (New Delhi: Sage, 1988).

³⁰*Ibid.*

as well as rural people. Whether the images presented in the media are apparently “progressive” or blatantly regressive, they seem to contribute to the reinforcement of patriarchal values among people in various sections of society.

Most of the first-generation Indian immigrants in my study grew up in India amidst these images of women and gender roles. Moreover, with the global technological revolution in the 1990s, popular culture in India is quite easily transmitted to immigrants in other parts of the world. The villagers in Dhruvarajan’s study, the urbanites in India, and the Indian immigrants in the United States or the Middle-East all watch the same shows and films through videos and on ethnic television. Appadurai calls this kind of electronic transmission of images across the world, “mediascapes.”

What is most important about these mediascapes is that they provide...large and complex repertoires of images, narratives and ethnoscapes to viewers throughout the world.... The lines between the realistic and the fictional landscapes they see are blurred, so that the further away these audiences are from the direct experiences of metropolitan life, the more likely are they to construct imagined worlds which are chimerical, aesthetic, even fantastic objects....³¹

The “imagined” world for immigrants is India with all its legends and folktales; and often the patriarchal images in the media appear to be quite real for those who watch and internalize them. Children born in the United States are also exposed to this mythical world through the media, influencing their socialization.

It is not surprising, therefore, that I found a majority of my respondents (both male and female) espousing a traditional ideology of marital roles. One such respondent, Malathi, has a large video collection of all the mythological films which her family watches regularly. When children are socialized through the attractive medium of videos and television serials about Sita and Savitri, they might internalize the patriarchal ideologies embedded in such narratives.

The view that traditional Hindu ideals of womanhood may have negative influences is challenged by some scholars who assert

³¹Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," *Public Culture* 2:2 (Spring 1990): 9.

that the idea of women as weak and inferior was in fact inherited from the West.³² According to this perspective, the status of Indian women was traditionally quite high and it was Western imperialism that magnified the image of the oppressed Indian woman. In my study, a male scientist, 45-year old Rajaraman, speaks about egalitarian gender ideology in Hindu philosophy and the actual patriarchal practice:

If you understand our scriptures and literature correctly, the place of women in India is so wonderful, although it is not practiced. Sita, Draupadi... and all great women saints were held in great esteem. Maybe it is Western influence, but the general impression given is that India is a macho country and that women don't have much freedom and all that. But I don't think that women are greatly mistreated. If you worship goddesses and you see their form in all women, how can you mistreat them?

Even as this respondent speaks of gender equality, he is reinforcing the image of the ideal woman as pure and saintly which, far from being egalitarian, can be a terrible burden. This assumption that Hinduism accords women a highly respected position has been promoted by nationalist historians in India.³³ This is only another facet of patriarchy that is couched within the construction of the woman as goddess. Moreover, not all my respondents subscribe to the thesis that there was greater equality in India, especially those who lived in an extended family under the supervisory role of the mother-in-law.

However, the cultural constructions of the "ideal" Hindu woman and their propagation through the mass media cannot entirely account for the variations in gender ideologies and practices among the immigrants in my study. Contemporary social changes in India, literacy and education, their urban backgrounds in India should also be considered to explain tendencies toward more transitional and egalitarian practices.

³²Joanna Liddle and Rama Joshi, *Daughters of Independence: Gender, Caste and Class in India* (London: Zed Books, 1986).

³³Veena Poonacha, "Hindutva's Hidden Agenda: Why Women Fear Religious Fundamentalism," *Economic and Political Weekly* (13 March 1993): 438.

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN INDIA

Gender ideologies of immigrants in the United States can thus be compared and contrasted with the gender ideologies and strategies of urban, educated women and men in India. Most of the Indian immigrants to the United States were educated in urban or semi-urban India and either pursue higher education or work as professionals in the U.S. Shamita Das Dasgupta's study about sex roles of Asian Indian women in the United States revealed that the most important factor in determining non-traditional gender roles might be the number of years an individual has gone to school in the United States. She says that it is not just the length of stay in the United States, but participation in the Western education system that generates egalitarian thinking among the Asian Indian women in her study.³⁴

Fewer than half (15 out of 40) of my respondents went to school in the U.S., but the backgrounds of some of the others suggest that Dasgupta's findings could be extended to include the influences of liberal education in India. One of my respondents, Ramani, who is in her early forties and works in a hospital, was raised and educated in a major metropolitan city in India (in a Westernized school system). Her egalitarian gender ideology or practices, she asserted, are no different now than they were when she was in India. She said she and her siblings were raised with an emphasis on good education and that there was no strict gendered division of labor at home. Ramani and her 45-year old husband Suresh share the work at home as do many other dual-career couples in my study. Suresh attributed their egalitarian lifestyle to the fact that he is from Kerala, a southern Indian state not only with a history of matrilineal societies but also has the highest literacy rates in the country for both men and women. He explained:

It is the woman who plays an important role in the family. Seventy five years ago, there were certain families in which women had their B.A. degrees. Why? Because the woman in that house had decided that her daughter will do her B.A. This still holds good to this day.

³⁴Shamita Das Dasgupta. "Marching to a Different Drummer? Sex Roles of Asian Indian Women in the United States," *Women And Therapy* 5 (1986): 309.

But their egalitarianism is certainly not representative of the attitudes and practices of all educated Indians, including other respondents in my study who are embedded in traditional ideologies.

An examination of the context in which people of my respondents' social class (and mine) were educated in India, especially women, gives us a sense of why there is no necessary correlation between education and egalitarianism. Rama Mehta, in her study of Western educated Hindu women in India, sought to understand the influence of education over the traditional value system of women.³⁵ A majority of the 50 women she interviewed said that their parents sent them to college to bide time till marriage rather than to acquire proficiency in a particular discipline. Education was not a way to attain economic independence, as working outside the home was against the norms established by the cult of domesticity. These women's mothers, who were themselves not formally educated, realized the need for their daughters to be educated just enough to make them "eligible brides" but they did not encourage unmarried women to work. Once married, many of these women said their husbands were proud to have educated wives, but did not want them to work outside the home, as it was necessary for them to be home with their children. An example from my study of someone who expressed a similar traditional gender ideology is Venugopal, who went to medical school in urban India in the 1970s. His rationale for marrying a homemaker was as follows:

I married a homemaker only for two reasons. If two people are working, you don't need a marriage. In my case, I don't have to make her work. That is an advantage she has. The second thing is I wanted somebody to be more attentive to my kids. She is very dedicated to the kids. One-third of her time is completely for the kids. She runs around and does a lot for the kids.... I look at her lifestyle and I think that she got more than she bargained for.

Venugopal, like the respondents in the Raos' study, believes that women are better off if they give primacy to the family and the husband over their own personal ambitions. He believes that

³⁵Rama Mehta, *The Western Educated Hindu Woman* (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1970).

marriage is the most crucial and important phase in a woman's life, and all other pursuits — intellectual, educational or political — are merely means for attaining the most suitable husband. Although Venugopal has these expectations for his wife and rationalizes any "rebellion" on her part as the price of Americanization, he is prepared to send his daughter as well as his son to an Ivy League school. Thus in terms of his children's education his aspirations may appear to be egalitarian, but I would wait until his 10-year old daughter grows up before writing the last word on it.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have examined the gender ideologies among the immigrants in my study and compared them with their practices. There are gaps in ideology and practice that can be explained in terms of a gender strategy. It is often strategically convenient for women to pursue egalitarian practices, but voice a transitional ideology. A number of female as well as male respondents espoused a traditional or transitional ideology while they were engaged in egalitarian practices. It gives men the satisfaction of being in control and makes the women feel empowered at the same time.

In addition to the discrepancy between ideology and practice, I also found that the immigrants in my study tended toward a particular gender ideology with respect to their own marital roles and quite another with respect to their aspirations for their children. However, as many of my respondents also tended to follow transitional or egalitarian practices, I sought to explain the variations through more contemporary social changes in India. These social changes and their influences on my respondents, along with the effects of immigration, could also explain the nature of participation and leadership roles of South Indian women at the S.V. temple. For many of my women respondents, life in the U.S. after immigration has been to some extent a liberating experience. They are able to exercise a degree of autonomy to do certain things that would have been difficult had they been living in India. For some others, however, life in the U.S. has only been a continuation of their urban experiences in India.

The Changing Role of the Indian State in the Development of Postwar Science and Technology

Joel R. Campbell

This paper analyzes the evolution of Indian science and technology policy and policymaking from the Congress Party governments that began in 1947 to the ascension of the Narasimha Rao government in 1991 and reflects on the changes in science and technology policy that have occurred since Rao's liberalization policy began. The paper suggests that the role of science and technology has shifted from support for socialist heavy industrialization during the Nehru era to a mixed policy of state industrialization and beginnings of private sector development under Indira Gandhi to gradual liberalization and encouragement of the private sector under Rajiv Gandhi.

Introduction

Technology is one of the most important resources for a developing economy.¹ The state's role² in the field of science and technology (S&T) is critical for developing countries, since no other sector in an initially poor nation has the capacity or resources to undertake major research or capital-intensive projects.

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¹'Technology' is generally defined as the practical application of scientific ideas, including both discrete devices or goods and knowledge of and processes for their use. 'High technology' refers to knowledge-intensive goods and processes with high value, especially in such industries as electronics, communications and biotechnology.

²The concept 'state,' as employed here, primarily refers to the executive and bureaucratic organs of government, under direction of political and bureaucratic leadership.

Accordingly, S&T policymaking is an excellent illustration of the leading role assumed by the state in economic development, and belies modernization and dependency theories' designation of economic forces as the chief agents of development. Nevertheless, the state's place in S&T development undergoes continual change. This study measures the changing S&T role of the Indian state three ways, viz.: 1) the development of S&T capacity, both in terms of state-run research and development (R&D) facilities, and state policymaking organs, 2) the evolution of relations between the state and the private sector, especially large corporations, and 3) the state's ability to manage or coordinate key technological projects or programs, especially in high technologies. Vital to all three are underlying political processes that affect technology policy.

Emphases of national science and technology programs differ slightly. India's S&T has been more broadly based than that of more explicitly export-oriented nations such as Korea or Taiwan and has served more clearly political goals than that of Brazil—like India, a continental power and regional economic leader. India's S&T policymaking structure has centered on a relatively strong role for state policymakers and state enterprises. The respective roles of the state and private sector have changed markedly since the 1950s, with the state playing a preeminent role at first, and the private sector and research institutions gradually taking over functions first performed by the state. India achieved only spotty success in developing high technology industries, as the state favored a broad range of industries, ranging from nuclear power to food production industries. As a result of domestic politics and international economic pressure, the Indian state shifted from a state-dominated, internally-oriented system to a more market-driven approach involving connections to international capital.

Though sweeping changes have affected every major sector of the Indian economy since the liberalization policy began in 1991, gradual change has been apparent in S&T policy throughout the post-independence period. This paper analyzes the evolution of Indian science and technology policy and policymaking during the pre-liberalization Congress Party governments from 1947 to the ascension of Narasimha Rao in 1991—the period of the Nehru through Rajiv Gandhi governments, and reflects on the changes in S&T policy has undergone since Rao's liberalization policy began. The paper suggests that S&T's role has shifted from support for socialist heavy industrialization during the Nehru era to a mixed policy of state industrialization and beginnings of private sector

development under Indira Gandhi to gradual liberalization and encouragement of the private sector under Rajiv Gandhi.

Building State Capacity

Since independence, the Indian state has taken a strongly interventionist course, stressing quasi-socialist economic development and self-sufficiency. Economic policy has had four overriding goals: 1) high growth, 2) industrial and technological self-reliance, 3) full employment, and 4) social equity through amelioration of major inequities. India has achieved generally high growth and is self-sufficient in most economic sectors, but has done less well in providing full employment and eliminating social inequality.³

In the twentieth century, Indians have been ambivalent toward science. While recognizing its utility for modernization and economic development, many believed it a disruptive alien influence, and thus tried to "Indianize" it by granting traditional practices a scientific patina or taking a traditional Indian philosophical approach to understanding of scientific advances.⁴

Indian S&T policy has evolved in four main stages, corresponding to the temporary ascendance of one or another of the main elements of Congress Party ideology, which blended elements of socialism, Gandhism, and capitalism. The first stage, under Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru (1947-1964), centered on establishment of a research infrastructure, in order to serve India's state-led heavy industrialization program. Nehru's government set up a variety of R&D laboratories under the aegis of either specialized ministries or administrative councils. The second stage, during Indira Gandhi's first tenure as Prime Minister (1965-1977), emphasized import substitution and self-reliance in both agriculture and industry. There was also much attention to use of appropriate technology and rural-oriented technology.⁵ When the Janata Party took power in 1977, it tried to decentralize

³Craig Baxter, et al., *Government and Politics in South Asia* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), pp. 148-153.

⁴Robert S. Anderson, "Cultivating Science as Cultural Policy: A Contrast of Agricultural and Nuclear Science in India," *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 56, No. 1 (Spring, 1983): 38-39, 44-50.

⁵*Technology Policies and Planning India* (Bangalore, India: Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology, 1986), pp. 6-9; Baldev Raj Nayar, *India's Quest for Technological Independence: The Results of Policy*, Vol. II (New Delhi: Lancers Publishers, 1983), pp. 528-529.

administrative control over research and de-emphasize heavy industrialization in favor of small scale production technologies and village industry, but these efforts were ended when the Congress Party returned to power under Mrs. Gandhi in 1980. The third stage, Mrs. Gandhi's second turn in power and Rajiv Gandhi's government, in the 1980s, focused state attention on promotion of industrial technology and high technology industries, while continuing to support big science projects such as nuclear energy and weapons.⁶ The most recent stage has seen the dismantling of the heavy industrialization program, as the economy has been liberalized and several state-owned companies broken up. This has created greater opportunities for privately conducted R&D.

India's S&T program in the first stage was merely a tool for the national modernization/ self-reliance campaign. Nehru pursued both heavy industrialization and import substitution, and S&T development was a hybrid of importation and indigenous development.⁷ This approach received strong support from high-ranking bureaucrats and the scientific/professional community.⁸ Like Korea's Park Chung Hee (1961-1979), Nehru took a keen interest in scientific development, and saw S&T development as integral to both overall development and economic planning.⁹ Like Park, he cultivated key scientists as S&T advisors. For instance,

⁶Baldev Raj Nayar, *India's Quest for Technological Independence: Policy Foundation and Policy Change*, Vol. I (New Delhi: Lancers Publishers, 1983), p. 504.

⁷Bjorn Hettne, "Self-Reliance Versus Modernization: The Dialectics of Indian and Chinese Development Strategies," in Erik Baark and Jon Sigurdson, eds., *India-China Comparative Research: Technology and Science for Development* (London: Curzon Press, 1980), pp. 23-41; Aqueil Ahmad, "Science and Technology in Development: Policy Options for India and China," in Baark and Sigurdson, pp. 61-67; Eddie J. Girdner, "Economic Liberalization in India: The New Electronics Policy," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 27, No. 11 (November, 1987), pp. 1188-1192; Ghayur Alam, "India's Technology Policy: Its Influence on Technology Imports and Technology Development," in Ashok V. Desai, ed., *Technology Absorption in Indian Industry* (New Delhi: Wiley Eastern, Ltd., 1988), pp. 136-155.

⁸Yogendra K. Malik and Surinder M. Bhardwaj, "Politics, Technology, and Bureaucracies An Overview," *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 17, Nos. 1-2 (1982), pp. 7-12.

⁹Nehru once asked, "What is planning, if not the application of science to our problems?" J.S. Rao, "Science and Technology in India," *Science*, July 12, 1985, p. 130.

S.S. Bhatnagar was appointed to lead the Council on Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), which established a chain of national laboratories in the sciences, technology, engineering, and medicine. CSIR has been frequently criticized for its failing to develop research links to corporate R&D organizations, was built as a general purpose organization. Also, Homi Bhabha, a nuclear physicist, founded the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), later renamed the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), and the Atomic Energy Commission.¹⁰

Under Nehru, the Indian Parliament adopted the nation's first Science Policy Resolution in March, 1958, which committed state-run R&D labs to serve heavy industrialization.¹¹ India was the first nation to establish a governmental office specifically dedicated to promotion and development of S&T—the first Department of Science and Technology. Though based on colonial antecedents, it was devoted to Nehru's developmental ideology and erected an S&T infrastructure favorable to both mission-oriented and general purposed technology. Government also aided S&T development by expanding educational facilities and making S&T knowledge widely available.¹²

While the state promoted science under Nehru, it was only recognized as a critical element of economic development under Indira Gandhi.¹³ Her Technology Policy Statement of 1983, recommitting the state to S&T development, was a more clearly balanced, politically inclusive document than the 1958 resolution, and listed newer scientific concerns along with traditional economic and economic development issues. The former included recycling, energy conservation, and environmental protection; traditional areas included increasing employment, development of

¹⁰*Technology Policies*, op. cit., pp. 8-11; Srinivasan, op. cit., pp. 9, 119; M.K.G. Menon and Manju Sharma, "Science and Technology Advice: The Indian Situation," in William T. Golden, ed., *Worldwide Science and Technology Advice to the Highest Levels of Governments* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1991), pp. 214-216.

¹¹*Technology Policies*, op. cit., pp. 8-11; Srinivasan, op. cit., p. 21.

¹²Specifically, Nehru wished to: 1) create a popular consciousness in favor of S&T development, 2) make Indian bureaucracy conscious of the utility of S&T, 3) involve scientists in S&T decision making, 4) use S&T to advance economic reform, 5) create an infrastructure basis for R&D, and 6) promote a "scientific temper" among India's intelligencia. *Technology Policies*, op. cit., pp. 11-12.

¹³Baxter, et al., op. cit., p. 153.

technical competence; and use of manual skills. It also included economic issues such as the former policy of self-reliance, mixing mass production and village industry, and the identification of obsolescence.¹⁴ Mrs. Gandhi's administration also increased overall state S&T expenditures, and expanded R&D facilities in the fields of nuclear energy, aerospace, electronics, defense, and agriculture.¹⁵

In order to deal with the general failure to establish public-private R&D linkages, and as a recognition that the state could not by itself perform all of the nation's S&T work, a number of major policy changes occurred in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and state commitment to S&T was made clearer.¹⁶ Most important was the creation of an S&T planning group in the National Committee on Science and Technology (NCST). Mrs. Gandhi's government also provided various incentives to encourage industry to establish its own R&D laboratories, especially a 100 percent write-off of all capital expenses, liberalization of imports of raw materials for R&D, and waiving of requirements for industrial licensing.¹⁷

Like his predecessors, Rajiv Gandhi (1984-1990) saw S&T as linked to overall economic development. In 1988, his science advisory council called for complete integration of S&T into economic planning, and for development of practical technologies in such areas as building materials, non-polluting small engines, and population control.¹⁸

As science policy has changed, so Indian S&T policymaking institutions have gone through several major alterations. Each policymaking body has been stronger than its predecessor. The 1948 Advisory Committee for Coordination Scientific Work, under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister, was set up as a purely advisory and deliberative body. In 1956, it was replaced by the Scientific Advisory Committee to the Cabinet (SACC), which was charged with policy formulation, international collaboration, and provision of support and coordination for research. SACC was superseded by the Committee on Science and Technology (COST) in 1968, intended as the overall policymaking body, handling formulation, implementation and coordination.

¹⁴*Technology Policies*, op. cit., p. 13.

¹⁵R. Natarajan, "Science, Technology, and Mrs. Gandhi," *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 22, Nos. 3-4 (July-Oct., 1987): 232-249.

¹⁶J.S. Rao, pp. 130-131.

¹⁷Nayar, Vol. I, op. cit., pp. 500-504.

¹⁸Helen Gavaghan, "Science takes the stage in Gandhi's India," *New Scientist* (November 5, 1988): 27.

However, COST was replaced after only three years by the National Committee on Science and Technology, which took on COST's functions, but added technology policymaking for defense.¹⁹ NCST also took on the role of S&T planner for the state. Using a sectoral approach, it charted R&D for twenty-four separate sectors, including nuclear energy, aerospace, electronics, and medicine. During the Fifth Plan (1978-1983), for example, NCST initiated S&T planning for the states, and sought to coordinate S&T functions among the different ministries.²⁰

Meanwhile, in 1971, the government established the Department of Science and Technology (DST), a ministry-level organ, as the primary policy implementation body, in charge of survey, research, financial support of R&D facilities, promotion of indigenous technology, and coordination of international collaboration.²¹

The jurisdictional overlap between COST/NCST and DST, along with the proliferation of specialized S&T policy bodies, has hindered the development of policy. Partly in response to the organizational mess, the second Indira Gandhi government created a bifurcated policy-making structure under the cabinet: 1) the Cabinet Committee on Science and Technology (CCST) in 1981, an overall S&T review and policy decision making body, and 2) a Science Advisory Committee to the Cabinet (also called SACC) to formulate policy and recommend means of implementation.²²

Actual R&D is carried out primarily by a chain of state-run R&D labs set up during the Nehru era. They encompass several distinct types, including: 1) national laboratories, which are primarily technology oriented and are generally administered by the Council on Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), 2) defense R&D labs, which are intended to develop new defense-related hardware, or update existing technology, 3) laboratories under specific ministries, e.g., the Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) under the Ministry of Defense, space research labs of the Space Research Department, and the

¹⁹*Technology Policies*, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

²⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

²¹DST supports two other bodies: 1) the Natural Resources Data Management Systems, in charge of data collection and research on natural resources, and 2) the National Council for Science and Technology Communications, concerned with popularization of S&T. Brian M. Murphy, *The International Politics of New Information Technology* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), pp. 113-115.

²²*Ibid.*, p. 113.

Indian Agricultural Research Institute under the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, 4) laboratories managed by non-profit organizations, which use funds from a variety of sources and work closely with ministries, 5) university labs, which do mostly basic and applied research, 6) contract research institutions, which perform work for industry, and 7) industrial research institutes of medium and larger corporations.

CSIR was established at the end of the colonial period, in 1942, but came of age under Nehru. CSIR now controls about 130 laboratories of various kinds, and accounts for about fifteen percent of all R&D spending in India. Other important state R&D umbrella organizations are: 1) the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), which accounts for perhaps twenty percent of total R&D expenditures, 2) DRDO, whose budget is about half that of CSIR, 3) the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), with a budget two-thirds the size of CSIR, 4) the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), and 5) the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO).

India has roughly 2.5 million research personnel, of whom about 80,000 are researchers. It spends as much as 0.9 percent of its GNP on R&D, second only to Korea in the developing world, over eighty percent of which is state spending.²³ Nevertheless, the heavy state role has hobbled the effectiveness of R&D, and the international standing of Indian S&T is weak. Indian research labs have never established strong linkages with industry, and so few discoveries have been marketed. In any case, Indian research suffers from a general lack of originality, has produced few significant innovations, as compared to research organizations in advanced industrial countries (for instance, India accounts for only 1/12 the major discoveries of the U.S.), and usually lacks relevance for India's industrial or social needs. Moreover, laboratory organization is inconsistent, ranging from tightly organized, mission-oriented set-ups (such as those researching nuclear power and electronics)²⁴ to unfocused, bureaucratic mazes administered

²³The World Bank, *Staff Appraisal Report: India Industrial Technology Development Project* (Washington: The World Bank, August 15, 1989), p. 14; Anil B. Deolalikar and Robert E. Evenson, "Private Inventive Activity in Indian Manufacturing: Its Extent and Determinants," in Evenson and Gustav Ranis, eds., *Science and Technology: Lessons for Development Policy* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), pp. 233-238.

²⁴The most often cited examples are the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), and the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC).

by a variety of ministries.²⁵ General recognition of these problems in part prompted state efforts to encourage private R&D, beginning in the last years of Indira Gandhi. The gradual development of private sector R&D is discussed below.

Shifting State-Private Sector Relations

Since 1947, India's S&T policy has been closely related to overall industrial and macroeconomic policies, which in turn, have been shaped by the political economic crises of the post-independence period. The need to consolidate Nehru's socialist government and jump-start economic development led to state-controlled heavy industrialization and import substitution. Accordingly, the state undertook most indigenous R&D, there were few linkages with or customers in the private sector, and most immediately needed technology was purchased from foreign suppliers and little improved upon.²⁶ Almost nothing was done to encourage private sector R&D, and it languished. By contrast, the 1980s crisis of external and budgetary debts and economic stagnation forced the governments of Rajiv Gandhi and (especially) Narasimha Rao (1991-present) to liberalize the economy, privatize state-owned enterprises (SOEs), and promote exports. The state moved to encourage private R&D efforts and joint ventures with multinational corporations (MNCs), generally allowing greater foreign participation in Indian markets in exchange for better access to technology.²⁷

Most R&D programs have been planned and organized by the state bureaucracy, with the assistance of state R&D institutions—the private sector playing at best a secondary role until recently. The state's role vis-à-vis the private sector has changed only slightly since the mid-1970s. The government's percentage of total R&D, measured in spending terms, dipped only slightly from 1975 to 1990 (80.8 to 76.8%), state-run R&D institutes accounting for all of this. Similarly, industry's percentage of total R&D rose only slightly in the same period (19.2 to 22.9%), though absolute amounts rose twenty-one percent,

²⁵M. Srinivasan, *Management of Science and Technology: Problems and Prospects* (New Delhi: Affiliated East-West Press PVT, Ltd., 1989), pp. 44-52.

²⁶Baxter, et al., op. cit., pp. 153-154.

²⁷E. Sridharan, "Leadership Time Horizons in India," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 31, No. 12 (December, 1991): 1202-1204.

1976-1987. University R&D has been so negligible that the state does not report statistics on it.²⁸

Various factors have hobbled the development of vigorous private sector R&D along the lines of those in Northeast Asia. The most important of these are state policies. The Nehru era "Mahalanobis" strategy envisioned state-fostered heavy industry as the engine of the economy. This would be done either through state owned enterprises (SOEs) or licensed private firms—generally the largest in the industry.²⁹ Some SOEs, such as Bharat Heavy Electricals, Ltd. (BHEL) successfully adapted a range of foreign technologies, while boosting their own in-house R&D. Others, such as Heavy Engineering Corp. (HEC), experienced frequent leadership changes, relied exclusively on foreign technology, and depended on state financial support.³⁰ India's SOEs have been widely criticized for their reliance on state subsidies, crowding out of capital that might be used for private sector efforts and absorption of private investment, cost and time overruns (of up to 90%), and attendant inefficiency.³¹

The economic planning process has also given the state an advantage in shaping S&T development. Industrial Policy Resolutions in 1948 and 1956 reserved such sectors as heavy industry and defense production to the state, and established a comprehensive system of licenses for nearly all private industry (derisively called "the license raj"). Licenses typically require approval by several agencies, making entry difficult. The state also

²⁸National Science Foundation (U.S.), *Human Resources for Science and Technology...*, op. cit., pp. 96, 100, 104, 108, 112; The World Bank, *Staff Appraisal Report...*, op. cit., p. 14.

²⁹Upendra Prasad Singh, *Economic Development of India and Brazil: A Comparative Study* (New Delhi: National Book Organization, 1986), pp. 297-298; Primit Chaudhuri, *The Indian Economy: Poverty and Development* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979), pp. 217-218.

³⁰Ravi Ramamurti, *State-owned Enterprises in High Technology Industries: Studies in India and Brazil* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), pp. 77-169.

³¹J.D. Sethi, *Indian Economy Under Siege* (Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt., Ltd., 1992), pp. 63-70. The state's anti-monopoly law, enacted in 1969, required approvals for expansion of most large-scale production, and so favored the development of a private sector composed mainly of SMEs, rather than large firms that could benefit from economies of scale. Jason Dedrick and Kenneth L. Kraemer, "Information Technology in India: The Quest for Self-Reliance," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 33, No. 5 (May, 1993): 467.

reserved the option to enter industries, if it deemed it necessary. Early plans, such as the Second Plan (1957-1961) called for state enterprises to lead heavy industrialization and import substitution, while aiding SMEs and village-level business. From the mid-1960s to mid-1970s, even as state policy moved toward liberalization and the influence of subsequent plans within the government gradually declined, SOEs' share of total industrial investment skyrocketed.³²

At the same time, protectionist trade policies have blocked most consumer and intermediate goods imports, instead encouraging a mix of importation and indigenous production of capital goods and new technologies. While India has developed a strong base of industrial production technology, acquisition of technology from foreign sources has often been the prime route of S&T development.³³ Even so, the state increasingly tightened technology import regulations in the 1960s and 1970s, and so the number of Indian technological import agreements has been relatively small.³⁴

Beginning under the Janata government in 1978 and resuming with Rajiv Gandhi in 1984, India began to liberalize its trade and capital import policies, allowing industries such as automobiles to upgrade through technology imports.³⁵ In the 1980s, the state introduced subsidies and tax exemptions, import processing zones, and technology import information services to promote exports. However, most improvement in export performance in the 1980s, Lall suggests, came from slow corporate building of production and marketing capacity in the domestic economy, which they have adapted to foreign markets.³⁶

³²Gautam Sen, *The Military Origins of Industrialisation and International Trade Rivalry* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), pp. 147-151; Bepin Behari, *Mismanagement of Indian Economy* (Delhi: B.R. Publishing Corp, 1991), pp. 196-204.

³³Lall, op. cit., pp. 226-233, 240-241; Sukhamoy Chakravarty, *Development Planning: The Indian Experience* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp. 64-69..

³⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 235-239.

³⁵Anthony P. D'Costa, "The Long March to Capitalism: India's Resistance to and Reintegration with the World Economy," Paper presented at the 45th Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies (Los Angeles, California), March 25-28, 1993, pp. 1-3, 12-15, 21-36.

³⁶Sanjaya Lall, *Learning to Industrialize: The Acquisition of Technological Capability by India* (London: MacMillan Press, Ltd., 1987), pp. 23-28. Exports accounted for 2.4% of India's economy in 1948, but had fallen to 0.41% by 1981. By contrast, Korea's exports were less than 1% in

In 1991, to satisfy foreign lenders' demands for a reduction of India's huge foreign debt, the Rao government abolished licensing for many industries, and eliminated government approval of imported technology; automatic approval would be given to many foreign technology agreements. A new monopoly law allowed up to fifty-one percent foreign equity ownership. Clearance for many new projects was reduced from six months to two weeks. The Rao government also began shutting down or downgrading operations of "unviable" SOEs, and introduced voluntary early retirement schemes to reduce the federal payroll in all 246 SOEs.³⁷

Since the late 1970s, the Indian state has encouraged both state enterprises and the private sector to set up R&D organizations through generous tax incentives. However, the effectiveness of these incentives has been limited by bureaucratic norms established since the Nehru era, and interpretation has favored large companies.³⁸ By the mid-1980s, there were about 950 corporate R&D units (up from 125 in the mid-1970s), including fifty-two state corporate R&D units, and spending by such R&D units had more than doubled in the previous decade. Most of these units were created by the largest Indian firms (the top 46 accounting for over half of industrial R&D expenditures), and most private labs were concentrated in the chemicals, pharmaceuticals, electrical/electronics, and transportation equipment industries. The major share of state enterprises focused on electrical/electronics goods, telecommunications, and chemicals. In fact, these three sectors account for 775 of the above corporate R&D units.³⁹

Even though private and semi-public R&D has grown, the state still controls most Indian S&T. State research organs, principally those under CSIR, account for about three-fourths of

1960, but by 1980 were four times the size of India's. "What Reforms Can Do For India," *Dataquest* (October, 1992): 106.

³⁷Ramashray Roy, "India in 1992: Search for Safety," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (February, 1993): 122; "The Liberalization Steps," *Dataquest*, (November, 1991): 102; Kingshuk Nag, "Industrial Policy: Only a beginning," *Business India* (August 5-18, 1991): 55-56; "A year of reforms," *Business India* (July 6-19, 1992): 52-60; Teesta Betalvad, et al., "The manpower mess," *Business India* (September 28-October 11, 1992): 97-100.

³⁸The World Bank, *Staff Appraisal Report...*, op. cit., p. 16.

³⁹Lall (1984), op. cit., pp. 233-235; Deolalikar and Evenson, op. cit., pp. 241-245; The World Bank, *Staff Appraisal Report...*, op. cit., p. 14.

Indian S&T expenditures.⁴⁰ The state orients its S&T policies almost exclusively toward R&D programs of state R&D labs, until recently downplaying the importance of private sector R&D.⁴¹ Despite the increased emphasis on industrial research, the bulk of state R&D spending is for nuclear science, aerospace research, and defense projects. Out of a nearly \$2 billion S&T budget in 1990, only \$146 million was devoted to industrial research.⁴²

Until recently, the Indian state considered economic self-reliance more important than indigenous development of S&T, heavy industrialization more vital than growth of a vigorous private sector. If technology could be purchased quickly from foreign suppliers, it made more sense to Indian policymakers to buy it rather than develop it domestically. The government generally promoted foreign tie-ups which involved little foreign equity ownership or control of operations, and companies favored technical collaboration agreements with SOEs or large Indian conglomerates over direct imports of technology.⁴³ Desai notes that both large firms and SMEs are reluctant to invest in S&T, the former because of lack of resources and the low-tech nature of the firms promoted by the state, and the latter because of the perceived risks created by antimonopoly and licensing regulations, and import substitution policies that encourage technology imports over indigenous development by pushing down the price of imports.⁴⁴

Under the Rao government's liberalization policy, though, the business climate is radically changing. Approvals for foreign investment have been cut from years to weeks, tariffs have been

⁴⁰Shrader, op. cit., p. 76.

⁴¹Deolalikar and Evenson, op. cit., pp. 252.

⁴²K.S. Jayaraman, "Atomic energy gets priority," *Nature* (March 29, 1990): 371.

⁴³Pramit Chaudhuri, *The Indian Economy: Poverty and Development* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979), pp. 217-218; V.N. Balasubramanyam, *The Economy of India* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, Ltd., 1984), pp. 151-165.

⁴⁴Ashok V. Desai, "Technology Acquisition and Application: Interpretations of the Indian Experience," in Robert E.B. Lucas and Gustav F. Papanek, eds., *The Indian Economy: Recent Development and Future Prospects* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988), pp. 163-183; Sanjaya Lall, "India's Technological Capacity: Effects of Trade, Industrial, Science and Technology Policies," in Martin Fransman and Kenneth King, eds., *Technological Capacity in the Third World* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), pp. 229-233.

reduced from as much as 200% to a maximum of sixty-five percent. Partly as a result, the Indian government received \$3.3 billion in foreign investment proposals during 1993 and 1994, and exports increased twenty percent. Indian companies have formed tie-ups with a variety of foreign firms.⁴⁵ As foreign connections increase and companies generate increased capital in the next few years, they will probably be able to conduct much more of their own R&D. Nonetheless, they start from a very small base. In sum, while the state has dominated Indian S&T throughout the post-independence period, the nature of that dominance and the relationship between public and private sectors has changed. In the 1980s, the entrance of private industry into high technology production, the lack of strong public-private R&D linkages, and the minuscule financial aid given companies by the state forced companies to perform more of their own R&D—and to participate in increased foreign tie-ups. Since the last years of Indira Gandhi, the private sector has been granted much more autonomy in S&T decision making,⁴⁶ yet R&D remains very much a state-dominated concern.

India's Key Technology Projects

Unlike the East Asian NICs, with their explicit export orientation, Indian industrial policy has consistently emphasized the importance of inward development and heavy industrialization.⁴⁷ Governments since Nehru have also emphasized development of agricultural and nuclear science, viewed as keys to development. These twin emphases have only recently changed, as the state has gradually freed up or supported private research in high tech fields such as computers and telephone switching equipment.

⁴⁵Rahul Jacob, "India Gets Moving," *Fortune*, September 5, 1994, pp. 100-104; Peter Fuhrman and Michael Schuman, "Now we are our own masters," *Forbes* (May 23, 1994): 128-138.

⁴⁶For a fuller discussion of these changes, see The World Bank, *Staff Appraisal Report: India Industrial Technology Development Project* (New York: The World Bank, August 15, 1989), pp. 1-11.

⁴⁷Sanjaya Lall, "Technological Capabilities and Industrialization," *World Development*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (February, 1992): 169-180.

AGRICULTURE

Agriculture was the most important object of R&D at the university level even before 1947, and by the late 1940s every major agricultural commodity or crop had a special laboratory dedicated to it. Due to the colonial experience of dealing with frequent famines, leadership believed advances in agriculture to be a critical base for national development, and were necessary to reduce dependence on foreign countries.⁴⁸ India's efforts to achieve agricultural self-sufficiency have been largely successful, though regional and income disparities have worsened.⁴⁹ This has been possible because of a combination of expanded irrigation, use of new high-yield crops, increased use and production of chemical fertilizers, development of hybrid seed varieties, and fitting of crops to ecosystems.⁵⁰

PRESTIGE PROJECTS

Similarly, nuclear science achieved a preeminent spot in post-independence science. Nuclear scientist Homi Bhabha, supported by the private Tata and Birla interests, developed the Tata Institute and became a key advisor to Nehru. Bhabha viewed cultivation of nuclear science as the best way for India to obtain both cheap energy for development and potential weaponry to bolster the state's geopolitical position in South Asia.⁵¹ India has produced two nuclear power plants and a nuclear fuel plant by the mid-1980s, developed a fast breeder plant, and exploded a "peaceful" nuclear device.⁵² Also, the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) developed several resources satellite systems in the 1980s. It used Soviet and European rockets and the U.S. space shuttle to launch them, before developing its own

⁴⁸R.S. Anderson, op. cit., pp. 40-41, 42-44.

⁴⁹Malik and Bhardwaj, op. cit., pp. 6-7.

⁵⁰J.S. Rao, op. cit., p. 131. Agriculture has been the primary focus of Indian biotechnology efforts. Partly with funds from U.S. AID, the Indian state has been building an agricultural gene bank at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute in New Delhi, which when finished in 1994 is to hold as many as 800,000 varieties of seeds. Its parent is the National Bureau for Plant Genetic Resources, which is often ranked, along with facilities in the U.S. and Russia, as among the world's best gene banks. "Indians protest against US-led gene bank," *Nature* (January 28, 1993): 291.V.

rockets in the mid-1980s.⁵³ Based on transfers of U.S. and European technology, IRSO produced India's first communications satellite, which was launched on a European Ariane rocket in 1992.⁵⁴ Also, the Defense Ministry's Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) has developed a small, computer-guided fighter-bomber called the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA).⁵⁵

COMPUTERS

The Indian computer industry was not noteworthy until the mid-1980s, but in the 1970s was probably more advanced than its counterparts in Korea or Taiwan.⁵⁶ In the early 1970s, changes in computer technology gave India the chance to enter computer production through production of mini and micro computers. In the mid-1970s, the state forced Burroughs and ICL to form joint ventures with Indian companies. Meanwhile, the Indian Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) had won a battle with the Ministry of Defense for control of the Electronics Commission, which set computer policy, and the Department of Electronics (DOE), which implemented it. The commission adopted a two-pronged approach: it allowed large businesses to form joint ventures for the purpose of importing mainframes and large mini-computers, and promoted the state-run Electronics Corporation of India (ECIL) as a national champion for development of small mini-computers.

Tata formed a joint venture with Unisys, Inc. of the U.S., but government negotiators' hard line on equity control and

⁵¹R.S. Anderson, op. cit., pp. 41-42; K.K. Pathak, *Nuclear Policy of India: A Third World Perspective* (New Delhi: Gitanjali Prakashan, 1980), pp. 28-39.

⁵²J.S. Rao, op. cit., p. 132; Pathak, op. cit., pp. 123-136.

⁵³J.S. Rao, op. cit., p. 132; Helen Gavaghan, "India's practical path to space," *Nature* (November 5, 1988): 28-29.

⁵⁴Hamish McDonald, "Price of Self-Reliance: Success Came Slowly and Expensively," *Far Eastern Economic Review* (December 10, 1992): 48-50.

⁵⁵"Multirole LCA Cuts Radar Signature," *Aviation Week and Space Technology* (July 25, 1995): 42-43.

⁵⁶The Indian computer market is still small, with perhaps much untapped potential. Japan consumed 2 million PCs in 1990, over 7 times the number in use in India that year. There are 3,500 persons for each PC in India, vs. 36 in Korea and 18 in Singapore. "Still a Micro Market," *Dataquest*, (November, 1991): 105.

service agreements caused it to back out of a venture with IBM. While the government did not wish to alienate the U.S. giant, it felt it had to uphold its foreign ownership limit of forty percent equity. ECIL created various opportunities for Indian suppliers, but customers were unsatisfied with its products, and potential competitors decried its monopoly status. Both users and nascent computer companies teamed up to try to force the commission to allow more companies to enter production.⁵⁷

In the early 1980s, the industry was dominated by ECIL and International Computers India Manufacture (ICIM), a semi-public firm. However, in 1984, DOE changed course with its New Electronics Policy. This encouraged the development of the local industry through: 1) liberalization of imports of technology and of mainframe and supercomputers, 2) establishment of four "science cities" around the nation, dedicated to electronics/computer R&D,⁵⁸ 3) international technology transfer agreements with the U.S. and Japan, and 4) lifting limits on individual computer companies' production and exports, along with easier licensing of new firms. It also set up a National Microelectronics Council to plan and coordinate computer R&D among existing state R&D centers.⁵⁹

With the change of government from Gandhi to Rao, the state has also sought to promote India as a computer manufacturing base, similar to Korea and Taiwan. To improve the industry's international position, it has approved several link-ups with MNCs. In 1991, after a decade delay, the state approved a joint venture between the Tata Group, India's largest conglomerate, and IBM, for production of high-end PCs (especially IBM's PS/2) for the Indian market and parts for IBM's international operations. In light of IBM's previous Indian history, IBM has only forty-nine percent equity ownership, and the new company is called Tata Information Systems, Ltd.⁶⁰ The same year, Hindustan Computers,

⁵⁷"The New IBM Way," *Dataquest* (March, 1992): 103; Dedrick and Kraemer, op. cit., pp. 475-477; Joseph M. Grieco, *Between Dependency and Autonomy: India's Experience with the International Computer Industry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 50-51, 66-68, 102, 147-149.

⁵⁸So far, the only science city to be established is at Bangalore. The others are to be set up in the northern, western, and eastern regions of India.

⁵⁹These include the TIFR, the Central Electronics Engineering Research Institute, the Indian Institute of Science, and 5 institutes of technology. Girdner, op. cit., pp. 1193-1196, 1201.

⁶⁰IBM was in the process of changing its corporate strategy due to

Ltd. (HCL) formed a joint venture with Hewlett Packard (HP) of the U.S. to manufacture a range of HP computers; HP was allowed to take a twenty-six percent stake in the new venture.⁶¹ Thus, while liberalizing the computer industry, the state favored the Nehru era approach of importation over indigenous technological development.

India has developed a strong software industry.⁶² It has experienced modest but steady growth since the late 1980s, and has concentrated its efforts on export markets, primarily because of the low level of computerization in India, little indigenous R&D, lack of up-to-date software engineering, and monopoly software contracting to Computer Maintenance Corp (CMC). State enterprises and national universities have put together a number of specialized computer information and software packages.⁶³ In

major financial problems, and decided an alliance with a local Indian manufacturer was acceptable, since it could not have the total control it wanted. "The Return of IBM," *Dataquest* (March, 1992): 98-102; K.G. Kumar and Madhav Reddy, "Ratan Tata: The end of innocence," *Business India* (December 23, 1991-January 5, 1992): 55-56, 59, 60; Carl Goldstein, "Big Blue Returns," *Far Eastern Economic Review* (October 10, 1991): 66.

⁶¹Rahul Sharma, "A Significant Move," *Business India* (April 29-May 12, 1991): 60-62. Other international collaborations include Digital Electronics India, Ltd. (DEIL) with both Digital Corp. and Apple Computers of the U.S., and ICIM with Fujitsu of Japan. Wipro Infotech has three tie-ups: with Sun Microsystems of the U.S. for workstations, Tandem Computers for on-line systems, and Seiko Epson of Japan for printers. HCL-HP is now the market leader for hardware, with Wipro, PCL, and DEIL also in the top five. "Soft bytes, and hard battles," *Business India* (August 31-September 13, 1992): 126-129; Sushila Ravindranath, "A quiet confidence," *Business India* (November 25-December 8, 1991): 65-68; "Becoming Global," *Dataquest* (October, 1992): 106-107. Tata, a conglomerate of 46 companies, hopes to concentrate on a few key industries: trucks and automobiles, computers and computer services, steel, construction engineering, and telecommunications. Pete Engardio and Shekhar Hattangadi, "India's Mr. Business," *Business Week* (April 18, 1994): 100-101.

⁶²"Personal Computers and the World Software Market," *Communications of the ACM* (February, 1991): 25-26.

⁶³Robert Schware, "Software Industry Entry Strategies for Developing Countries: A 'Walking on Two Legs' Proposition," *World Development*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (February, 1992): 148-151. Software exports reached \$164 million in 1991. "The SW Promise," *Dataquest* (October, 1992): 103.

1986, to help turn the industry into an exporter, DOE liberalized software imports, removed licensing requirements for imports, reduced duties sixty percent, and made available foreign exchange to software importers. In 1990, most software profits were exempted from taxes, and in 1992, the government set up duty-free software export zones.⁶⁴ However, DOE was slow to formulate policies on important international concerns, such as duplication and piracy of imported software, and has not adopted consistent import duties.⁶⁵ The domestic market is growing, but the industry still lacks design skills beyond simple coding, is underfinanced, and operates in poorly developed markets for locally developed software.⁶⁶

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

India's telecommunications system has been controlled throughout the post-independence period by the Department of Telecommunications (DOT), which has a monopoly on telephone and telegraph service. India has attempted to fully indigenize and digitalize its telephone switching system, and intends to provide at least one telephone for each of India's villages and quadruple the number of telephones in service to twenty million by 2000 (this may have to be slipped because of budget constraints). The Rajiv Gandhi government gave the task of developing a switching technology to Sam Pitroda, a founder of the state-funded but privately-run Centre for the Development of Telematics (C-DOT) in New Delhi. Pitroda, owing partly to his American experience, felt the quickest way to develop a switching device for India was to use a mixture of foreign technology and indigenous developments.⁶⁷ His team of 500 technicians relied on parallel

⁶⁴Dedrick and Kraemer, op. cit., pp. 479-480; Sunita Wadekar Bhargava, "Software from India? Yes, it's for Real," *Business Week* (January 18, 1993): 77.

⁶⁵"In Search Of A Policy," *Dataquest* (October, 1992): 85-88.

⁶⁶"Soft bytes...," *Business India*, op. cit., pp. 131-135; "The SW Promise," *Dataquest*, op. cit., p. 103; Jon Udell, "India's Software Edge," *Byte* (September, 1993): 55-60.

⁶⁷Though born in India, Pitroda had a long career in the U.S., where he developed over fifty patents for digital technologies. He returned to India to become an advisor to the prime minister before heading C-DOT. Pitroda has also been the subject of a recent biography. For a personal view of his work, see Pitroda, "Development, Democracy, and the Village Telephone," *Harvard Business Review* (November-December, 1993): 66-79.

processing, which is more dependent on software than hardware. The Telematics Centre's successful development of a switching system led to the establishment of a related Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), which has been researching application of the parallel processing method to industrial uses.⁶⁸

The Rao government changed course in July, 1991, when it delicensed telecommunications equipment manufacturing and opened up the field to foreign investment. Several joint ventures were formed, which competed for contracts to be let by the Department of Telecommunications. DOT contracted with Siemens, Fujitsu, and Ericsson for supply of switching systems in 1992. Due to its association with the Rajiv Gandhi government, the Telematics Centre's budget was cut, and although its rural telephone exchange was used, its urban-oriented exchange did not meet minimum technical requirements set by the telecommunications department.⁶⁹ DOT has begun to sell exchanges in foreign markets, but the Rao government intends to privatize it in the future.⁷⁰

As the state cut back SOE operations and encouraged the private sector in the 1980s, its ability to shape technological development lessened. The Nehru government could keep R&D efforts focused on the twin goals of self-reliance/industrialization and advance in strategic industries (agriculture and nuclear). Through heavy importation, India developed heavy industries and became a world leader in agricultural and nuclear technology. As India shifted toward high technology industrialization in the 1980s, the state-led approach no longer worked, and the state was less able to effect the course of R&D. It turned to a liberalization-cum-importation technology policy in high tech industries.

⁶⁸Robert Crawford, "Out of the dark ages," *Far Eastern Economic Review* (November 22, 1990): 78.

⁶⁹The joint ventures included: 1) GEC of Britain and Siemens with K.K. Birla, 2) Ericsson with Jiwarijkar interests, 3) AT&T with Tata Telecom, 4) Fujitsu with Punjab State Electronic Production and Development Corp., and 5) Alcatel with B.K. Modi. "Hello, India," *Business India* (October 12-25, 1992): 55-57.

⁷⁰Eapen Thomas, et al., "Telephone trauma," *Business India* (October 12-23, 1992): 59-60; Peter O'Neill, "Modernization of the Balkan networks," *Telecommunications* (April, 1993): 14, 17.

Conclusion

Since independence, the Indian state's role in S&T has been paramount, but has gradually changed. This is clearly seen in the development of state policymaking and R&D institutions. Where the Nehru government attempted state-led autarky, governments of the past decade have cut back the operations of both SOEs and state-run laboratories. The private sector, once able to participate in the nation's industrialization only through special licensing, has gradually taken the lead in high tech fields such as computers and software.

India's S&T program shares certain features of development with other countries, yet each is unique. Like other countries, it began with virtually no S&T capacity or programs in the early postwar era, and made S&T development a major part of national economic development. It devoted much effort to institutionalization before launching major S&T programs, and moved from S&T to support ISI and heavy industrialization to high technology or export-oriented industrialization. India's S&T program thus involved a strong component of state-led development, though the role of the state was not uniform, varying by industrial sector and time.

The state's relationship with the private sector changed over time, from near total dominance to gradual liberalization. The role of the private sector in R&D increased as the economy developed, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s. Throughout the pre-liberalization period, Indian governments have considered R&D a primary developmental resource that they should strictly control. Since liberalization, technology policy has come to resemble those of other fast-developing nations, including South Korea, Taiwan and Brazil. State research organizations no longer take the lead in every major project, and often serve as equal or junior R&D partners. The Rao government's recent economic liberalization program is creating a climate conducive to expanded private sector R&D, even though companies start from a quite meager research base.

India devoted considerable effort to developing a computer industry in the 1970s and 1980s, and at least devoted some R&D efforts to developing telecommunications equipment and biotechnology. India also emphasized R&D that would fit the particular needs and traditions, e.g., India's agricultural and "prestige" programs, such as nuclear power, satellites, and aerospace. Like many of the fast-developing nations of East Asia, India saw high technology products such as computers as quick ways to leapfrog to advanced nation status in selected industries.

Linked as these are to international markets and technology sources, the state saw liberalization and encouragement of private-led R&D as the best chances for India to become a major player in knowledge-intensive industries.

South Asian American Studies A Working Bibliography 1975-1994

Rosane Rocher

This bibliography, developed for a course on the Indian American experience at the University of Pennsylvania and covering the past two decades, is offered as a testimony to the coming of age of South Asian American Studies and as an incentive for further development.

A collection of essays, *The Asian American: The Historical Experience*, edited by Norris Hundley in 1976, included an article originally published by Gary R. Hess in the *Pacific Historical Review* in 1974 under the title "The Forgotten Asian Americans: The East Indian Community in the United States." Twenty years later, it remains the case that the Indian American experience in the United States has received less attention than that of some other Asian Americans. It is also the case that the South Asian American experience in the United States has been less studied than that in Canada, a fact that is at significant variance with other strands of Asian American Studies and which stems from a British imperial—now "Commonwealth"—past. Yet, as the South Asian American community has grown, so have South Asian American Studies in the United States. The following bibliography, which was developed—and will continue to be developed—for a Freshman writing course on the Indian American experience which I teach every Fall at the University of Pennsylvania, is offered as a source of inspiration for further explorations of the lives, past and present, of North Americans of South Asian heritage.

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As a bibliography developed for a course in which a majority of enrolled students were born of post-1965 immigrants from India in the United States, this selection of titles differs in some respects from that in *South Asians in North America: An Annotated and Selected Bibliography* edited by Jane Singh and others at the Center for South and Southeast Asia Studies, University of California, Berkeley, in 1988. The original occasion for Singh's bibliography was the cataloguing of a library collection on the Gadar Party, an organization founded in 1913 by immigrants from the Indian subcontinent on the West Coast of the United States and Canada in support of India's struggle for independence. The difference in focus is reflected in the title: whereas *South Asians in North America* evokes South Asian sojourners on alien American soil—and includes items dealing with visitors to North America such as Vivekananda—the present bibliography places the South Asian American experience within the context of an Asian American ethnicity. It is the premise of the course for which this bibliography was developed that the experience of Americans of South Asian origin is best studied in the light, not only of a global South Asian diaspora, but also of the shared experiences of successive generations of Americans of Asian ethnicity. Differently from the focus indicated in the subheadings "The Immigrant Experience, 1900-1946" and "The Immigrant Experience, 1947-1986" in *South Asians in America*, the present bibliography was designed to help students explore their identity as Americans of South Asian ethnicity born and/or raised in the United States.¹

Many new titles have appeared since 1986, when the research for *South Asians in America* was concluded. In addition to these, to relevant titles already included in *South Asians in America*, and to publications that had not come to its editors' notice, the present bibliography includes critical studies of South Asian American literature, a field of inquiry that is new to South Asian American Studies, though not to Asian American Studies at large. Works of creative writing proper and newspaper and magazine articles are not included any more than they were in *South Asians in America*. Differently, the present bibliography

¹A report on the first edition of this course, "Building Community Spirit: A Writing Course on the Indian American Experience," is forthcoming in an anthology of the Association for Asian American Studies being edited by Lane R. Hirabayashi and others.

does not include unpublished dissertations and papers. Entries marked * are unverified.

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Book Review

Wives and Others: Short Stories and a Novella. By Manik Bandyopadhyay/Tr. Kalpana Bardhan. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1994. Pp. xxix, 345. Rs. 125 pb.

Kalpana Bardhan's latest collection of translations—*Wives and Others: Short Stories and a Novella*—features the entire collection of thirteen stories known in Bengali as “Bou” [Wives], another ten short stories, and a novella “The Children of Immortality” (Amṛtasya putrāḥ) by Manik Bandyopadhyay (1908-1956). Manik (like other well-known figures, he is referred to by his first name by Bengalis) is important in modern South Asian literature for the political motivations of his fiction as well as for the artistic skill with which he channeled his concerns into popular short stories and novels. Among the latter, *Padmā nadīr mājhī* [The Boatman of the Padma River] and *Putul nācer itikathā* [The Puppet's Tale] are best known. Manik was a committed member of the pan-South Asian Progressive Writers' Movement, and has an influential place in the lively and contentious ranks of early twentieth-century Bengali fiction writers. At times Manik's narrative voice stops to teach—or even preach—about the changing and pressured society he describes, but most of the time it is intricately ironic as he explores the interplay of classes, genders, and generations. The “subject matter” of Manik's fiction makes translations of his work an easy choice for any number of literature or cultural studies classes taught at American universities.

All of the works Bardhan has selected were originally published in the 1930's and '40's (xiv) and can be seen as revolving around human relationships and perceptions of the self. Manik's female characters are lively and varied, although in the “Bou” stories they necessarily struggle against, and are often defeated by, the narrowly defined roles assigned to them as wives and mothers.

While Manik's fictional personalities represent social “types,” each character is also uniquely lifelike. The plain Sarasi's discovery of—and mortification by—the voluptuousness of her own body in “The Clerk's Wife” (“Keranīr bou”) and Shankar's terrifying delusions in “Serpent-like” (“Sarpil”) are as unforgettable as the walled compounds and run-down mansions the characters live in. Sumati's healthy egotism in the beginning of “The Spirited Wife” (“Tejī bou”) is tonic reading after

countless portrayals of South Asian women (by writers of every persuasion and background) as beguiling mysteries filled with unexpressed emotion.

Given Manik's qualities as a writer, it is regrettable that Bardhan's translations in *Wives and Others* are mediocre at best. Manik's deft, powerful blending of literary Bengali with colloquial freshness is only dimly reflected in Bardhan's jumble of idioms: "Little did she know that . . . [Suryakanta] would himself appear one day, accompanied by three friends, to view her as his potential bride, and after *checking her out*, give his consent."¹ ("The Writer's Wife," 33; reviewer's emphasis). There is nothing in the original to warrant the descent from "potential-bride-viewing" to "checking out." Is it only the difference in editorial effort that results in the vast difference between the prose of the volume under review and the clean, readable work found in Bardhan's earlier collection of *Translations Of Women, Outcastes, Peasants, and Rebels* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1990)? Despite Bardhan's attested commitment to Manik and his causes (Translator's Introduction), her murky translations are often a chore to work through even with the Bengali original ringing in one's mental ear. Bardhan is *too* faithful at times, failing to convert participle-driven Bengali sentences into appropriate English: "Hearing such things constantly, her fearfulness grows" ("The Clerk's Wife," 26) should have ended with "...she grew more fearful." Why couldn't the title of "Andher Bou" simply be translated "The Blind Man's Wife"—parallel to "The Shopkeeper's Wife," "The Writer's Wife" etc. instead of "The Wife of a Man Gone Blind"? All the Bengali titles end in *bou*, and the original does not signal to us to distinguish between "blind"—a possibly pejorative adjective—and "gone blind"—a vaguely milder one. The sudden variation adds further disorderliness to the generally artless, and perhaps rushed, translation.

Although Bardhan's translations do not bear *close* reading, *Wives and Others* is accessible and relevant for non-Bengali readers interested in modern South Asian literature and society. The sheer amount of material translated in this collection can give one a sense of Manik's literary and historical importance, as well as afford precious glimpses into twentieth-century Bengali experience. It should be noted, however, that, through no fault of Bardhan's, the cover of the Penguin paperback seems to participate in a dubious trend of commercial publishing: it baits the

¹*takhan se janito. . . ekin svayam tinti bandhur sange take dekhite asibe eban dekhia pachando koriya jabe!* (Manik Granthāli, V. 4, p.406)

prospective buyer to the cultural finesse and possible feminism of the contents by means of “artistic nudes” of South Asian women.

Sagaree Sengupta
University of Texas at Austin

Errata

The following are corrections to volume 1, number 2:

Bulletin Board, page 113: leading to the doctorate *or* [with change] the Master of Fine Arts...

Bulletin Board, page 114: There should be closing quotation marks after “Database Creation.”

Bulletin, Board, page 114: “East” in “US Information Agency Near and Middle East Research and Training Act” should be capitalized.

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