

SOME CONCEPTS OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY IN INDIA

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Studies in Hindu social psychology up to the early 1970's were reviewed. It was concluded that cross-cultural research still has not found strong grounding in the Indian psychological community. It was noted that very few researches actually focused on indigenous concepts and that very rarely were such concepts studied using culturally sensitive instruments. To facilitate the movement of India's research work towards ethnic analysis, central concepts were abstracted from the Hindu religion which were believed to also be key concepts in the social psychology of the Hindus. The concept of class/caste, the doctrine of transmigration or *samsāra*, and the tendency towards inclusiveness were among the concepts cited as central to the understanding of Hindu psychology. Included also in this study were some reflections on the consequences of such religious values on the life of an individual and on society. Finally, some chartered paths towards a healthy modernization of the Hindu were presented.

A. Social Psychological Research: Conceptual and Methodological Issues

A review of 527 studies in social psychology conducted in India up to 1970 by Ruth (1972) shows that work has been carried out in the following areas: culture and social process (n=277); attitudes and opinion change (n=93); group and interpersonal process (n=71); communication (n=27); aesthetics (n=20); methodology (n=29); others (n=10). It is clear that different research areas did not receive equitable attention and that most of the researches were confined to small studies on narrow aspects of large social problems. Further, various accumulated findings have not been synthesized so that various constructs verified by empirical findings would form comprehensive conceptual systems (ICSSR, 1973).

Studies after 1970 have been largely concerned with personal, social and religious value systems, differences and preferences across various demographic and socio-personal variables (e.g. Bhattacharya, 1973; Parmesh, 1973; Rao, 1973; Desai, 1974; Singh, S., 1978); and child rearing practices or family structure in relation to different personality dimensions (e.g. Nijhawan, 1971; Nijhawan and Verma, 1975; Singh, S.N. 1975; Singh, U.P. and Sowaid, 1976; Madan, 1976; Joshi and Daharwal, 1977; Ponnuswami, 1977). Caste as a sociological variable has been studied by Anant (1972a, 1972b, 1973, 1974, 1975), Singh, R.M. (1972), Das and Shingha (1975), Sinha, S.N. (1975) and Prasad, M.B. (1976). The determinants/correlates of religious, ethnic stereotypes and different prejudices have been studied by Chatterjee, Mukerjee,

Chakarbarty and Hassan (1972a, 1972b), Prasad, R.N. (1972), Sinha and Krishna (1972), Hassan (1973a, 1973b, 1978), Hassan and Singh (1973), Srivastava and Kapil (1974) and Anant (1976). The research on attitudes has been concerned with religious and ethnic attitudes (e.g. Mohanta, 1977), attitude toward communism (e.g. Sinha and Iyer, 1971), marriage (Chakroborti, 1975; Rao and Rao 1976), and attitude change (e.g. Sinha and Dhawan, 1971). Besides a review of Indian researches on need for achievement by Mehta and Mohta (1974), a number of other studies have been conducted relating need for achievement with entrepreneurial success, rural economic development, agricultural growth, progressive farm behavior etc. (e.g. Sinha, D. and Chaubey, 1972; Sinha, D., 1974; Hundal and Singh, 1975; Singh, S., 1976, 1977, 1978 and Singh and Gupta, 1977).

Other studies have been concerned with social distance (e.g. Meade and Singh, 1973; Muttagi, 1975); authoritarianism (e.g. Hassan and Khan, 1975; Sinha and Sinha, 1976); dogmatism (e.g. Hassan, Q., 1974); modernization and modern value orientation (e.g. Damle, 1974; Sharma, 1975; Mukerjee, 1977); economic conservatism (e.g. Sarkar and Hassan, 1973); communication (e.g. Verma, 1973; Pareek and Dixit, 1977); risk-taking behavior (e.g. Singh and Singh, 1972); correlates of social change (e.g. Vasudeva, 1976); contemporary social changes (e.g. Kapur, 1973; Parantham, 1975; Nandy, 1976) and social problems (e.g. Gulati, Moni, Singh and Hassan, 1977; Kundu and Ghosh, 1977); leadership behaviour (e.g. Pandey, 1976; Pant, 1976); social acceptance (e.g. Venkatramiah and Kumari, 1975); psychological dimensions of poverty (e.g. Sinha, D., 1976); decision-making (e.g. Kanekar, 1977); culture contact and personality structure (e.g. Singh, V.K., 1976); social perception (e.g. Tripathi, 1978); dependence proneness (e.g. Tiwari, 1978); creativity growth among disadvantaged children (Ahmad and Joshi, 1978); student unrest (e.g. Roy, 1974) and interpersonal

attraction (e.g. Eswara, 1974)

Some cross-cultural comparisons have also been attempted on personal values (e.g. Thiagarajan and Andre, 1971); coercion and competition (e.g. Carment and Modkin, 1973); authoritarianism (e.g. Saiyadain, 1973); risk-taking propensity, tolerance of ambiguity, world-mindedness (e.g. Carment, 1974a, Carment and Alcock, 1976); future time perspective (e.g. Meade, 1971; Mehta, Rohila, Sundberg and Tyler, 1974), choice behavior (e.g. Carment, 1974b); attitude toward older people (e.g. Sharma, 1971); perceptual selectivity (e.g. Broota and Ganguly, 1975); cooperative and competitive game behavior (e.g. Pareek and Banerjee, 1974); parental perceptions of ideal child (e.g. Raina, 1973) and self-image (e.g. Agarwal, 1978). By and large, these studies compared Indian school/college samples with their American/Canadian counterparts. In a number of these studies, mean scores on Indian samples have been compared with normative data reported in the West without first standardizing norms in Indian culture. Hence such comparisons are weak.

In general, most of the post-1970 research continued to deal largely with social structure, change and roles; interpersonal processes and related issues; social perception and motivation; cross-cultural comparisons, etc. Sufficient attention has not been paid to family and political process, psychosexual behaviour, sex roles, drug and alcohol usage etc. The concepts involved in these researches included extraversion, need for achievement, locus of control, anxiety, modernity, dogmatism, authoritarianism, tolerance of ambiguity – to mention only a few. It can also be seen that these studies use more sophisticated and rigorous multi-variate designs and competent analysis, and manifest shifts toward rural sampling and greater problem-orientedness. Moreover, the post-1970 researches definitely made a promising beginning in some of the priority areas

suggested by the ICSSR Committee for Psychology (ICSSR, 1972). However, Indian social psychologists continued to ignore the augured interdisciplinary perspective in these researches and were bogged down with microcosmic processes (Sinha, D., 1975). Moreover, the concepts that were being measured in various studies continued to be those which are based on the observations of "White Male Middle Class Anglo-Saxon Protestant Undergraduates" (Serpell, 1976, p. 10). The results from such studies are restrictive and often misleading because their concepts are traceable to specific currents of western thought. Western methods, couched in western conceptual terms and interpreted in relation to western conceptual categories, are still the ones being used. For instance, Chakrobarty (1974) has criticized the existing criteria of mental health or illness for their covert dependence upon the implicit acceptance of a western culturally limited view of human nature and conditions. Further, the Review Committee of the ICSSR has also "voiced concern about the foreignness of social sciences research in India . . . in the field of psychology in particular" (ICSSR, 1973, p. 43). As a consequence, "Indian psychology has become not merely imitative and subservient but also dull and replicative" (Nandy, 1974, p. 4).

It is claimed that the development of cross-cultural psychology has been marked by a gradual emancipation from the automatic imposition of Western concepts, methods and operations. However, such a claim cannot be accepted as valid as far as cross-cultural research with respect to India is concerned. This is because such a research in India continues to use literal and shabbily translated western tools. Few attempts have been made to demonstrate the validity of the achieved cross-language or cross-cultural translations. The task of translation which appears to be simple turns out to be far more difficult than most people realize (e.g. Brislin, Lonner and Thorndike, 1973; Spielberger and Sharma,

1976; Sharma, 1977). A case in point is Wober's 'centricultural' comparisons. Such comparisons are called 'centricultural' by Wober (1969) because the goal is to vindicate a conceptual model developed in a Euro-American setting by attempting to show that it yields results in a variety of cultures. Discussing the same issue, Serpell (1976, p. 54) comments, "If theories originally formulated to explain the behavior of Western population are to be productive in cross-cultural research, they will need to be prised free of particular standardized tests and new instruments devised appropriate for measuring the same psychological construct in different settings."

Such a situation of "intellectual colonialism" has resulted from the asymmetrical social science transactions between industrialized and less industrialized countries. Kumar (1976) points out that the asymmetrical transactions (where 'inflows' and 'outflows' of knowledge and expertise do not balance one another), have discouraged the growth of indigeneous theoretical perspectives and methodologies because research problems continue to be defined in terms of existing knowledge. Another dys-functional consequence of such transactions is that it has helped to legitimize the present economic and political domination of the world by developed countries by providing for it a cultural rationale. Their value systems and ideologies have come to be idealized as more desirable ones. As a result, more of the people of the developing world not only perceive themselves as economically and politically backward (as in fact they are), but culturally and ethically as well (which they are not).

With the greater awareness and acceptance of the argument that social sciences are largely culture-specific and do not possess a single paradigm for analysis, there has emerged a small, but growing group of investigators focused on indigeneous key concepts, notions that have greater psychological reality to the culture, terms and labels people live by. The

investigations on *amae*, a dynamic of life-long expectation of dependent gratification observed in Japan (Doi, 1972), *giri-ninjo*, the peculiar network of traditional obligations and responsibilities between subordinates and superiors (Doi, 1967), *amor proprio* in the Philippines (Guthrie, 1968), only imperfectly rendered in English as self-respect or self-esteem, *Philotimo*, the Greek conception of what is good, expected and right (Vassiliou and Vassiliou, 1973), the concept of *Sahaja* (Neki, 1975), an Indian ideal of mental and spiritual health, all represent laudable attempts at indigenization. Other promising attempts in this direction are by Okonji (1975) in Africa, Enriquez (1977) in the Philippines, Diaz-Guerrero (1977) in Mexico and Krishnan (1974) in India. Viewing indigenization as a process from *within* the culture or from *without*, Enriquez (1977) has warned that the latter approach can actually be a form of 'Westernization' — a slogan to deaden the sensitivity of third world cultures and make them hospitably receive what they would otherwise reject. Further, one must be cautioned against the usual lapse wherein the content of research is indigeneous, but the underlying process of theorizing is not. This arrangement reflects biases inherent in theory and therefore does violence to social reality (Kumar, 1976). However, not all values and concepts which have originated in the Western world and have been diffused to the developing one, can be regarded as irrelevant. The issue is not of the origin of knowledge but its uncritical acceptance.

Indigenization as a strategy is desirable to the extent that it helps to generate and mature social science models and paradigms which are more in tune with the perceived cultural heritage and value systems of the third world nations. However, there can be dysfunctional outcomes of 'indigenization' if it becomes an end in itself. Kumar (1976) warns that such a situation will strengthen the force of ethnocentrism and can inhibit the growth of global perspective by weakening transnational cooperation.

To balance the demands of 'indigenization' on the one hand and of 'global perspective', on the other, Triandis *et al.*'s (1972) notion of 'subjective culture' and Berry's (1969) strategy based on *emic-etic* distinction seem to provide an answer. An *emic* analysis sheds light on *culture-specific* meanings of particular concepts, relationships and roles taking into account what the people themselves in a culture value as meaningful and important. An *etic* analysis takes into account *all* human behaviour (experience) in making generalizations *across* cultures. Various research methods meant to yield both *emic* and *etic* findings have been evolved and evaluated (e.g. Brislin, 1976). However, the discovery of a set of core items and culture-specific items poses a difficult yet challenging problem. To arrive at *etic* concepts, one would have to engage in collaborative research in which investigators will mutually benefit from their observations of their respective cultures. Through such a genuine cross-cultural research, one is more in a position to study the *emic* part of each culture, e.g., Indian culture. Unfortunately, not much has been done in India to develop indigeneous key concepts and metatheories to highlight the *emic* aspects of Indian culture.

Indian culture, especially its religious aspect has certain special features of its own which distinguish it from the culture of the west and to a considerable extent from other cultures as well. The vast majority of Indians are Hindus, whose religion is based on philosophical contemplation. For the Hindus, religion, culture and philosophy are, by and large, indistinguishable. The three fundamental aspects on which Indian attitudes, whether Hindu or Buddhist, differ from those of the Western World, are (a) the concept of class/caste (*varnashrama*), (b) the doctrine of transmigration or *Samsara*, and (c) inclusiveness (Basham, 1966, p. 39-42). These three aspects continue to have significance in the life styles of people who have theoretically given up religious values and

beliefs. There is little doubt that the people of India, whatever their social and economic trapping may be, continue to place greater emphasis on theological matters, religious discourse and on the corollaries of the transcendental than the average western man. Hence, systematic empirical studies of the concepts based on Hindu religion can be highly useful in the understanding and prediction of the behavior of the vast majority of Indians.

Besides Indologists, cultural anthropologists and to some extent sociologists have attempted to study the nature and operations of Hindu religion/culture/society. Unfortunately, social psychologists have not paid due attention to this area. However, some isolated and restrictive attempts have been made at random by them to study broader psychosocial aspects of Hindu religion and their social psychological and economic consequences (e.g. Gladstone and Gupta, 1963; Spratt, 1963; Loomba, 1966; Dutt, 1966; Mukerjee, 1967; Ganguli, 1969; Beg, 1970; Sharma, 1970; Singh, R.B. 1971; Krishnan, 1974; Misra and Prasad, 1976). It may be worthwhile to look for key social psychological concepts in the doctrines of classical Hinduism.

B. Key concepts of Classical Hinduism

(a) Nature

The key concepts which provide the ideological/doctrinal framework of classical Hinduism, are *Dharma*, *Samsāra*, *Karma*, *Moksha* and *Brahmān*.

Hindus attach the greatest importance to the authority of Universal Law – the law that all individuals and all social organizations should follow. And they call it '*Dharma*' which means "right action", "rule of conduct" or "duty". This law is clearly defined and minutely explained at great length throughout the huge corpus of Hindu literature. By extension, *Dharma* is used to

represent the religious assumptions on which these laws are based and is, therefore, in its broadest connotation translated as 'religion'. It is, then, both 'law' and 'religion' (Zaehner, 1966, p. 2). Hindus themselves call their religion the '*Sanātana dharma*' or 'eternal *dharma*'. Hindus came to think that *Dharma* is the basis of whole universe and all things rest on the *Dharma* (Nakamura, 1964, p. 113). They have a high regard for the authority of law (*dharma*) than for gods – who are not the founders of law. But, on the contrary, it is the Universal and unalterable law that makes the gods what they are. Thus *Dharma* has a form superior even to that of the creator of the Universe (the *Brahma*). However, a dilemma or role conflict creeps in, for the law exists at two levels. On the one hand, it is written down in the sacred books; on the other hand, it is inscribed in the hearts and conscience of man. Sometimes these two exist side by side in harmony, the coexistence sometimes resulting in tension and conflict.

What most sharply distinguishes Hinduism, like its offshoot Buddhism, from the religions of Semitic origin, is its unquestioning doctrine of trans-migration of souls or reincarnation, which all sects and all philosophical schools accept. The doctrine further presupposes that the condition into which the individual soul is reborn is itself the result of good or bad actions performed in the former lives. This is the law of *Karma* (action). According to this law "any action whatsoever is the effect of a cause and is in turn the cause of an act" (Zaehner, 1966, p. 4). The whole process goes by the name of *Samsāra*, "the course or revolution". The world of *Samsāra*, perpetual flux, is transient and in some sense unreal. "For the Hindu, life in space and time is without beginning and, unless the way of liberation is found – eternal life in *this* sense becomes a crushing burden in its endless, pointless, senseless repetitiveness" (Zaehner, 1966, p. 61). The law of *Karma* tells us that the "individual life is not a term, but a series. Fresh opportunities will be open

to us until we reach the end of the Journey” (Radhakrishnan, 1979, p. 89). The worst hell may ultimately be escaped from, and there are an infinite number of new chances for self-improvement and development. That might be thought of as a rather exciting prospect, and probably many Hindus are quite satisfied with it, though it has never been agreeable to the leaders of religious thought and they have always tried to find means of escape or liberation from the monotonous and uncertain round of birth and death and from the Samsāra – which is Māyā (illusion), thus unreal. Samkara, who is regarded often as representing the standard type of Hindu thought points out that if we are not perpetually doomed to the pursuit of an unattainable ideal, then we must reach perfection at some point of the historical process and that will mean transcending our historical individuality, escaping from birth and death, or Samsāra. History is the working out of a purpose, and we are all getting nearer and nearer to its fulfillment. *Moksha* (the liberation or emancipation) is the realization of this purpose, i.e., to escape from the wheel of Time and/or action which is itself conditioned by Time. It affirms that such an escape is possible. However, Hindus differ profoundly among themselves as to how this blessed state can be achieved.

The impersonal concept of *Brahmān* means the eternal substrate of the universe from which the eternal *Dharma* proceeds (one Absolute Being/one Universal Being), underlying the diversified phase of phenomenal world. All the phenomenal phases belong to it, depend upon it and are controlled by it. The divine *Brahmān* is crystallized into a single figure known to all Hindus as *Brahmā* – the creator par excellence. The Hindus never doubted the reality of the one supreme Universal spirit. “God is viewed as a supreme knower, the great lover and the perfect will with *Brahmā*, *Visnu*, *Śiva* embodying each of these traits respectively. They are not three independent centres of

consciousness, as popular theology represents, but three sides of one complex personality: *Uttama Purusa*” (Radhakrishnan, 1979, p. 21). There has been/is tension in Hinduism between what is and what ought to be, between *eternal* dharma that invisibly is and the dharma elaborated by the *Brahmanas* (members of the highest or priestly class/caste) here on the earth.

A beautiful clarification of this concept of *Brahman* in the classical Hinduism as related to other concepts – *Dharma*, *Karma*, *Saṁsāra* and *Moksha* – is given by Zaehner (1963, p. 6). In his words:

“It is both the *state* that is natural to the liberated soul (*Moksha*) and the source from which all phenomenal existence derives its being; it is the link between the world of *Saṁsāra* which is conditioned by space and time, cause and effect and *Moksha* which transcends all four. It is both eternal Being and the unchanging source of all change. It is *moksha* and it is eternal *dharma* too, for this *dharma* is the law which both has its roots in the eternal and governs the world of *Sāmsāra* made up, as it is, of the numberless individual *karmas* or actions of the individual men.”

Except in the very early period, there has always been double tension within the Hindu religion – the striving after liberation from this world on the one hand and main obligations to do what is right in this world on the other; the tension between *moksha* and *dharma*, which simply placed is tension between two types of *dharma*, the *śānātana dharma* or absolute moral order which can never be fully defined yet it is felt to have absolute validity and *dharma* of caste (*varnāśrama*), which later developed into something monstrously unjust. The tension between two dharmas was brutally exposed to the light of the day when *Gandhi* met his death at the hands of an orthodox Hindu. This conflict is also reflected in intercaste tensions, especially in rural India. This

man-made social stratification (the caste system) provided the *social framework* of Hinduism from the early times and has become increasingly complicated, rigid and identified with Hindu religion as such. In fact, India is still influenced by the caste system in spite of the acculturation process it has undergone during the last three centuries.

(b) *Consequences*

A number of general conclusions about the unique ways of thinking of Hindus and its accompanying consequences have been drawn mainly by Indologists (e.g. Koestler, 1961, Spratt, 1963; Nakamura, 1964) and to some extent by cultural anthropologists and sociologists.

On the one hand, it is argued that the inclination to emphasize the Universal Being (Brahm) to which all individuals and particulars are subordinated resulted in the concentration on the idea of unity of all things. Different philosophers and different conceptions of the world are nothing but manifestations of the Absolute one. In Bhagavad Gita, Krishna says, "Whatever God you may worship, I answer the prayer." This explains the Indian world view characterized by tolerance, spirituality, love for peace and assimilative character (inclusiveness) (Morris, 1951). In contrast to the exclusiveness of Western spirit, Hindu culture has always found it easy to incorporate new elements and the process has not ceased. Furthermore, they are, by and large, free from despair because of the optimism derived from their belief/hope that they will unify with the Absolute one day (Moksha). This belief in a Universal Being resulted in the reverence for Universal standards of behaviour (eternal *dharma*).

On the other hand, the thought process — a byproduct of a contemplative or meditative attitude — that regarded existence beyond the phenomenal world as more important than the phenomenal world or that viewed the essential

universality behind and beyond the concrete phenomenon of our experience — resulted in alienation from the objective natural world, manifested in a life that is lived in the world of meditation or contemplation. In line with this belief, spiritual — introspective — subjective pursuits were greatly encouraged. Together with linguistics and philosophy, the psychology of reflection flourished remarkably in India. The difference between the Western and Indian science of psychology is that "Westerners consider the human mind capable of being studied objectively as a behaviour pattern of the body, while Indians deny its objectivity and understand all mental processes as qualifying the subject experiencing them" (Nakamura, 1964, p. 142). Furthermore, such a philosophy leads people usually to assume a rather passive attitude toward the objective world instead of encouraging an active attitude. They attempted to adapt themselves to nature without reconstructing nature. They also tended to speak highly of the virtues of self-surrender and an attitude of non-resistance toward outward oppression, a bias that encouraged "escapism" and a consequent indifference to social, political action. No wonder no other country of the world has been under alien rule so long as India. It can also be noted that contemplative attitudes lead to extravagant development of fantasy life. "The imagination of Indians ignored the natural limits of time and space. It is free, boundless and extravagant, and often goes to extreme" (Nakamura, 1964, p. 142). In their introspective way of thinking, Hindus believe that an ideal state existed in the past where *Dharma* was faithfully carried out. But as this state is no longer possible, they worship the past and admire the classics. Nehru (1956, p. 69) is particularly outspoken in his criticism of such values. He said, "a country under foreign domination seeks escape from the present in the dreams of a vanished state, and finds consolation in the visions of past greatness. That is a foolish and dangerous past time in which many of us indulge."

The law of Karma is sometimes interpreted as implying a denial of human freedom, which is generally regarded as the basis of all ethical values. However, Radhakrishnan (1979) argues that the law does not conflict with the reality of freedom. "The cards in the game of life are given to us – we do not select them. They are traced to our past *Karma*, but we can call as we please, lead what *suit* we will, and as we play, we gain or lose. And there is freedom." Unfortunately, the law of *Karma* at the popular level became confused with "fatalism in India where man himself grew feeble and was disinclined to do his best." It was made into an excuse for inertia and timidity, and was turned into a message of despair and not of hope. This law was made to explain the inequalities of birth and endowment and the visitation of suffering upon the innocent. Consequently, the stability and strength of social and economic stratification is not commonly challenged by the under-privileged and exploited lower strata, but is generally considered by them to be natural and right – a fate ordained by *karma* and the whole paraphernalia of supernatural force. In words of Nehru, "many Western writers have encouraged the notion that Indians are other-worldly. I suppose the poor and the unfortunate in every country become to some extent other worldly, unless they become revolutionaries, for this world is evidently not meant for them." (Nehru, 1956, p. 69).

What could be the consequences of belief in doctrines like *Samsāra* and *Moksha* and related concepts? In this context, Wint (1955, p. 213) concludes that "from the earliest days of Indian history, Hindus have been concerned about the state of the individual human soul and have been hungry for individual salvation – the drama of the individual human soul was, morally and metaphysically, of infinitely more importance than the vicissitudes of empires and the fate of mankind in the mass." However, if in theory the ultimate aim of life is *Moksha*, then it is quite evident that ordinary man do not worry unduly about it.

Moksha is something to which he could look forward in the long distant future, after many births and rebirths. For the time being, and for an indefinite time in the future, the three lesser aims of *Dharma*, *Artha* (wealth) and *Kāma* (desire, artistic/cultural life) are considered sufficient.

C. Hinduism and Modernization

It must be pointed out that classical Hinduism in its original form did not sanction the popular beliefs, prejudices and social arrangement. "Religion as a social fact cannot be identified with and has indeed very little relation to the 'higher level' that they want to preserve" (Myrdal, 1968, p. 17). But with the passage of time "every kind of custom however poisonous came to be tolerated and to receive sanction under the cover of (Hindu) religion" (Pannikar, 1955, p. 401). As a result of the Renaissance movements in the early nineteenth century by religious reformers and also by cultural contact with the Western world, Hinduism is undergoing modernization. However, the appeals of religious reformers were to the intellectual elite, who in turn endeavoured to diffuse them throughout the population.

A problem which we know little about is to what extent the ideology of Hindu modernization, a creation of intellectual elite, has penetrated the masses and what changes the religion has undergone in the process, and whether and to what extent this ideology supports or conflicts with modernization ideals. Answering these questions will involve the evaluation of *actual* statements by *actual* people about their tradition (in contrast to the approach of Indologists who analyze what Hindus wrote). The structure and dynamics of modernization can be gleaned from the manner in which this corpus deviates from the traditional doctrine. It must be pointed out that not all elements of a religious system are necessarily impediments. For instance "inclusiveness" or "assimilative character" of Hinduism can be an asset to modernization.

The modern Hindu, having lost his roots, attempts to be a modern Hindu and a Westerner at the same time. This is fraught with linguistic and behavioural conflicts (Bharti, 1971). The conflict between articulated specific traditional valuations and modernization ideals (largely stemming from Western influence and hence alien to India) is getting sharper day by day and is reflected in ever-increasing discrepancy between belief and behaviour. The existence, extent and effects of such conflicts need to be empirically studied and evaluated in terms of lost opportunities to adoption of modernization ideals and in terms of mental health problems.

With regard to the prevalence of religious values, an eminent Indian sociologist, Srinivas concluded that "Indians are still, by and large, a religious people, but large areas of life are becoming secularised" (Srinivas, 1966, p. 27-28). The general question is how fast and with what differences secularization is taking place in India across different social and economic strata. Probably, secularization varies in amount and speed for different social/religious groups in urban and rural areas. An evaluation then of both religious and secular behaviour is needed in a period of rapid social change and transition. This issue has not been made an objective of social psychological research in India.

Another important field of research would be the analysis of literary statements about Hindu religion, culture and personality traits (e.g. Koestler, 1961; Spratt, 1963; Nakamura, 1964), in their own historical, social and economic context. Through systematic and comprehensive empirical studies one can check (i) the extent to which they coincide with *actual* attitudes, values and behaviour of men and women in different regions and socio-economic strata, (ii) how far the alleged cultural and personal traits bear resemblance to reality, (iii) and to what extent the key concepts of classical Hinduism govern the behaviour of various people in modern times,

or find out if such literary concepts are still the key concepts for the understanding, description and prediction of behaviour of the vast majority of Indians.

If we are to do more than scratch the surface, we need to examine the antecedent (proximal and distal), concomitant consequences (short-term and long-term) of the *emic* aspects of Indian culture/religion/philosophy. Hopefully, this examination will generate data which are also culture-sensitive rather than culture-free. It is also expected that such examinations will inspire future researches pursued within the framework of social change, movements and problems.

In the words of Nandy (1974, p. 8), "Unless our favorite microtheories and sophisticated methodological devices are not supplemented by indigenously produced middle-range concepts and theories, the Indian-Psychologist's self-image will continue to be that of a second class citizen in the world of professional psychology."

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