

# Institute of Indian Culture

## News and Views

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**INSTITUTE OF INDIAN CULTURE**

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# **INSTITUTE OF INDIAN CULTURE (IIC)**

A Post-graduate Research Centre  
for degrees of M.A. (by research) & Ph.D.  
in Anthropology and Sociology  
Recognized by the University of Mumbai

## **Vision of the Institute**

IIC Works with a Vision of  
providing reliable and  
researched data on  
Indian Culture, Religion and Society,  
towards the goal of building a just and humane society

## **EDITORIAL**

### **Towards the New Future: The Challenges Before the New Government**

The just concluded General Elections of April-May 2019 to the 17<sup>th</sup> Lok Saba have given a clear mandate to Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to govern the people of India under his leadership for the next five years. It is a very big responsibility.

There is much effort to place India at the top of the world scenario. Planning is underway to build Smart cities, to establish Space Station, to introduce Bullet Trains, to Digitalize Offices and Institutions and many other schemes to make India in par with developed countries. These creative and future looking planning are praise worthy and need peoples' whole hearted support.

While the above pains taking efforts to be on high priority, one cannot lose the ground reality if we really look for an inclusive growth of all Indians, especially the poor, the farmers, the villagers and other marginalized sections of Indian society. The available statistical data tell us that the ordinary Indian is not doing well in terms of “well-being”. According to Gallup's 2018 World Poll of 150 countries, India scored the lowest in the world in terms of perception of well-being (see Indian Express, June 20, 2019).

A scientific analysis would indicate that our economy is not doing well. India's GDP growth is lowest in 20 quarters; the highest unemployment rate in 45 years (see the article of Bhaskar Chakravorti, “A coup and a Crisis”, Indian Express, June 20, 2019).

While there is high concentration to implement the idea of “One Nation, One Election”, “One Country and One Ration Card”, “Removal of Article 370”, and Implement of the removal of “Triple Talaq” etc. are on high priority, the immediate welfare of the citizens' every day existence is taken a back seat. According to the United Nations Report, in the Global Hunger Index, India's place is 103, denoting severe hunger. In the Gender Inequality Index, India's rank is 125 out of 188 countries. In the Index of Economic Freedom, India occupies rank 130 out of 180 countries. In the Human Development Index, the rank is 130 out of 189 countries. India is in the bottom third. In the Freedom of Press Index, the rank is 138 on a descending scale of 180 countries. In the Education Index, it is 145 out of 191.

This information tells us that the high rate of growth and considerable economic progress achieved by the country have not put an end to the abject poverty of a significant proportion of the population.

The New Government under the leadership of the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has a big responsibility to give dignity to all citizens of India of their basic necessities of life. No doubt, it involves fixing the economy first. But it is much more than that, “It is essential to make a change in the non-economic factors that affect a citizen's day-to-day experience”.

The recent (June 2019) death of 117 children affected by acute encephalitis syndrome is only the tip of the iceberg of the deeper health situation in Bihar and elsewhere in India. It has been cited in many technical reports that the underlying cause for so many deaths is acute hunger and malnutrition. India spends just 1.4 per cent of GDP on health, one of the lowest in the world. Every year more than 60 million Indians are pushed into poverty because of

medical expenses. The increasing water crisis in the country is ringing the alarm bells of the coming worries of the future. The government should attend to this immediately.

India is a complex country with many cultures, religions and ethnic groups. Any simplistic solutions will not take us forward in a long run. Understanding its multiple history, pluralistic cultures, languages and religions is important to take the nation forward. The massive mandate Shri Narendra Modi, our Prime Minister has received in this election is an opportunity as well as a challenge to take forward our country to a higher heights of inclusive development.

**S.M. Michael**

## **Academic Expectations from the New Government**

This issue of the News Letter of the Institute of Indian Culture comes out at a time when Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has been re-elected by the Indian electorate at the General Elections held in April-May 2019 to the 17<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha. The IIC offers its Congratulations on his victory and hopes that he and his Minister for Human Resource Development rejuvenate the education system in India.

After taking charge, Dr. Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' the new Cabinet Minister for Human Resource Development under the NDA-2 government is reported to have asked the officers to prepare an action plan to fill vacant seats at every level in educational institutions across the country. The Minister also stressed on the mandatory training of teachers in all educational institutions.

The Draft New Education Policy released by the Modi government led to the eruption of a controversy about the BJP's alleged attempt to impose Hindi on non-Hindi speaking states. Shri Yogendra Yadav (formerly of the AamAdmi Party) and presently the President of Swaraj India, draws the reader's attention to section 4.5 of the DNEP on “Education in the local language/mother tongue; multilingualism and the power of language” and its chapter 22 on promotion of Indian languages, they would have seen that the charge of a grand design for imposition of Hindi is simply untrue. As Tamilnadu threatened to wage a war if Hindi was imposed on the State, the Government assured that there was no such plan and Hindi would be an optional subject. The matter has subsided on the assurance.

In so far as Social Science Research is concerned, it is understood that the ICSSR has sent a proposal to the Government suggesting that research moves from “pure ideological research” to one that is in sync with policy imperatives. The ICSSR seems to have formulated a blue print of key areas for future research. The ICSSR is reported to have said: “We believe that social science research should focus on areas that can link research to pressing policy needs of the time. Social science is close to society and research in it should contribute to solving the problems we face.” In future, proposals that are related to the thrust areas are more likely to pass muster, though other proposals also can. The document shared with the government identifies many thrust areas. These include research proposals on public private partnerships, food security, Make In India (a key policy initiative of the present government), federalism, regionalism and its implications, etc.(Vikas Pathak in the Hindu, 27 June 2018)

The ICSSR is also reported to have internally formulated some key themes for research, apart from the document shared with the Ministry of Human Resource Development. These include agrarian issues, farmers' distress, agricultural growth, poverty alleviation, revitalisation of manufacturing, trade and investment policy, liberalisation and lost opportunities, etc.

**Dr. Vasundhara Mohan**

## **IIC News**

### **New Appointments & Transfers**

Fr. John Singarayar SVD has been appointed to the Academic Staff of the Institute of Indian Culture from June 2019. He has his Master's Degree in Cultural Anthropology from Pune University and qualified in NET. He has Master's Degree in Philosophy from Bhopal University. He will be pursuing his Ph.D. in Sociology at the Department of Sociology, University of Mumbai.

Fr. Michael Pereira SVD has joined the IIC Community from June 2019. He will be pursuing his studies in Master in Social Work (MSW) at College of Social Work, Nirmala Niketan, Church Gate, Mumbai.

Fr. Joe Prabhu SVD, is transferred to Gyan Ashram, Andheri as its Administrator. IIC wishes him well in his new assignment and thanks him for his collaboration at the IIC for the last two years especially for his assistance in maintaining the IIC Website and design and layout of IIC Newsletter.

### **IIC Day**

The IIC Annual Day was celebrated on 24 March 2019, with Professor Ramesh Kamble of the Head of the Department of Sociology, University of Mumbai. He released the book entitled 'Good Governance in India: Prospects and Challenges' edited by Dr. (Mrs.) Vasundhara Mohan, Programme Director of the Institute and Fr. D. Scaria Pannackal, former Director. The book is a compilation of the papers presented on the subject by reputed academicians of several Universities in India.





### **Upgrading of IIC Library**

- As reported in the last News Letter, the IIC has undertaken Digitisation of ancient and rare books of its library with a substantial grant from Mahendra and Mahendra Ltd., Mumbai. M/s Noetic Technologies, Mumbai who has been entrusted the work is making a good progress and has so far digitised over 500 books.
- Mahendra&Mahendra Ltd., have also granted financial assistance to the Institute for installing 4 split air conditions in the library so as to ensure that the old and rare books do not get damaged due to bad weather conditions. The air conditioners have since been installed in the library.
- The IIC is also grateful to Mahindra and Mahindra Ltd., for sanctioning the purchase and installation of 4 Desk Top computers in the library for the benefit of students and research

scholars. The computers have since been purchased and made available to the actual users of the library.

- The National Archives, Ministry of Culture, Government of India has also been pleased to sanction to grant of Rs.1,83,000 to enable the Institute digitise the rare and ancient books. M/S Noetic Technologies, who has been entrusted with the job has digitised 73 books so far. The National Archives has promised to make a further grant once the present grant is fully used.

*The Institute of Indian Culture is highly grateful to both Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. And National Archives for their assistance.*

### **Collaboration with Other Academic Institutions**

- The Institute of Indian Culture has entered into an MOU with the SNDT Women's University, Churchgate, Mumbai for undertaking joint research projects.

### **Forthcoming Events**

- The IIC has proposed to organise a 10-day workshop in Research Methodology in Social Sciences for research scholars and teachers. The Institute is awaiting for the ICSSR's sanction to the proposal.
- The IIC has approached the University of Mumbai seeking its permission to appoint part-time research guides to help the students seeking admission to MA Degree (by Thesis) and Ph.D. courses at the Institute. University's sanction is awaited.

# **Research Article:**

## **Neo-Nationalism and the 2019 Elections**

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The long drawn out election summer is finally over. The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) led by Narendra Modi is back in power after a long and rancorous campaign for a second consecutive term, with a thumping majority. What does the BJP's win mean for India? Are the foundational values of the nation being re- interpreted? Can the BJP's victory be the consequence of such reinterpretation?

### **Historic Mandate**

The 2019 general elections established the BJP the dominant party in India's political landscape. The BJP won 303 with 37.4 percent of votes. The National Democratic Alliance (NDA), which the BJP leads won 353 out of 543 seats of the Lok Sabha, 17 more than its previous tally of 336 seats in 2014. It is the first time in Indian history that a non Congress party has been voted back to power for a second consecutive term and the second time since 1989, that a single party has got the support of the majority of electorate.

The BJP's performance 2019 is comparable to only three other elections from the past.(1) In 1971, the Congress party under Indira Gandhi won 352 seats with more than 50% votes in 12

states. In 1980 again, the Congress won 353 with 13 states giving more than 50% votes to the party. In 1984, the party under Rajiv Gandhi won 404 seats with more than 50% votes in 17 states (2).

The saffron party won seats in 17 states, securing more than 50% votes in 13 states. It made forays into Bengal and Tripura, where it had hitherto no presence. Though it did not win any seats in Kerala, it managed to bag nearly 15 % of the votes, establishing itself as an important emerging player in the state. Formidable alliance between regional parties such as SP and BSP in Uttar Pradesh could not prevent the BJP from winning 64 of the 80 seats in the state. It even managed to sweep Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, where it had lost in the state Assembly elections in December 2018, making it an All India party in all possible sense.

The 2019 elections also wiped out opposition parties. The UPA won 91 seats with a vote share of 20%. The principal opposition party, Congress won 52 seats, 8 more than the 44 seats it had won in 2014. It was unable to win any seats in 18 states and Union Territories. Several of the top leaders of the party including, Mallikarjun Kharge, Jyotiraditya Scindia, Milind Deora lost. Rahul Gandhi, the Congress President too lost his seat from Amethi.

The Left Front was reduced to six seats in the Lok Sabha, its lowest since independence. The so called *Mahagath bandhan* between SP and BSP was unable to stop the BJP juggernaut. Only the YSR congress in Andhra Pradesh and DMK in Tamilnadu and United Democratic Front led by the Congress in Kerela were able to prevent a complete BJP washout.

It is not the first time that a single party or a single leader has dominated the political landscape of the country. The nationalist

movement was dominated by one party. Till 1967 the Congress was the only party that dominated Indian politics and Nehru was the undisputed leader of the Congress party. But the post-independent India's polity, determined by the Constitution favoured building a coalition of interests. The Congress' dominance was based on a social coalition that was constructed by inclusion of disparate segments of Indian society; Dalits, Adivasis, Muslims, Women along with Hindu upper caste, though the aberrations of the Congress party later made some of these groups captive of vote-bank politics.

As liberal scholars point out, the BJP's dominance, on the other hand, "is based on division rather than consensus". (3) In ideological terms, it presumes that Indian culture is coterminous with Hindu culture and prioritizes it. In social terms, "it is majoritarian and excludes the minorities, especially the Muslims". (4) In terms of decision-making, it asserts on leader-driven decisions. The terms of decisions are decided by a few on the basis of their historical and representational claims.

Yet, there was no negative fallout for the BJP. On the other hand, the magnitude of BJP's victory confirmed that the BJP now hegemonises the political mind space of the country.

## **Interpreting the Mandate**

The questions in 2019 were not just about who will form the government, or run the administration for the next five years, but what ideas are better positioned to shape the nation. The focal point of the BJP's electoral agenda was nationalism.

After the Pulwama attack, BJP's election campaign focussed on national security over issues such as agrarian distress or

unemployment. As the campaign progressed, the BJP's narrative prioritized class over caste, national over local issues, muscular aggression over soft state, and experience over novice. That the BJP's electoral strategy bore fruits confirms the consolidation of a new ideology and a re-imagining of India as a nation. India's nationhood is no longer understood merely as confluence of cultures, regions, castes, ideas, problems and viewpoints. Rather it has an independent, homogenous identity, which prioritizes national identity.

### **Neo Nationalism and the Middle classes**

The BJP's electoral agenda catered to the demographic changes that modern India has witnessed. Nearly 65% of India's population is young, (5) about 28% may be categorised as middle class (6) and a large proportion resides in urban and semi-urban areas, where the rigidities of caste and religion are increasingly being challenged by modernisation. The economic reforms of 1991 and the consequent economic growth have created a new aspirational class that is pulled apart by contradictions of tradition and modernity. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the class aspiring for economic change, however, is fearful of disjuncture that technology is unleashing on family, social structures, religion and state. This among other things means that across categories, there is an increased curiosity and excitement around exploring local roots and traditions. (7) National pride has found multiple manifestations among them. The new nationalism espoused by the BJP's nationalism addressed some of these concerns; economic prosperity, stable social structures determined by traditions and confidence derived from a 'glorious' past, and aggressive nationalism.

What has made this nationalism more effective is its

personification. The BJP through its organisational machinery, traditional and new media, positioned Narendra Modi as a custodian of neo-nationalism. He was projected as an honest and hardworking homebred leader, committed to the nation and its people. He is unabashedly religious, visiting temples, mediating in mountains and observing fasts, equally at ease in Varanasi and in Washington with world leaders and CEOs. For, the young and the middle classes, the search for leadership, strong, wedded to traditions, patrimonial, speaking the language of modernity ended with Modi. It is therefore not surprising that for nearly a third of the voters the Prime Ministerial candidate was the most important factor in the voting. (8) That the opposition led by Rahul Gandhi did not have similar leaders who could inspire confidence only added to Modi's appeal.

The BJP's victory in 2014, and again in 2019 definitely points to changes in India's political culture, wherein the ideas of nationalism and nation are being reinterpreted. These are ideas that are fundamentally different from the post-colonial understanding of the same and therefore the disquiet and debates on its emerging contours are not out of place. However, the jury is not yet out on whether this marks a paradigm shift or a temporary dalliance of democratic nation experimenting with the idea of and nationalism.

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## Academic Activities of IIC

### S. M. Michael

- As a Visiting Faculty at St. Pius College, Goregaon, Dr. S.M. Michael delivered lectures on “Cultural Anthropology” and “Social Movements”.
- Ms. Sonakshi Udayraj Vichare, lecturer at SNTDT College, who was doing her Ph.D. under the guidance of Dr. S.M. Michael, has successfully completed her Doctoral studies in Sociology. She worked on the topic “Globalization and Religion: A Comparative Study of the Hindu and Christian Communities in Mumbai.”
- Presented a paper on “*Empowerment of the Marginalized through the Indian Constitution*” at the National Conference on “Moving Towards an Authentic Witness to Jesus in India”, 2-4 March 2019, Navasadhana, Varanasi.



- *Publication:* “Christianity and the Indigenous People in India”, *Indian Christianity and its Public Role*, (ed. by) Gnana Patrick, Chennai: Department of Christian Studies, University of Madras; & New Delhi: Christian World Imprints, 2019, pp.17-36.
- Participation in a National Seminar on “Whither India? Theological Concerns”, at NBCLC, Bangalore, 25-28 April, 2019.
- Resource Person for a Workshop on “Intercultural Community Building” Holy Spirit School at Vishakhapatnam, April 29- 3 May, 2019.
- Resource Person at the Workshop on “Building Intercultural Communities” at Canossian Provincilate, June 10<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019.
- Resource Person at Ishvani Kendra, Pune on “Culture and Cultural Transition” for the Overseas Training Programme, June 18-19, 2019.

### **M. T. Joseph**

#### *Paper presentations:*

- 08-09 February 2019. *Theorizing religion in south Asia: Gandhian interventions*. 10<sup>th</sup> IASR national conference “Gandhi and religion: multi disciplinary perspectives”. Hindu college, University of Delhi.
- 21-22 February 2019. *Understanding risk and crisis in neo liberal context*. National seminar “Understanding agrarian crisis in India: perspectives from gender and other marginalised locations”. Department of Sociology, University of Mumbai.

- 27-28 February 2019. *Dalits and religion: interpretations and reclamations as projects of emancipation*. National seminar “Sociology of Dalits: epistemological issues and methodological challenges”. Department of Sociology, University of Hyderabad.
- 6-7 March 2019. *Nationalisms and nation states: dystopias of democracy?* National seminar “Refugees, migration and citizenships: issues and challenges”. Department of sociology, Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad.

## **Glimpses on Religious Tolerance, Culture and Society predominantly through poetry and individual efforts**

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Religious nationalism is a political project of those who would like to remain in power using the emotional appeal of the religion. (1) These trends have only led to greater social strife and violence, leading to loss of life and property. Most South Asian countries have suffered due to the advocates of a nationalism based on religious identity. Peace and prosperity of a region can only be possible with a nationalism that cherishes multiplicity, plurality, justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. Regional parties vying for political space have been using identity based politics. Polarization of communities has resulted in rich dividends for right-wing political parties. This paper tries to collate scattered material which synchronises society.

Fr. Gnana Dhinakaran writes in *Prison Voice* (2): “Let us not suffocate God with our human qualities; rather release him from all these attributions.” In his personal memoir entitled “*No Future without Forgiveness*”, Archbishop Desmond Tutu stood alongside President Nelson Mandela who made a remarkable shift by forming True and Reconciliation Commission rather than war tribunals. Mandela wrote: “*As I walked out the Door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn't leave my bitterness and hatred behind I'd still be in Prison.*”

Pope St John Paul II created a history by asking forgiveness for the errors of the Church over 2000 years thereby encountering the past

and conquered the future with much brightness and satisfaction. He promoted carrying forward inter-religious dialogue and the integration of local culture into Christian life. In her poem on Mother Teresa, Yashoda Bhat writes how she gave new life to the downtrodden and poor.

### **Mother Teresa**

She picks up last men and women  
From rotting lanes and stinking gutters  
Like fresh flowers from blossoming plants  
And gives them another precious change to live

But she herself is the rarest flower-  
A pure white stooping tube rose,  
Silent, shy, pure

She gives them life; gives them hope  
In life, it was all darkness,  
In dying a new vision (3)

We may quote Bhat's another poem:

### **The Lotus**

Flanked by two Saucer-like leaves  
Dotted by glittering drops,  
The Lotus stood erect,  
Its drowsy petals, unwilling to open more.....  
Murmured the lotus;  
“I am sick of mud and slime  
I wish I were a hibiscus  
Dangling from a tree-  
A fragrant Jasmine  
Or a red, red rose”  
Alarmed, replied the mossy pond:

“Do not conclude in haste dear!

.....

A Lotus is a Lotus

Who else can be the majestic queen of the pond?”

The present trend of globalization and mass migration of people is fast making inter-cultural living a reality in every part of the world. A Philosophy of cultures by Thomas Menaramparampi States: “One understands one's own culture better from watching alternative expression of human values and self-expression in another culture and one stops insisting on using one's own culture as an ultimate point of reference for evaluating communities.” (4) E.V. Ramakrishnan wrote “Letter to an Afghan Friend” in which he concludes ... men live and die, like men, in peace.(5)

### **Letter to an Afghan Friend**

Frontiers shift like rivers changing courses.

Which side of the uprooting tree do you Stand, Farouqui?

The sheep spread on the mountain's waist, like a rash.

The script of the shrubbery stands out in bold red.

My son articulates his body in the new-found language of walk.

Have you taught your son the songs of Pakeezah?

We keep indoors during an eclipse.

The sheep have come further down,

Infecting the private parts of valleys.

Soon we shall celebrate the New Year

We shall pray under high tension wires.

Where are you these days, Farouqui?

To pass for a sane man, most of the time,

I have to choose my words and cast my vote.

The sheep are lost in the smallpox of shadow.

Tonight, I shall read a book of fiction

In which men live and die, like men, in peace.

In her article in the book *The Internationalist moment: South Asia, Worlds and World Views 1917-39* (6) Ana Jelnikar supports the idea that intellectual ideas travel with or without people, by comparing a Slovenian poet Srečko Kosovel (7) and Indian poet Tagore. She emphasizes that Tagore's influence on Kosovel extended his vision beyond the borders of Europe and Kosovel's poetry should be read as part of a complex global configuration of anti-imperialist politics and ethics. She states that both the poets argued for a non-hierarchical dialogue between cultures while deploring the fact that meeting of cultures arrived on the back of conquest and colonization. Both struggled with the question how to resist foreign impositions and yet not bar oneself from the discoveries of modern age. They sought to transform anti-colonial dissent into a project of liberation and expand the international stage moving beyond the limited world of boundaries.

### **In Green India (8)**

In green India among quiet  
trees that bend over blue water  
lives Tagore.

Time there is spellbound, a cerulean circle,  
the clock tells neither month nor year  
but ripples in silence  
as if from invisible springs  
over ridges of temples and hills of trees.

There nobody's dying, nobody's saying  
goodbye—life is like eternity, caught in a tree . . .

In founding the school at Shantiniketan, Tagore did not mean to ignore the best in Western civilization and in Western Culture. He merely intended that it should be based on the indigenous culture

and tradition, retaining only what is best in them, while freely taking the best that the west had to give us. (9)

Prof Findlay in writing about Rabindranath Tagore, Prof. Findlay says (10): There are two great men in our epoch: John Dewey in the West and R. Tagore in the East, whose wisdom not only illumines the general mind, but has stooped to the level of children. Both men are now passing into old age, but it was in the prime of life, during the closing years of the last century that both of them resolved to keep school.

With Tagore, the environment, the Ashram, the stars and the sky, friends and neighbours are the means whereby an inner happiness is fostered. Dewey seems to leave such influences to the subconscious; means the American boy and girl are to solve the riddle of life spring from impulses of curiosity and intelligence. He supported peace development via an education that emphasizes the current and future role of students in a democracy. He emphasized the importance of students having experiential education in their societies, in addition to pragmatic education in their classrooms. (11) In *Building a Global Civic Culture* (1988), Elise Boulding points out that people use their imagination to solve problems. Boundary less, multilinguality, equality, unity, sharing etc. may help.

Elwin (1902-1964) wrote: “Anthropology did not mean 'field work', it meant my whole life. When the First World War broke out, “it never occurred to anyone that there was the least inconsistency between the scripture classes, where we were taught to love our enemies, and the bombing classes where we were taught to kill them”. A Gond women Elwin met in Central India during the Second World War gave him an interesting take on such wars. “This”, she said “is how God equalises things. Our sons and

daughters die young of hunger and disease or the attack of Wild Beasts. The sons and the daughters of the English could grow old in comfort and happiness. But god sends madness upon them, and they destroy each other: and so in the end their great knowledge and their religion is useless and we are all the same.” (12)

Gandhi wrote: “Instead of having graceful hamlets dotting this land, we have dung heaps....the one thing which we can and must learn from the West is the science of Municipal sanitation”. Amrita Pritam's daring act to turn the pages of her life for her readers in her autobiography *Rasidi Ticket* (1976), is perhaps one of the watershed events of Punjabi Literature. (13) Her childhood recalcitrant desire to drink water/milk from the same mugs that were kept separately for Muslims visiting her household, perhaps reflected her inane secular DNA that also became a reason why at the height of Hindu- Sikh and Muslim riots, Amrita sought to reinvigorate the spirit of a Muslim poet on the other side of Punjab, to talk about the plight of Punjabi woman, who was far beyond an Indian or a Pakistani.

In a situation of War, Shulamith Koenig, an Israeli author, writes,” as difficult as it may be, let us learn to be 'Pro' not 'anti'; pro-Israeli, Pro-Palestinian. All my life I was very proud that I was a Jew, a woman, an Israeli, a mother. Today, there are times when I am ashamed. I need to work together with my sisters from around the world to find a way forward. My question is this: How do we stop humiliating one another? How do we turn from the experience of humiliation, and yet not go on to humiliate others? How do we break the cycle? (14)

Noa and Mira Awad famous female Israeli singers (one Jewish and the other Arab) visited India as a part of a celebration marking 20 years of diplomatic relations with Israel. (15) Their music carried



strong political message demanding dialogue and a peaceful resolution to the Palestinian question. The duo sang a song in Hebrew, Arabic and English called “*There Must Be Another Way*”. The Civil society is dominated by 'with us or against us' mentality. Noa added that “there are wise men who sat long hours in Geneva, Oslo, Washington and Camp David and worked out good plans for how to settle our issue. Now it just needs to be implemented. We have to stop saying that there is nobody to talk to on the Palestinian side. Both sides have to be responsible for the education of their own population to minimise fear. The settlements have to stop being built, at least for a moment. And the world has a responsibility to lessen the paranoia, so that both sides have a safety net for the dialogue”.

Jaiprakash Narayan wrote: “War is a strange alchemist and in its hidden chambers are such forces and powers brew and distilled that they tear down the plans of the victorious and the vanquished alike.” Pakistan i poet Zehra Nigaah's Urdu poem translated by Rukshana Ahmad reads:

### **Compromise**

Warm and tender soft, this 'chadar  
Of compromise has taken my years to knit.  
No flowers of truth embellish it  
Not a single false stitch betrays it.

It will do to cover my body though  
And it will bring comfort too  
If not joy, nor sadness to you

Stretched above us, this will become our home,  
Spread beneath us, it will bloom into a garden,  
Raise it, and it will become our curtain. (16)

The write-up, the 'One-parent' child, by Mary McCabe in Children Education (17) Dr. TemsulaAo, the prominent poetess of North East India wrote the poem “Why do songs live”:

Why do songs live  
Long after songsters  
Are gone and forgotten?  
Why do songs speak  
Though sung in alien tongues  
And unfamiliar tunes?  
Why do songs appeal  
When children squeal  
In Shaky voices and broken rhymes?  
(From the book of poems *Songs that try to say* (18))

### **Great examples for forgiveness both in the religious and secular world**

K G Paulose, a Sanskrit Scholar and writer of *History of Kuttiyattam* (the ancient Sanskrit Theatre) spoke about the evolution of inclusive culture in Kerala The best Sanskrit Grammar text in Malayalam was written by I .C. Chacko, a Christian Ezhava. Once Buddhists had access to Sanskrit learning and practised Ayurveda. In Kerala, Sanskrit and Malayalam got amalgamated. Sanskrit manuscripts from all over India are in the Devanagari script. But in Kerala Sanskrit manuscripts are in the Malayalam script. (19)

Ajmer serves as annual reminder of the need to humble the individual self in the presence of the divine. For, such was the faith of the Khwaja himself in the power of surrender to God through service to others that this became the Sufi way of transcending ego. His uncommon love for the common man, his emphasis on unconditional service to all, has earned for Khwaja the moniker *Garib Nawaz*, benefactor of the poor. (20) God is

nothing but the mere projection of human qualities' is a quite old saying but is vibrant also today in its meaning.

Shikha Sharma, CEO and Managing Director of Axis Bank Ltd says: 'with learning agility we can face a VUCA (21) world. "The more learning curves I climb, the more likely that I will continue to remain relevant. Growth begins where your comfort zone ends. Every time I have found myself at one of life's crossroads, I have tried to ask myself: "which path offers me the steeper learning curve?" So learning itself has become a habit.' Three major choices that shaped Shikha were: (a) Choosing the road less travelled, (b) Choosing partnerships based on core values and common goals, and (c) Choosing to always do the RIGHT thing.

At the 5<sup>th</sup> National Science Film Festival and Competition, 2015, Category 5 was on Film on Science, Technology and Innovation. The documentary "*Living with Elephant*" directed by Mr Sarvanakumar Salem won the Golden Beaver Award (22) and its target audience was general. The film has brought out effectively how the people in Annamalai forest have been using technology for sustainability with Elephants in the area, though many deaths have taken place by elephant killing. In a nutshell, this paper highlights the religious tolerance, culture and society predominantly through poetry and individual personalities. R. Bhattacharjee wrote in the last part of his poem **Poet:** (23)

Poets are uncommon beings,  
Since surely mad they are;  
Of madness, inexplicable type;  
Their madness makes them rare:  
They are the Maddened species,  
Let loose on earth from the heavens afar,  
To sing themes  
In the Pursuit of which-

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