

## EDITORIAL

This issue of the *Studies in Humanities & Social Sciences* offers twelve articles and a Document.

The first article by Peena Thanky presents a dense analytical treatment of the Mahatma in Indian novels in English. It turns out to be as much an exposure to Gandhian social and political ideas in the lived experience of Indians of the period of 1930s as a history of English fiction in India and its literacy critique with special reference to Gandhi's persona and presence in the Indian society and politics. Thanky writes: 'There is a national consensus about the 1930s right from the beginning, when the English novel began to deserve an academic and critical attention. One could easily say this was somewhere around the 1970s that Meenakshi Mukherjee played an important part in foregrounding the studies on English fiction in fiction in English.' Thanky goes on to say : 'The three Musketeers of Indian fiction in English - Mulk Raj Anand , Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan started writing during the 1930s and their novels demonstrated the Gandhian impact convincingly.' Thus, the Indian fiction in English displays a strong imprint of Indian nationalism and postcolonialism.

Rahul Chaturvedi in his piece deals with Mannu Bhandari's Hindi novel *Mahabhoj* describing the age-old problem of untouchability and exploitation of Dalit masses and the mysterious death of a Dalit social activist, Bisu, who was personally investigating the arson and massacre in a Dalit hamlet in western Uttar Pradesh in a perfunctory way by the administration and police. The case otherwise was getting unusual media coverage merely because it coincided with an Assembly election! Both the chief ministers and the leader of the opposition were trying to make political capital, but the victims only got illusions of justice!

Sujay Biswas in his article on "Gandhi, Ambedkar, and British Policy at the 2nd Roundtable Conference", narrates how Gandhi strongly opposed the proposal of the British government to grant a separate electorate to the untouchables, like the Muslims. This prompted Dr. Ambedkar to sign the Minorities Pact. Gandhi had only agreed to reservation of seats for the untouchables in the general seats for the Hindus. As it finally transpired, Gandhi went on fast unto

death in opposition to the separate electorate, and finally Gandhi and Ambedkar signed the Poona Pact in September 1932 whereby the depressed classes were granted reserved seats in provincial and central legislatures and were to vote under the general electorate. As a result of this, the Dalits got a better deal in avoiding the status of a minority and got reserved seats in legislatures, educational institutions, and government employment.

The next article by Binumol Abrahamon is derision as critique in the context of matriliney in literature and journalism in colonial Kerala. In complex ways, humour, satire, irony were used ambivalently, often contradictorily, on the legal abolition of matriliney which was largely prevalent among the Nairs to save the fragmentation of landed property.

Chitresh Shrivastava and Aasita Bali present an interesting picture of travel by the Indian Railways through a glance at Bollywood Hindi films. The authors conclude: 'The railways have assumed an important role beyond an economic instrument. [They] have become an important part of the narrative, weaving around stories of not just the railway employees but also the people and their experiences through the rush of life and effective employment of railways as a narrative device in films drawing relations between the struggles of life, and effective employment of railways as a narrative device in films drawing relations between the struggles of life and growing fantasies of people and important life lessons...'

Manpreet Kaur deals with the important neo-psychoanalytic theory of identity crisis and identity formation among the adolescents. In an empirical survey-based study and powerful statistical analysis of a non-probability sample of 500 boys and girls from various schools and colleges of the city of Amritsar in Punjab state of India, she seeks to correlate reasoning processes and identity processing style of the adolescents and finds positive relationship between these two factors in some hypotheses and negative in some others — derived on the basis of some rich crop of theories in this interesting area of research.

Alisha Dhingra has presented a good comparative study of constitutional and legal challenges to traditional patriarchy in India and South Africa. She explores this important new terrain at theoretical plane in the context of interaction between constitutionalism and patriarchy.

Kamal Nayan Choubey presents an excellent study in politics and contemporary history of Indian forests and tribal life under a complex legal pluralism of mainland India (excluding India's

Northeastern states where the community and state-reserved forest laws are different).

Md. Chingiz Khan in his article makes an interesting political anthropological study from a historical perspective of the society and culture of the tribal Pangal community of the Manipur state of India living in an intermixed multicultural context in transition.

The article, “The Shifting Paradigm of Innovation and Social Enterprise during COVID-19 Times” by Roopinder Oberoi, Jamie Halsall and Mike Snowden provide an interesting perspective and study of the role of institutions during Covid-19 crisis. The corona virus outbreak has tried and tested major institutions to the limit. Social enterprise organisations have stood out during the pandemic as crucial players along with the state in many countries across the world to alleviate the suffering of communities in multiple ways. In this article, the authors critically explore the benefits of social enterprise by offering qualitative evidence from a recently funded social enterprise project. The authors reimpose the trust in these hybrid social organisations and make a strong case for a robust support to social enterprise organisations for future innovation and development.

Bulbul Gupta in “Transgender Worlds and Centrality of Human Agency” explores the centrality of human agency in the lives of trans individuals in context of the two trans protagonists, Captain Macho and Teddy of transgender narratives namely, *Masks of a Superhero* and *Dean and Teddy* respectively from the anthology entitled *The Collection: Short Fiction from the Transgender Vanguard* edited by trans activists and playwrights Tom Léger and Riley MacLeod. *The Collection*, which bagged the Lambda Literary Award 2013 in the Transgender Fiction Award category, consists of stories by twenty-eight authors from North America that shed light on the vicissitudes of the transgender spectrum. The paper analyses the movement in Teddy’s perceptions and experiences and trans subjectivity through the lens of feminist theory, queer theory and trans-identity/transgender theory. Further, it also studies Captain Macho’s emotional and psychological complexity, and the dilemmas and contradictions that s/he faces in her/his dual and seemingly contradictory identities as an individualist and a collectivist.

Neeru Anand in “Women in Times of Violence: A Reading of Euripides’ The Women of Troy” explores the plight of women during a war. Through the figures of Trojan women like Hecuba, Andromache, and Cassandra as well as the Greek woman Helen, the

paper analyses the response of various women who have been denied not only agency but even a voice in the determination of their fate. The paper also studies the reason behind Euripides' writing of the play and the schism that it drove between him and the people of Athens.

The issue concludes with a special lecture on "Handling Pakistan" by Dr T.C.A. Raghavan delivered on August 26, 2020. It surveys the Pakistan policy of the recent governments of India beginning with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance government (1998-2004) through the Indian National Congress (ANC)-led United Progressive Alliance governments (2004-2009 & 2009-2014) to the BJP-led Narendra Modi governments (2014-2019 and since 2019 to the present) with inimitable ease and admirable understanding, and combination of realism, idealism, and pragmatism.

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*Editor*