

standard of living of recipients and are potential sources of investment capital formation for development. However, the potential of remittances has been lost to the economy as they have by and large gone into increased consumption of durables and unproductive investments, mainly land and housing, which have fuelled inflation. The increased financial wealth accumulated from working abroad also has a negative effect on the migrants' offer to work on return to his home. At the same time it relaxes the need for an immediate source of income, raises the reservation wage of the migrant and his family, and results in a high extent of voluntary unemployment which is a social cost. The morale and productivity of Goan labour also gets diminished as those who do not migrate face a reduced sense of self worth as they earn much less than those in the Gulf who are employed in identical jobs. The discourse suppresses this impact of migration on the social life.

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Knowledge, Culture, Power

This project explores the phenomenon of a certain 'culturalism' which has emerged in the social sciences in the last few decades. While culture had always been a central concept for the disciplines of sociology and anthropology, it had earlier received hardly any recognition in other social sciences, in the Anglo-American world atleast. But now by contrast, it forms a part of a high growth area in the social sciences, a trend encouraged by the popularity of post-structuralist and post-modernist approaches in recent years.

Certain questions are raised by this new trend. For instance, if culture now seems to play a part in all the social sciences (neo-classical economics included) has it been introduced in order to draw attention to aspects of social life previously ignored in social explanations? Or does it merely provide a redescription of phenomena already under consideration? To what extent has the concept provided us with new insights into social process and 'thickened' the description of social and political phenomena?

One should note the continuing influence of a notion of culture devised by anthropologists in the late 19th century for the study of the small and often isolated communities encountered in the process of colonial expansion. This was later adapted to the study of larger societies as well. In such studies the tendency was to view culture as representing the holistic, and totalising ethos of social life. Cultural world-views and value systems were assumed to permeate the thinking of members of the community. True, there has been much criticism and modification of this culture and community still influence social analysis. They have made a reappearance,

for instance, in communitarian criticism of liberalism, in the work of philosophers like Charles Taylor, or Michael Sandel, or in the debate about secularism in India.

It can be contended that the notion of culture that is widely used is essentially an apolitical one. Hence the burden of explanation in a number of studies has shifted from political factors to cultural ones, both terms being understood in isolation from each other. This might appear to be a strange claim considering the emphasis given in post-structuralist and post-modernist approaches, to exploring the politics of culture. The influence of deconstruction, of Foucauldian notions of power, of post-modernist critiques of the meta-narratives of progress, reason and science associated with modernity, and the anti-humanism associated with post-modernist philosophies – such influences have converged to reinforce some of the characteristics of the anthropological notion of culture. They may also sustain the essentially apolitical approach of that view of culture. The politics which may be generated by studies made within such approaches may only be a politics of counter discourses of a search for indigenous community alternatives to colonial discourse, or for the silenced, subaltern subject positions which were masked by the homogenising discourses of dominant groups. Such critiques, of course, have their importance but their critical edge is somewhat blunted because of the framework within which they work.

In this study, these theoretical issues are examined in relation to certain contemporary debates in political theory in India as well as with reference to the political questions which they raise. For instance, the critiques of colonial discourse, and modernity, on the debate about secularism, encapsulate many of the issues mentioned above and also illustrate some of the strengths and limitations of the methodologies which are being used by social scientists. We need to look again at concepts like ideology which drew attention to certain issues of culture and social life which have of late not received critical attention, and to examine the politics of the culturalism which seems to obscure our understanding of social and political issues.

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Women in Narratives: Selections from Rajasthan

The palace of Chittorgarh, commanding an arid stretch of Rajasthan's desert, hides an apocryphal secret. In the dark vaults of its underground chamber are the charred remains of a fourteenth century queen, Padmini, and a thousand of her women companions who immolated themselves in the name of Rajput honour. Like many other tales of women's destiny in Rajasthan, this too hinges on the idea of transgression – on the woman's