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## **Editorial**

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This issue consists of six articles from different area of life in which the authors mostly brought from their area of interest and research. The pandemic blocks everyone within the four walls of home and restricts us to explore more from the society. However, the six essays in this issue attract the reader because of the variety of the topics dealt here. The first essay “**News Media in Building Social and Communal Harmony**” Thomas M. Samuel tries to bring out the importance of news media in terms of its social and communal harmony. He talks about the characteristics of media in different points and he brings the the task of journalism and the role of press in bringing the news to the public and how do the news impact the people, readers and the society. Also he looks into the ethical part of journalism and how does the news / information given to the public liberate and transform the society for a just and harmonious living. Overall the essay invites the reader’s attention because of the present socio-political context of India.

The Second essay “**Weaving God's Stories and Our Stories: A Narrative Approach in Pastoral Care**” Vibeituonuo Mere tries to bring the nature and challenges of pastoral care in a narrative perspective. The essay explores the narrative challenges and possibilities on dealing with issues in pastoral care context and the ways in which narratives from the biblical and psychotherapeutic traditions be brought into conversation. She talks about the challenges of narrative approach of pastoral care and different approaches in pastoral care as well. This essay calls our attention certainly because the narrative pastoral care is understood as helping people refashion their life story' through the lens' of God's story, then, certainly the Bible is inextricably linked to the care of souls.

The Third essay **“A Vestige Towards Understanding Eco-Feminism in Hinduism”** Mary Chang tries to explain the connection between feminism and ecology. Eco-feminism, as a movement, stands against patriarchal and hierarchical exploitation of women and nature by the so-called dominant group. Eco-feminism seeks to highlight the interconnectedness of the nexus that exists between women and nature. Eco-feminism connects to the theory that subjugation of women and oppression of nature are inter-linked relating to the study of the internal and intricate relationship. She highlights that the understanding of eco-feminism in Hindu thought or tradition, as nature, both animate and inanimate, are the expression of *Shakti*, the feminine and the creative principle of the cosmos. Mary tries to bring out the Hindu understanding of nature, and earth which is considered as mother and a matter of worship. Hence he brings the importance of mother earth by saying that ‘She (earth) is the home of all the creation, both living and non-living. Women and nature both alike produce and reproduce life, not just biologically but also through their role in providing sustenance.

The fourth essay **“A Critical Survey on the Development of the Nature and Purpose of Christian Education from 1<sup>st</sup> Century till 21<sup>st</sup> Century”** Vivi Achumi tries to bring out the development of Christian education by taking a survey from 1<sup>st</sup> century to 21<sup>st</sup> century and she tries to depend on biblical aspects and starts with Bible. She divides the period from 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> century, 6<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century, 15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> century, 16<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century, 18<sup>th</sup> century, 19<sup>th</sup> century, and 20<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> century. She deals with different foci and goals of the Christian education during those periods who led the education. The ways and means to mould a child is education with values and different models also can be used to impart education and this can motivate more members. Christian education was only confined to home teaching and learning of mere Christian values. Also she stresses the value of education for liberation and transformation of the society as well.

Education is not from the books, it is from nature, observation and through different lives and models. Hence education should lead a person to become a real human being with a vision of inclusiveness.

The fifth essay **“Mission as a Quest for Justice and Identity”** Ashish Kumar tries to bring out the plight of Bahujans experienced in India under age-old cultural and religious practices resulted in the commodification and discrimination of millions of Bahujans from the time ancient Indian Scriptures were written. Hence he tries to deal with Mission as Quest for Justice and Identity in light of the marginalization and subjection of the Bahujans. The Bahujans of India suffered under the dominant few who took advantage of their existence to get the menial works done by them and yet treated them with contempt and offence. He talks about the reasons of their struggle and why they need a mission of Justice and Identity are clearly dealt with. The essay demands a serious involvement of people to liberate and to transform the people at the margins.

The sixth essay **“The Theoretical Bases and WACC’s Christian Principles of Communication in the Context of Communication Revolution with reference to the Churches in India”** Joel Patrick deals with the need of Communication as a basic theory to understand and to communicate with people to have better relationship. The area of communication has so much of scope in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and it challenges and revolutionizes the people and the communities. The better communication facilities make better ministry and mission through the churches. He talks about the contribution of World’s Association of Christian Communication and its principles. He brings out advantages of communication to create communities which focus communication for liberation, transformation and mission.

**Aswathy John**  
Editor

## **News Media Inbuilding Social and Communal Harmony**

*Thomas M. Samuel\**

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Media is the key to building secular fabric of the society through social and communal harmony. Although social changes accompany tension and maladjustment, yet it's the media that can regulate the temperature of these tensions by providing explanations and thereby accelerate development. The media has the role of being the watchman to critically scan several governmental policies and report back to citizens. Such dissemination of information has become an undisputed powerful force in our time. "Depending on the veracity of the information disseminated, the intentions of the authors, and the climate in which the information received, it may be a force for progress and the common good, or be a catalyst for destruction, intolerance, also even genocide."<sup>1</sup> Consequently, in news media, particularly focusing on issues related to news storytelling has implications among both the media practitioners and consumers towards social justice.

The perspectival approach has been made from the point of the journalistic framework in analysing the media with specific reference to ethics in media communication. The journalistic approach evaluates subjective opinions, individual views and personal comments of news media journalists. The approach

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analyses the tailored for and address to the mass readers of newspapers written mostly to inform rather than to create social consciousness. Therefore, this perspective is mostly concerned with the sociological issues of the program that flows through print media, particularly newspapers.<sup>2</sup> Hence, the article efforts to comprehend the challenges of news media in building social and communal harmony.

### 1. Characteristic of News Media

Travelling in the morning to any part of our country, either in tea shops or along with the street corners, one can witness a group of persons talking over the daily newspaper. Even if one cannot read, one will hear the news being read along with comments on the important news of the day. This shows the fact that average people are interested in being informed about what happens around them. Moreover, with the advent of digital technology, news stories have been widely circulated through mixed smart technologies that meet the objectives of the social and communal fabrics of our society.

For Tunstal,<sup>3</sup> the newspaper is the archetype and prototype of all mass media and the central ingredient of all media is news. Walter Lippman defines news as “not a mirror of social conditions, but the report of an aspect that has obtruded itself.”<sup>4</sup> Robert Park understands news as a continuum between “acquaintance with” and knowledge. Therefore, for Park, the news is timely, i.e., very recent or recurrent events; it’s unsystematic, i.e., deals with discreet events; it’s perishable, i.e., only when it is about current events, the news is unusual or at least unexpected. Besides unexpectedness, it is characterised by other news values, which involve judgements about audience interests; news is more oriented and attention-direction and not a substitute for knowledge, and finally, the news is predictable. This last statement of Park is rather paradoxical.<sup>5</sup> Further, the news is also characterised as saleable, superficial, simple, objective, action-oriented, interesting, stylised, and

prudent.<sup>6</sup> With these classifications and definitions of news, the following blinders of news media are assessed.

### 2. Truth-telling in the Practise of Journalism

Mostly, lying and deception are never justified. For some, it depends on the circumstances and for others, it depends on the very definition of the word ‘lie’ in the context it was articulated. Although these responses may be simplistic, at the outset it should be acknowledged that lying and deception are related but are not necessarily the same thing. Deception means “the communication of messages intended to mislead others, to make them believe what we do not believe.”<sup>7</sup> Even silence is considered a deceptive act, and hence, given the circumstances the withholding of information from the public be considered a deceptive act. Media practitioners have been known to deliberately transmit false information, many of the contemporary ethical problems involving the ethics of truth-telling fall under the broad category of deception.

Our social structure is built on the premise of relativism when accusations of moral misconduct are addressed with the response ‘everything is relative’ justifies the socio-cultural norms. Although relativists are not entirely wrong, yet there are times when deception may be justified. If we are to remain moral beings, both in our personal and professional lives, we should be prepared to defend our deviations from the path of truth based on some firm moral foundation. Truth-telling never needs any moral justification; lying and deception do.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, the journalists require strategical skills to function in the society of misinformation to resist the biased or fake news that polarizes the audience. For instance, when reporting inevitable ‘false news,’ it could be done without amplifying it, i.e., narrate the false news story between the facts.<sup>9</sup> The journalists can preserve their credibility in news reporting by being transparent, acknowledging the errors, and avoiding intimidating public figures.

## 2.1. Truth as Fundamental Principle

Society needs to embrace the commitment to truth as a fundamental principle. Primarily, the lack of integrity in human communications undermines the autonomy of the individual. As rational beings, we depend on truthful and accurate information to make informed judgments about activities related to the election of public officials, products to buy and so on. Therefore, we have a right as autonomous individuals to expect media practitioners to behave with the same degree of integrity as the rest of society.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, the commitment to truth demonstrates respect for persons as individuals rather than as tools to be manipulated. Significantly, the belief in the truthfulness of communications is what builds trust between individuals and between individuals and society's institutions. Deception constitutes a breach of faith and makes it less likely that relationships based on trust and credibility will succeed in the future. Thus, the existence of a norm of truth-telling is a moral condition of language. Media practitioners have a pivotal role in the communications process and are instrumental in sending ethical cues to the rest of society regarding proper moral conduct.<sup>11</sup>

## 2.2. Truth in News Reporting

The question is how much of the truth should be revealed and under what circumstances professionals and advertisers may withhold information that might be important to consumers? Although we expect journalists to be unbiased and to report the truth, on the other hand, consumers realise that public relations practitioners and advertisers are advocates and do not expect them to do anything that would be contrary to their self-interest or the interests of their clients. Here, "the medium is the message."<sup>12</sup>

Some ideas underlie the notion of truth in news reporting. To begin with, the reporting of a story must be accurate. The facts should be verified, i.e., they should be based on solid evidence. If there is some doubt or dispute about the facts, it should be

revealed to the audience. Quotes should be checked for accuracy, especially when the quotes contain assertions that the reporter believes may be untrue.<sup>13</sup> Sometimes accuracy of information is compromised due to time and competitive pressures. Such a rush to judgment causes journalistic causality. Hence, accurate reporting is a fundamental requirement of determining the truth in journalism.

Moreover, a truthful story should promote understanding. Time and space limitations preclude providing a comprehensive understanding of any situation. The goal should be to provide an account that is essentially complete.<sup>14</sup> A story should contain as much relevant information as is available and essential to afford the average reader or viewer at least an understanding of the facts and the context of the facts. This places the working journalist somewhere between the extremes of full disclosure and no disclosure. The fact is that the whole truth could perhaps never be disclosed about any situation, but ethical concerns arise when the news media as the ethical agents deliberately withhold all or some facts relevant to the public interest.

More specifically, the criterion for a truthful article is that it be fair and balanced. These two ideas involve more than just avoiding reporter bias, although that is certainly desirable. Journalists should attempt to accord recognition to those views that enhance the understanding of the issue.<sup>15</sup> Every effort should be made to represent them fairly and not to use quotes out of context. The fairness-balance requirement is more complex than just verifying the content. The use of evaluative language and bad story structure and editing can also produce an unintentional slant in news reporting.

It should be noted that the idea of objectivity<sup>16</sup> is impossible for all journalists to achieve, since all individuals, including reporters, who are supposedly experienced observers, view the world through a series of psychological filters – beliefs and expectations that determine how they interpret

events. Additionally, the legitimate communication function of persuasion in news media and such circumstances, the audience expects that the dissemination of information will be more selective.<sup>17</sup> However, the moral imperative to fully disclose is more acute when the health or safety of the public is at risk.

Therefore, the principle of truth-telling in the news media is absolute that it ought to be relevant in all circumstances, irrespective of the consequences of the news story. This approach would rule out all deception by media practitioners, even by reporters who advocate that deception is necessary at times to root out corrupt government.

### 3. Privacy and the Journalist

The idea of privacy is difficult to define. The common understanding of the right to privacy means the right to be left alone or to control unwanted publicity about one's personal affairs. Since media is in the business that tends to reveal and not conceal stories of people; there needs to be a balance between individual's interests in privacy against the interest of the public in access to information about others raises several ethical questions.

Invasion of privacy by the news media is necessary to the news gathering process and a well-informed public. However, the ethical predicament arises in deciding where to distinguish the difference between reasonable and unreasonable news media conduct. This frustration of confronting ethical situation is well described by Conrad Fink in *Media Ethics: In the Newsroom and Beyond* he writes,

“Infinite variations of ethical dilemmas arise in privacy issues. Here, perhaps more than in any other area of journalistic ethics, you will have no precise guidelines, and often will find little solace in what other journalists did in similar cases. Make your best judgement call, balancing your responsibility to your reading or viewing public against the individual's right to privacy,

and expect to awaken in the night, even years later with the gnawing feeling you made the wrong call.”<sup>18</sup>

This is not a very promising assessment for media practitioners who must make difficult judgement under deadline pressures. In all likelihood, the search for the meaning of privacy will continue unrestricted, and the distinction between reasonable and unreasonable violations of privacy will continue to ignore us. Nevertheless, sensitivity to the privacy interests of others is an essential element of moral reasoning in newsgathering.

#### 3.1. The Importance of Privacy

Fundamentally, the value of privacy is important as it can maintain the confidentiality of the personal information of an autonomous individual.<sup>19</sup> It takes the position that others are not entitled to know everything about themselves. The moment this principle is breached, one loses control and the sense of autonomy is undermined. Additionally, privacy could protect one from scorn and ridicule by others.<sup>20</sup> In a society in which there is still intolerance of some human tragedies, lifestyles, and unorthodox behaviours, where no one wants to be shamed and they know the risk of exposing their private lives to public scrutiny.

Further, privacy produces a mechanism by which one can control reputations. Commonly people say, “Who cares what others think?”, but the fact is that one does care.<sup>21</sup> The more others know about oneself, the less powerful one becomes in controlling their destiny. Alan Westin notes that privacy is “the claim of an individual to determine what information about himself or herself should be known to others,”<sup>22</sup> while Charles Fried stated that “privacy ... is the control we have over information about ourselves.”<sup>23</sup>

Additionally, privacy in the sense of being left alone is valuable in keeping others at a distance and regulating the degree of social interaction one has. The law against trespassing and intrusion reflect this concern.<sup>24</sup> The moral right to privacy has

value for those who wish to maintain a sense of individuality. The curiosity about the activities of others, and revelations of facts by the media and other agencies have eroded the expectations of privacy.<sup>25</sup> In other words, although every individual is a private and social being, and those two roles collide at times to everyone's detriment.

### **3.2. Need for Privacy Ethics in News Reporting**

The key question from an ethical perspective ought to be, to what extent the public information relates to the individual's public performances or image. Journalists reporting on an individual's life commences from that individual's definition of privacy. For instance, celebrities and public servants make their public choices based on their awareness that they could have privacy loss. This within itself is a difficult judgement because some people seem to have a life of their own.<sup>26</sup> Further, ethics of privacy is needed to revolve around one of the primary legal defences for the publishing of embarrassing private information: newsworthiness.<sup>27</sup> More attention should be paid to what the public needs to know rather than merely to what it has a curiosity about. Journalists ought to make the distinction between the public and news publication, i.e., the process of publishing differ from publicising, and that difference needs to be treated with caution.

Any story, even one that appears to be innocent, has the potential for raising complaints from those who are featured in the news story. Some members of the public view such innocent intrusions as a matter of privacy, the media should be sensitive to their concerns. Some other areas of news coverage dealing with private and sensitive information and certain techniques of news-gathering raise special problems for journalists.<sup>28</sup> When news reporters consider disclosing the elements of an individual's private life, they are aware of the distress it causes to that individual. Hence, many journalists select their news stories with discretion on reporting concerning contagious diseases and

handicaps, homosexuality, rapes and other sex crimes, juvenile offenders, and suicides are among the most problematic subjects.

### **4. News Media and Social Justice**

The principle of social justice is to treat every news story without double standards, and it is referred to as the principle of formal justice. Social justice needs to be further clarified to be defined as what is considered to be equal. Various socio-cultural frontiers with diverse philosophical ideologies attempted to objectively define social justice in their distinctive views. However, the basic principles of social justice balance the values of access, equality, participation, and human rights.<sup>29</sup>

The traditional view of news media is the libertarian idea of justice, maximising the independence of the news media from government intervention and obligation to society. So this means self-interested corporations and profit centred ideologies have a justice of their own. Hence, if one pays for something, one would still be a customer regardless of race, age, skin colour, or sex. As long as the news company makes a profit, they respect their customer as a valid prospect client, and the idea of commercial monetary benefit is the sole motivation for equality. From the news media point of view, self-regulation in news reporting is left to the competitive forces in the marketplace. While not all members of society have the same political, social and economic equality to speak, libertarians still prefer alternatives to government intervention, even when justice is threatened. Observing the various new news outlets in media, it seems quite easy to detect bias and personal views from the publisher.<sup>30</sup>

On the contrary, the egalitarian ideology promotes that it is essential to enforce public pressure or governmental action to necessitate in ensuring equality and social responsibility by the news media. Egalitarians views that any disconnect from social justice to the contending social forces would never accomplish equal justice. So, in the profit-centred philosophy, even if an individual was a valid paying consumer, yet they might still have

been treated unjustly due to the individual self-interests. In news media, egalitarian moral representatives operate with a respect for people rather than with undisguised scepticism. Individual freedom can be sacrificed if justice is equal to all. Distributive justice, like equal pay for equal work or compensatory justice, like affirmative action programs, is often the most utilized.<sup>31</sup> The mainstream news media often blend these two philosophies, depending on their commitment to social justice, the coverage needs, and appealing to their audiences. So as a customer, one should be treated equally as any other customer, regardless of race, sex, age, disability, etc., and not just because an individual customer is paying.

Furthermore, "Information is power and insight can impact on public discourse."<sup>32</sup> Perception of society changes through the access of information from the free press, which is core to healthy media and fundamental right to information in the democratic system. Free press enhances unbiased information, as it generates a platform for multiple opinions in society. However, Lack of information at any conflict situations create desperation and the people become vulnerable for manipulative information source at this stage. Consequently, United Nations Millennium Declaration states the need "to ensure the freedom of the media to perform their essential role and the right of the public to have access to information."<sup>33</sup>

To enhance social justice through journalism, the journalists must report the voices of the victims in the conflict. News reporting need to refrain from manipulative imbalanced information flow, rather adhere to the ethical guidelines of journalism to document the sufferings and losses of all people due to social and communal disparities in the conflict situations. The possibilities of recommending solutions to prevent further escalation in the conflict are central to journalism from a social justice perspective.<sup>34</sup>

News media reports on human rights abuse defend the victim through ethical standards in journalism that commit towards

productive social justice for all the people in the society. Increasing public opinion in news reporting enables the news media to have wider coverage in influencing news worthiness to a larger audience.<sup>35</sup> The effects of the news media are at their best when it takes responsible action to address the social and communal crisis. In this context, the authoritarian governments attempt to persecute journalists preventing them from exposing misconduct and abuse of power. News media practitioners are increasingly being persecuted even in democratic countries. True social justice is possible only when the people's elected representatives become more accountable to the people through the news media even during conflict or crises.<sup>36</sup> For instance, it includes protecting gender discrimination, minority rights, freedom of expression and information, etc. Also, most importantly, those in government adhere to news media laws and refrain from abusing journalists in the context of reporting a violation of social justice in society.<sup>37</sup>

News media has the potentiality to conflict manage when social justice is threatened.<sup>38</sup> Whereas journalistic tool enables healthy social and communal environment, but additional ethical responsibility in news reporting ensures the furtherance to holistic social justice in the society. With the twofold functions of the news media, it enquires the social constructs that destabilise social justice and promote people's freedom in right to information. Although the news media has a tremendous perspective in conflict and post-conflict situations, yet its utility has been largely undermined in realising social and communal harmony.

Hence, the means of news-gathering has raised ethical concerns for us to examine further. The issues related to truth-telling, privacy and the idea of justice has indeed pointed to several blinders that we face in society from time to time. We ought to translate the bondage of these blinders towards liberation force in the print media so that the news media would continue to serve the overall interest of the people to gain information,

increase awareness regarding social and communal harmony in the society.

### **5. Role of Press in Promoting Harmony**

The press demonstrates diverse but complementary functions in society, specifically during riots or tense situations to promote harmony in society. In the context of the disturbed and apprehensive social and communal situation, the news reporters embrace the role of advocacy journalism to “promote a particular cause and intentionally adopt a biased, non-objective viewpoint to do so effectively.”<sup>39</sup> At this juncture, the advocacy press observes stringent journalistic guidelines, not as the role of an activist but exercise credibility in news reporting without propaganda to suppress significant facts or to present a half-truth in narrating the news story.<sup>40</sup>

In the course of riots or tense situations, the media has the responsibility to produce only proven facts. It should refrain from fanning and spreading rumours because at that time not many people can reason out the information’s veracity. They simply go by the word of the media. Therefore, the language used in the news narrative cannot be instigating, derogatory, inflammatory or insulting.<sup>41</sup> Press has to be free from any external pressure like political, bureaucratic, economic, power groups, peer groups or other vested interests to be unbiased. The media need to place society’s interests before its own TRP rating or monetary interests, and not forget humanity during crises.

As it has been seen in many riots and communal clashes like the serial bomb blast in Delhi, Ahmedabad, Jaipur etc. for the revenge of Gujarat riots, media should not provoke people by reiterating the painful story, which has already been forgotten or put in the back store of one’s mind. For instance, reminding people about Ayodhya, Babari Masjid demolition, Gujarat riots, Bombay clashes etc. usually serve no useful purpose except the incitement of the miscreants for revenge.

In contrast, during peace time news reporting has the responsibility to promote social and communal harmony as well. In a quieter situation, the journalists adopt precision journalism utilising polls and research studies to focus the accuracy of their news stories.<sup>42</sup> It applies the principles of scientific methods in the task of gathering and presentation of news reporting. For instance, reporting exit polls or voting patterns during elections. Additionally, journalists could bring forth to the public notice the plight of the weaker sections of society. If this is followed in good faith, the weaker section can get along with the mainstream and they feel equally comfortable thereby decreasing the sense of inequality and injustice, which is the root cause of all the communal tensions.

The press needs to build up national solidarity in noticing that people have been living together harmoniously in the long history of India except for the small periods of communal unrest. The news media facilitate inter-religion communication and talks among the religious leaders on the issues of social importance. They could bring about the best of the practices and cultural diversity of all the communities. Art, music, paintings, songs of national unity and communal harmony in the news go a long way in promoting communal harmony.<sup>43</sup>

The press could focus on publishing books, documentaries and other material that promote communal harmony. There are many movies and books on communal riots, but merely a handful of them on the theme of communal harmony. Due to the commercialisation of the news media, the basic notion of ‘whatever incites the basic instincts, sales well’ promotes negative news reporting. The populous social mindset is such that people like news stories on war, clashes, deaths etc. but are quite apathetic to peacebuilding measures. Therefore, the news media constantly attempts to perform with people’s raw wounds and never let them heal.

Markandey Katju, Chairman Press Council of India, former Judge Supreme Court of India observes,

“Intellectuals and media people must fight against divisive tendencies in our country. We must remain united because the modern industry requires a large market, and if we are divided and fight with each other modern industry cannot grow, and without modern industry, we cannot generate the wealth required to abolish poverty, unemployment, etc. and provide for healthcare, education, etc. for our people. Therefore, whatever divides us, whether based on religion, caste, region, language, race, etc. is anti-national, and whatever unites us (e.g. secularism) is the path we must adopt for progress.”<sup>44</sup>

Most importantly, the editors of news media need a very conscious and active role to play in the promotion of harmony. To ensure the content of the news reporting is a healthy one and congenial to the atmosphere of communal harmony as gatekeeping in journalism, they could ensure not instigating any section of society and not affecting law and order situation. Furthermore, they could allot space and prominence to the articles related to the promotion of social and communal harmony in the country.

## **6. News Media Build Social and Communal Harmony**

Fake news promotes disruption of harmony and it enhances a more dangerous volatile place in society. The quantum circulation of misinformation and hoax in the news media make it critical to sensitise the news consumers of its impact. Wrong information or rumours do incite the public to indulge in violence and breeds anti-social culture. It's a tragedy when people do not realise the nuance of misinformation in the news story that they are being exploited by the commercial news media to serve its interests.

The central functions of the press as the credible information source and critical investigative adversarial agent needed to be

considered as the twin side of the same coin, while considering building social and communal harmony through news media.<sup>45</sup> For instance, in India, despite caste discrimination, social oppression, and communal inequalities, the news media to a great extent continue to function as a credible information source. Nevertheless, it is the function of the newsagents as critical investigative adversarial gives new substantive news content concerning the society, i.e., the press can act as the secondary agent in news reporting. E.g., probing into the public policy related to multiple social and communal deprivation that are prevalent in the society, which enhances the credible informational role of the news media.<sup>46</sup>

Also, the news media conceptualisation as a ‘watchdog’ function involves constructive adversarial agents for the public interest. The notion of watchdogism may improve and reform the social and communal system through news reporting, criticism, investigation, etc. Walter Lippmann envisions free press to continually improve the governance in the society,<sup>47</sup> while N. Ram views that the news media could legitimately destabilise social and communal harmony through unacceptable systemic policies.<sup>48</sup> However, the sustained watchdog function towards more accurate, reliable, and truth-telling news media do build trust among the news consumers as loyalty readers in independent journalism. The autonomy of professional journalism and the availability of indigenous media has the capability of the press performing the task of social and communal harmony in the society.

Again, the role of the free press in agenda-setting could be visible in investigative and analytic journalism bringing significant issues to build public agenda. The expose of the scandals, probing corruptions, ministerial and official misconducts, are brought to the public attention to address issues responsible for the discord in the society. For instance, the investigative journalism of P. Sainath probing into the rural distress and farmers’ suicides are the finest free press journalistic

tradition of agenda-setting on people's social and communal issues.<sup>49</sup> Socially conscious news stories construct agenda-setting processes to produce democratic and progressiveness in the society to build "authentic public opinion and a congenial context of attitude, feeling, and critical democratic values and practices."<sup>50</sup> Investigative journalism inspires truth-telling ventures that enable whistle-blowers or newsleaks on issues that matters social and communal harmony.

More importantly, the propaganda or manufacture of consent in the news media could be seen as a subversion of the central function of the credible information source and critical investigative adversarial to social and communal harmony. In his book on *Manufacturing Consent*,<sup>51</sup> Herman and Chomsky advocate liberalising the news media as free, independent, respecting diversity, pluralism of views, striving for fairly unbiased reporting for the public interest. On the contrary, in his book on *Necessary Illusion: Thought Control in Democratic Societies*,<sup>52</sup> Chomsky observes that the propaganda model of news reporting serves the interest of the state and corporate elite in framing news narratives that supports the established privileged. News media corporates and ownership commercialise their news stories to suit the interest of the consumers through the well-structured management in distributing the news products on the advertisement to their captive audience.

To demonstrate the propaganda or manufacture of consent in the news reporting, it was evident in the case when the Indian news media adopted celebration attitude in the Hindu Right's Ram Janmabhumi campaign mobilising the demolition of Babri Masjid. Rajagopal, in his study, argues that the social distance in news reporting between the Hindi and the English language press became a strategic resource for Hindu nationalists. The gap between the news coverage provided crucial space for mobilisation of social and communal divergence.<sup>53</sup> Similarly, in the context of the Gujarat Riots, the gap in news coverage by the English and

the Gujarati language press was convincingly visible. While the English news reporting upheld the truth-telling of the whistle blowers on the state-sponsored genocide program, the Gujarati press exercised the manufacture of consent role with vengeance in a fact-finding mission.<sup>54</sup> Such irresponsible and unethical journalism contributed to the offence, propagation of hate and fuelled social and communal disorder.

Overall, while the contemporary news media adopt a laudatory tone in underplaying robust criticisms and objections, it becomes less relevant to the news consumer as non-committed to the people's right to information that drives the news media. For Gandhiji, the basic principle of truth-telling was the realisation that harmonises the existence of all creation.<sup>55</sup> Any violation of harmony creates a disaster in the social and communal fabrics in society. The principle of truth-telling is enshrined in all regions, which leads humanity to accord equality and respect to live harmoniously. Let our media be engaged in bringing forth the best of the knowledge and art out of our cultural diversity and spread this knowledge across the world that India will stand united and strong for the generations to come.

## End Notes

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## Weaving God's Stories and Our Stories: A Narrative Approach in Pastoral Care

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This paper deals with the nature and challenges of pastoral care in a narrative perspective. Situating pastoral care at the interface of care for human and care for the stories of God, the paper explores the narrative challenges and possibilities on dealing with issues in pastoral care context and the ways in which narratives from the biblical and psychotherapeutic traditions be brought into conversation.

### 1. God Stories and Our Stories in the Bible-Pastoral Care

The Bible is first of all about stories of God and faith in God. The biblical narrative is the account of creating, covenanting, redeeming, and sustaining God whose character is love. God is hidden and revealed, present and absent, powerful and vulnerable in the divine narrative. The language of biblical stories is metaphorical because it is the only way for humans to speak about the mystery of God. At the same time, the divine narrative is about human struggle to live in the story of God. The bible is also a book of human stories about unbridled passion, remarkable births, sibling rivalry, military heroics, political intrigue, and the complex dynamics of family living. As a remarkably honest collection of stories of human struggle, the bible is a book of observation as well as revelation. It is a script that reveals God's relentless love for the world and at the same time observes with ruthless honesty the human struggle to live faithfully in that love.<sup>1</sup>

Acknowledging the human dimension to the biblical story, Stephen Pattison argues that, "while the biblical writings do

not give a literal historical record, they do give a profoundly truthful and eternally relevant account of aspects of the human condition."<sup>2</sup> As such the Bible is a literary source for validating human experience today even when it is not regarded as the one and only divine authority. That is the point of empathy in pastoral care. When people feel struck or trapped in a negative narrative, the task of pastoral care is to create a framework in which they might think about their story in new and liberating way. Besides finding our place in the divine narratives, we also want to discover God's presence in the human narrative. One of the reasons why biblical stories are treasured is because of their timeless ability to narrate God's presence in the midst of human events. The Bible is filled with stories about the presence of God in ordinary moments of sleeping or eating or fishing or meeting with fabric of our lives and locates us in the large drama of God's journey with God's people. Adding in biblical framework to the lens through which we see another's story is therefore, an authentic re-appropriating of the Christian heritage of pastoral care.<sup>3</sup>

Hence, as Anderson states, "the aim of pastoral care is to assist people in weaving the stories to their lives and God's stories as mediated through the community into a transformative narrative that will liberate them from the confining narratives, confirm their sense of belonging, and strengthen them to live responsibly."<sup>4</sup> Our stories and God's stories are inextricably linked together. When we are fully attentive to the stories of God, we are in the midst of the human story-valuing our past, pushed by the power of story, strangely aware of the one whom we dare to call God. Weaving the human and the divine enables us to hear our own stories retold with clarity and new possibility. In this regard, John Patton postulates that narrative creates the possibility of interaction with biblical theology, through a fresh understanding of Anton Boisen's famous phrase of the 'living human document.'<sup>5</sup> Whereas earlier this term was used to emphasize the contrast between dead texts and living people, narrativity underscores the parallels of written texts and

meaningful human action. This connection invites empirical pastoral theology to employ methods and insights from biblical theology and to explore the relation with human documents.<sup>5</sup>

## 2. Narrative Approach in Psychotherapy

In psychotherapy, narrative as therapeutic method was introduced through the collaborative effort of Michael White and David Epston in their book, *Narrative means to therapeutic ends*. White and Epston take a social constructionist view of the world. They are interested in how their clients perceive events and the world around them. The narratives or stories that are people's lives represent political, cultural, economic, religious and social influences.<sup>6</sup> When these stories are problem oriented or negative, they often affect the attitude of the clients or family. Morgan supports their view and asserts that narratives develop in the lives of people as a result of events that are linked in sequence across time according to a certain plot. People's lives are multi-storeyed,<sup>7</sup> consists of different types of stories (individual, family or community related), and/are also influenced by the broader social context in which they find themselves.<sup>8</sup> Not only do people live their lives according to these narratives, but their future expectations are also based on them.<sup>9</sup>

White and Epston opined that people's life-stories are a powerful influential force. When the dominant stories of people's lives are problem-saturated, their lives become problem-saturated as a restricted view governs both the present and the future. However, they suggest that the narrative approach can then be instrumental in helping people discover alternative stories and helping them to re-tell the dominant stories in a way which is freeing and liberating. The narrative approach emphasises the importance of listening to the unique stories of each individual.<sup>10</sup> The message it conveyed was that the lives of people can be interpreted as a story and that this story, or text analogy, can be utilised as a therapeutic tool. Strategies to facilitate the narrative process are: *therapeutic stance of not knowing, problem is*

*problem, externalization, deconstruction, co-construction and unique outcomes, constructing alternative stories.*<sup>11</sup> In this approach the primary caregiver task is still to listen the story as fully and completely as possible. We must know their stories in order to help people reframe them.

Narrative perspective assumes that people make sense of their lives through stories they fashion and cultural narratives into which they are born. Narrative has become a significant framework for understanding situations of pastoral care. We were if defined by our own stories, then caring for people means listening to their stories, and not for historical facts or psychological symptoms of it. Stories are the content of pastoral conversation. When we listen carefully to people, we discover that they often live with competing stories, with no overarching way of stitching their stories together into coherent whole and little understanding of the connection between daily events and larger narratives of life and faith.<sup>12</sup> The liberating promise of the narrative perspective is that if our lives are socially constructed, they may also be reconstructed. We are never fully trapped in the narratives we construct. It is always possible to narrate our lives in another way. Consequently, storytelling is an act of hope, and even defiance, because it carries within it the power to change. In this regard, Christie Conzod Neuger rightly asserts that a major part of the work of pastoral care from a narrative perspective is “to help people generate new language and new interpretive lenses and thus create new realities.”<sup>13</sup> In this sense, psychotherapeutic narrative perspective has its affinity with Jesus' approach to caring and healing ministry in his earthly ministry (John 4:7-42, Mark 2:27, Luke 24:13-35 etc.).

### **3. Narrative Approach in Pastoral Care: Challenges and Prospects**

Narrative approach in pastoral care collaborates with other helping professions in its care for the human stories. It shares the care for the stories of God with other types of religious

presence such as: worship, church development, and religiously inspired political action. R. Ruard Ganzevoort opines that combining these two focal points creates a powerful potential for meaningful care, but also a *fragile identity*.<sup>14</sup> In this regard, Ganzevoort observed that some theories of pastoral care stress the human focus to the degree of becoming indistinguishable from social work or psychotherapy, albeit usually without their sophisticated theories and methods. Other approaches focus on the divine stories and end up as forms of preaching. This poses a major challenge for pastoral caregiver to maintain the balance and find ways of meaningfully connecting the two. Three narrative approaches in pastoral care are identified for our discussion and further reflection.

**3.1. Kerymatic/proclaiming or Instructive Approach:** In this model, its root structure is a movement from the stories of the tradition to the individual story. The pastoral care giver listens to the person's stories for questions and clues, but then draws on the narrative tradition to offer answers. It is called intrusive because of the truth claims inherent in this model. The underlying conviction is that the tradition carried the revelation of God himself. This implies that the meaning and messages coming from this tradition takes priority over the stories of the receiver of care. The stories of God do not as possible sources of meaning, but as *ultimate ones* demanding a response of faith and obedience. Sometimes this model comes in harsh and fundamentalist shapes, at other times it takes a more sensitive posture, for instance when a person is in despair is admonished to keep faith in God. This may be comforting but it requires the person to rely upon the authority of the pastoral caregiver and /or the tradition of that faith. This is why the instructive tradition has usually stressed the religious authority of the ordained pastor/clergy, so that one can speak on behalf of the tradition or on behalf of God.<sup>15</sup> For instance, approach represented by Jay E. Adams is not concerned with being consistent with other sciences rather it focuses with the scripture passages in scripture

that might influence the moral behaviour of the counsellee that is inconsistent with faith norms.<sup>16</sup> In this approach Bible is considered authoritative both as a spiritual resource and as the only norm for methods of care and counselling. While, Howard Cline bell contends that in such approach there are possibilities Bible can be misused in wholeness-constricting ways in pastoral care. This is to say that Bible can be quoted in a legalistic way by pastors to buttress their sagging authority, manipulate counselees to confirm to rigid moralizing and justifying life-constricting attitudes towards issues such as sexuality and divorce.<sup>17</sup> Anderson argues that Biblical care and counselling becomes problematic when it disregards both the complexity of the Bible and the freedom of the human spirit.<sup>18</sup> However, for Thurneysen pastoral care is and remains proclamation of the Word to the individual and neither can nor should be anything else.<sup>19</sup> As Brunsdun cautioned, such approach may contribute to the danger of seeing the pastoral encounter as an individualised kerygmatic endeavour without hearing or accommodating the needs of the counsellee.<sup>20</sup>

**3.2. Therapeutic or Expressive Approach:** This model grew out of the modernising changes in the nineteen sixties in the western context. Here the central meanings are to be found in the individual's life story. In this model, the authority of the tradition and its representatives are disputed. The pastoral caregiver engages with the care-receiver in exploring the spiritual meanings of the personal life story. The stories of the religious traditions are invoked to express the affects and longings of the individual. Biblical stories then can serve to offer images and language for the existential issues the person is grappling with. This articulation of the person's life in terms of religious serves to foster in the person an experience of oneself as a spiritual being and of God's presence in one's story. These biblical stories may be, for example, comforting psalms, but they may acknowledge the importance of emotions that the person labels him or herself negative, such as anger, or revenge. By offering biblical models of anger and

revenge, the person is allowed to feel and accept these emotions and find ways of handling them constructively. The caregiver plays an important role in this approach because he/she carries the knowledge of the religious stories and knows which stories would fit the person's life story.<sup>21</sup> It is not the ecclesial authority of the first approach, but the more functional authority of expertise. In this regard, Wayne E Oates affirmed that to whom a pastoral caregiver ministered need to have a positive attitude toward the Bible and some familiarity with its stories or theme. For Oates, "the Bible is a handbook of the Church and personal discipline, a treasury of ideals of human thought, feeling and conduct under God."<sup>22</sup>

Anderson acknowledged that the task of weaving together human and divine stories without violating the integrity of the biblical narrative or the human story is seldom easy. Nonetheless, he points out the possibility of connecting biblical stories and our stories without violating the integrity of either. In the Book *In Jacobs shadow: Christian Perspectives on Masculinity*, Anderson makes an effort to connect the male dilemma of today with the biblical narrative and a special resonance was found with Jacob's flawed humanity (Genesis 25:29-34, 27-35). Anderson states thus: "Jacob is a man for our time precisely because we can see ourselves in his ambiguity, we are comforted by his flawed humanity, and yet we are inspired by his faithfulness... what I have learned from the Jacob story is that the journey to faithfulness in God is a bumpy road full of struggle and unexpected change."<sup>23</sup> The structure of this story provides a useful framework for understanding the costliness of deception and the anguish of fear. Jacobs wrestling with God and subsequent wounding draws events in Jacob's lives such as disappointments, vulnerability, aggression and develops perspectives on themes underplayed in most men's lives such as nurturing, grieving and sharing power. The biblical character of Jacob is a man for our time because men can see themselves readily in his ambiguity.

Caroll Wise rightly articulated that when the Bible is properly used could have beneficial effect in the alleviating of emotional distress.<sup>24</sup> In this regard, the book, *Rachel's cry: Prayer of Lament and the Recovery of Hope*, is a convincing invitation to recover the prayer of lament as a way of hope in a time of irrational suffering and deepening despair (Jer. 31:15-17). The question they ask is this: "what guidance does the Bible and the theological tradition give us regarding the inclusion of lament as we praise and thanksgiving in the practice of Christian living." By the prayer of lament, Billman and Migliore mean the unsettling biblical tradition that includes expressions of complaint, anger, grief, despair, and protest to God. They are most often, but not exclusively, found in the psalms. While, this prayer makes us uncomfortable, they are evidently an important part of the biblical tradition of prayer. Contrary to what we may assume, the bible makes room in the journey of faith for daring complaint to God rather than declaring such prayer off limits (Ps. 38).<sup>25</sup> For Andrew Lester, "People who hope do not need to doge the facts or obscure the objective data. Hope does not function as an opiate that causes people to deny reality. In fact hope provides the courage to face whatever chaos and trauma life throws at us. Hope does not try to avoid the pain of finite existence nor is it naïve about suffering."<sup>26</sup>

In the context of loss and grief, Donald Capps offers insightful example on the functions of psalms of lament in facilitating grief process. Psalms of lament is to rehabilitate and restore those who are suffering. The lament defines the suffering and tells the sufferer the correct form in which the lament is to be experienced. It shapes how the one experiencing grief feels and expresses feelings appropriately for healing. It facilitates the expression of deep emotions of hurt, guilt and anger, at the same time draws the sufferer closer to God. where healing and growth take place.<sup>27</sup> Edward P. Wimberly supports this view and demonstrates the relevance in his practice in counselling with a client. For instance, Psalm 86 is categorised as an individual lament, and it relates to individuals who faced initial shock

over tragedy. Psalm 23 is helpful for the client to gain trust and confidence in God's provision when faced without various difficult situations.<sup>28</sup> In order to ensure that the biblical texts used are relevant and will be relevant and will be positively, we still need to listen very carefully both to scripture and to the human situation asserts Capps.<sup>29</sup> So far, relevance is still linked to authority.

**3.3. *Hermeneutical or Evocative Approach:*** This approach combines elements of the other disciplines, but refrains from the authority that is intrinsic to both. Central to this third approach is to offer notions, language, images and stories that may evoke a change of meaning. This intended change of meaning distinguishes the evocative from the expressive approach. In the encounter of personal life story and the religious story, both are allowed to change. This makes a critical and creative reading of the Bible story. Neither the personal nor the traditional determines the outcome and the pastoral role is not one of authority. Only the person whose life is involved is in the position to find moments of merging significance in this interchange of stories. The pastoral caregiver is more like a facilitator creating the space in which these interchanges can occur. This approach seeks for an open and creative attitude in the pastoral caregiver.<sup>30</sup> The work of Charles Gerkin was a major influence in establishing 'pastoral interpretation' as the framework for linking scripture with pastoral events or relationships. The pastoral hermeneutical effort is directed towards bringing hidden or unintelligible elements of a situation to awareness so that a fitting response may be made. Gerkin summarized the hermeneutical perspective as "a way of seeing the life of the self or, in more Christian terms, the life of the soul. That life is first and fundamentally a life of interpretation of experience."<sup>31</sup> The Bible is not simply the spiritual resources according to present therapeutic strategies, or the authoritative guide that shapes pastoral action. Rather, the focus of pastoral interpretation is on a dynamic process of reciprocal influence

in which the presumptions of the pastoral interpreter of both scripture and the human situation are examined. Imagination is one dimension of the interpretation of both person and text because it invites images of meaning and reality beyond persons and text because it invites images of meaning and reality beyond observable experience and beyond singular reading of the text or the situation.<sup>32</sup> New perspectives in biblical interpretation have created freedom to move beyond both an overly simplistic equation between the biblical world and ours and an overly cautious distancing of scripture from the present situation. The final aim of interpretation is to be fashion liberating narratives of human life and life in God This approach reflects three interrelated assumptions about the reality: *reality is socially constructed over time and in time; reality is constituted through language and metaphorical speech; these socially constituted realities are organised and maintained through narrative.*<sup>33</sup>

One of the main questions of narrative practice is epistemological, “How do we know what we know?” Postmodernism does not deny the existence of things as such but states that, in any description that we make of things, we do so by means of language and language is a product of the cultural and historical context. We can therefore never be sure that our description precisely represents the things and events in the world. Following Foucault, one can argue that social prescriptions impact the construction and meaning-making of the experience of spirituality and religion to the same extent as they impact the construction of experience of sexuality and of illness. Questioning the ideas that we took for granted at some point in the past, we can filter out what it is our beliefs that belonged to the world, what parts of our ideas of Christianity are results of the influence of the contemporaneous culture historical context and the forms of power relations that are established in it (the hierarchical culture of the church, gender roles, and so on). We make meaning of the experience of the sacred that we encounter in our lives, as of any

kind of experience by means of language or storying it. The issue that is faced by a believer who has learned deconstruction is how to stop oneself from deconstructing everything? what is to be deconstructed, and what is to be left intact (for a while)?<sup>34</sup>

#### 4. Reflection and Conclusion

If the aim of narrative pastoral care is to be understood as helping people refashion their life story' through the lens' of God's story, then, certainly the Bible is inextricably linked to the *care of souls*. Biblical narratives will continue to be spiritual resource in pastoral care but in new ways. When we weave or reweave together human and divine stories, our stories of God reflect at their deepest levels every human experiences of being overlooked or unacknowledged. If it is true that the need for recognition is a dominant force driving human beings, then there is some urgency to acknowledge human stories in the divine narrative and the divine narrative in human stories. In this sense, the bible will continue to be a spiritual resource for people who regard it as an authority for faith and life. The power of the Bible, as Walter Brueggeman has observed, is that it is a primal antidote to techniques and trivialization. In order to evade ambiguity, we are tempted to 'thin the Bible and make it one dimensional...(reducing) what is urgent and immense to what exhaustible trivia.' (Brueggeman, Placher and Bount 2002, 26) The paradox of pastoral care is this: we are familiar with the messy stuff of life and at the same time we are *theotokos* or bearers of God. In this regard, Anderson rightly asserts, “in order to mediate between the all embracing, ever-elusive mystery of the Divine and the bits and pieces of human life, we need to be in habitual contact with the mystery of God while standing in the midst of human pain and struggle. The Bible is a dependable road to divine mysteries. That is why it is so important for pastoral caregivers to learn the art of weaving human and divine stories. Hence, “Double listening and bimodal thinking are the centre of care of souls.”<sup>35</sup>

Narrative therapy from psychotherapeutic tradition particularly its strategies as discussed above provide a helpful additional framework and outlook for pastoral care. Its optimistic approach to life, its love of stories, and its deeply respectful regard for the value of persons, and empathy give it a natural point of affinity with biblical approach to care of souls. However, its intimate connection with postmodernism (social constructionism and the enterprise of deconstruction) could be problematic for traditional Christian religion. This is partly because of the moral relativism inherent in a constructionist approach, but also because deconstruction carries with it a disdain for essentialist foundations of thought such as those on which traditional Christian values and beliefs are built. A narrative approach, particularly hermeneutic/evocative model provides us tools to more accurately know ourselves and what we know. It also reminds us to value and make use the tools-to be empathetic listeners to another person's story without being sceptical or making judgement as is also intrinsic in Jesus' approach to care and healing ministry. David Lyall is right when he uses the term 'Biblical Care' to describe an approach to pastoral care grounded in biblical principles of covenant, community and the celebration of diversity. Lyall further takes a thematic approach to pastoral care in the light of the Christ-event. For him the incarnation implies that the 'communication of Christian truth is relational and not propositional.'<sup>36</sup> Pastoral care that is informed by the biblical narratives will embody the central themes of Christ event: incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and hope that endure in the Spirit of God. What makes the incarnation a relevant theme for pastoral care is that self emptying of God is a paradigmatic in order to make for the other (Phil. 2:5ff). The self emptying of the caregiver is prelude to integrating human and divine stories.<sup>37</sup> In this sense, the hermeneutic/evocative approach rather than the other two approaches can facilitate the most meaningful conversation between the stories for recreating stories towards fullness of life.

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## A Vestige Towards Understanding Eco-Feminism in Hinduism

*Mary Chang*

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### Introduction

The issue of ecology and feminism is an ongoing struggle, albeit, the many ecologists and feminists' struggles to reach out. The immense destruction, violation, manipulation, and impertinence towards women and nature is a need to be addressed and discussed over and again. Patriarchy and hierarchy have always side-lined the contribution of women and nature towards the sustenance of the earth. Both are assumed to be the weaker section of the society having lesser abilities to stand and fight for themselves. They are also seen as the creation to be objectified, used and manipulated. However, from a broader perspective, women and nature have a larger contribution. They are the real life's source without whom there is no sustenance.

Eco-feminism, as a movement, stands against this patriarchal and hierarchical exploitation of women and nature by the so-called dominant group. It attempts to analyse two strands of thought-worlds, ecology, and feminism, which was taken as almost entirely discrete and disjointed entities. Put differently; eco-feminism seeks to highlight the interconnectedness of the nexus that exists between women and nature. It indicates a politics that revolves around the indispensable correlation between women and nature, both in essence and praxis. Eco-feminism connects to the theory that subjugation of women and oppression of nature are inter-linked relating to the study of the internal and intricate relationship between women and ecology. The theory projects that

the subjugation of women and the oppression of nature are linked together. Keeping the larger perspective of eco-feminism at the backdrop, this paper attempts to see the thoughts of Hindu goddess tradition and further see its contribution in the eco-feminist study.

## 1. Eco-Feminism

Francoise D'Eaubanne, a French feminist, first coined the term eco-feminism in 1972, combining the link between the domination of nature and the exploitation of women.<sup>1</sup> However, it was only in the 1970s, and the 1980s eco-feminism rose to popularity and was vastly studied concerning women and their resemblance to nature. The connection between the word ecology and feminism is the basis of the word 'eco-feminism.' Eco-feminism was born out of the struggle and oppression of women and nature and their struggle for identity, respect, value, and dignity. Therefore, eco-feminism is an attempt to synthesize two separate struggles, feminism and ecology.<sup>2</sup>

Eco-feminism studies the interconnection between the domination and exploitation of women and nature by the patriarchal culture and society. It also defines women as being 'closer to nature'<sup>3</sup> aligning the inter-relation, inter-connectedness, and inter-dependence of women and nature. It represents the twin domination of women and nature who are always under oppression and threat by the so-called dominant powers of this world.<sup>4</sup> Eco-feminism also claims that there is a nexus between the oppression of women and the exploitation of nature. Patriarchy perceives women and Nature's role as a subordinate role. The popular notion of misunderstanding is that men can use and exploit both women and nature alike as and when they want. Women have no say or any right to either complain; their only duty is to be the subject of the dominant group.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, eco-feminism argues that without respect for women, the right relationship between humankind and nature may not establish adequately as women and nature both are an integral part of the creation. Eco-feminism

rejects an anthropocentric worldview which is the understanding of domination and dualism.<sup>6</sup> According to Mercedes Canas;

Eco-feminism promotes a global movement founded on common interests and respect for diversity, in opposition to all forms of domination and violence. The continuation of life on this planet demands a new understanding of our relation with nature, with other human beings and with our own bodies. In addition, eco-feminists recognize that the impact of the degradation of the environment affects women in a different way, because as women they are part of the same ecosystem that is dominated and exploited irrationally.<sup>7</sup>

Many eco-feminist views that women are marginalized like the marginalization of nature. The oppression of women is interconnected with the oppression of nature. Thus, in many ways, women are the mediator for nature and share solidarity with it.<sup>8</sup>

The primary aims of eco-feminism are not the same as those typically associated with liberal feminism. Eco-feminists do not seek equality with men as such but aim for the liberation of women as women. Central to this liberation is a recognition of the value of the activities traditionally associated with women, which are childbirth, nurturing, and the whole domestic arena. Throughout human history, nature is represented as feminine, and women are often assumed to be closer to nature than men. Women's physiological connection with birth and child care and nurturing has partly led to this close association with nature. Eco-feminists focus on these connections and analyse how they devalue and oppress both 'women' and 'nature.' Overall, eco-feminism emphasizes the interdependence of all life, human's role as part of the Earth's ecosystem, and the non-hierarchical nature of a system in which all parts affect each other emphasized to counteract relationships dominated by values of control and oppression.<sup>9</sup>

In the Indian feminist spirituality, one can notice that there is a way woman structure their household chores. Particularly the sweeping and mopping of the house and the porch, sprinkling of

water, watering the *Tulsi* (sacred plant) and decorating of *Kolam* (*Rangoli* design with white or coloured powder) all designate the deep spiritual connection of women with water and the plants. In their daily household chores, varieties of natural resources such as water, cow-dung, milk, plants, flowers are utilized. Thus, a deep connection is formed between women and nature. Nature is cared for because it is their sustenance; likewise, nature too provides the women with the needful in their specified time and season.<sup>10</sup>

## 2. Marginal Discourse Within Feminism

Despite the same objectives, eco-feminism also varies in some of its thoughts and ideas. There are eco-feminist philosophies and ecological feminism. In eco-feminism, there are also liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, radical and socialist feminism, black and third world feminism, etc. The point that makes eco-feminism distinct is their insistence that non-human nature and naturism (i.e., the unjustified dominion of nature) are feminist issues.<sup>11</sup> Each of such studies and theories has taken up issues on the relationship between women and nature with a hope to bridge the gap between man-women-nature relationships.<sup>12</sup>

A central tenet in eco-feminism states that male ownership of land leads to a dominator culture (patriarchy), manifesting itself in food export, overgrazing, the tragedy of the ordinary people, exploitation of people, and an abusive land ethic, in which animals and land are valued only as economic resources. So, eco-feminists struggle is to explain how the degradation of nature and exploitation of the available resources contribute to the degradation of women. Eco-feminism is all about answering the question of what makes the environment (ecology) a feminist issue? What are some of the similar connections between the domination of women and the domination of nature?

## 3. Hinduism and Eco-feminism: Their Triads

Nature was generally symbolized as an embodiment of the feminine principle right from the beginning of a human's

understanding of the cosmos. The link or connection between nature and women is assumed to be one reality, particularly in Indian thought or understanding. Mostly so because of their mothering-nurturing character towards the creation.<sup>13</sup> In Hinduism, the re-emergence of the dynamic energy in the form of *Shakti/Sakti* (the life energy of the universe) as the source and substance of all things, pervading everything and the manifestation of all the primordial energy or *Prakriti* (nature) can contribute towards the understanding of eco-feminism in Hindu thought or tradition, as nature, both animate and inanimate, are the expression of *Shakti*, the feminine and the creative principle of the cosmos.<sup>14</sup> To understand this *Shakti* concept, we will see some of the Hindu pantheon related to nature.

## 4. *Prīthvī Sūkta* in Hinduism

*Prīthvī Sūkta* or *Bhumisukta*<sup>15</sup> of *Atharva Veda* advocates the philosophy of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* endorsing the philosophy of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*; here *Vasudha* (this earth) and *kutumba* (extended family) includes humans, animals, and all the living beings. In the *Prīthvī Sūkta Vedic R̥sī* address to *Devī Vasundhara*, Mother Earth praying to grant them all kinds of blessings. The *Prīthvī Sūkta* represents a holistic view of the universe where the inhabitants of the world are regarded as one family.<sup>16</sup> The *Atharva Veda* is the only text in the world's scripture where an entire hymn (the *Prīthvī Sūkta*, consisting of 63 verses), is devoted to praising Mother Earth. Accepting the fact, Dwivedi mentions, "The *Atharva Veda* is perhaps the first of its kind of scripture in any spiritual tradition where the concept of respect to the earth has been propounded."<sup>17</sup> Dr Karan Singh also explains the essence of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* in the following words: "the planet we inhabit and of which we are all citizens - Planet Earth - is a single, living, pulsating entity: ... the human race, in the final analysis, is an interlocking, extended family- *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* as the *Veda* has it."<sup>18</sup>

In the *Vedas*, the Earth is regarded as the abode of a family of all beings. Every entity and organism is a part of one extensive extended family system presided over by the eternal Mother Earth;

On whom the winged bipeds, the swans, the eagles, and birds of various kinds flying together. On whom the wind from heaven comes rushing, rousing the dust and uprooting trees. Fire kindles brighter by the blowing of air hither and thither.<sup>19</sup>

Further, *Vedic* seers claim that Mother Earth nourishes and protects everything that is in the world without any biases of the class, religion, and region. It is Mother Earth, who supports and shelter the creation.<sup>20</sup> According to *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, every entity and organism is a part of one large extended family, which is presided over by the eternal Mother Earth. Mother Earth feeds and protects all the creatures without any discrimination. She treats all creatures just like a child full of love as verse 59 states; “May my vast motherland, mild, sweetly odorous, gracious, with food in her breast, full of milk and water, bestow her benison, with milk, on me.”<sup>21</sup>

*Vedic* *Rsīs* believed that for Mother Earth, all species are of equal value. She has not accorded any one species exclusive authority over other species. She does not discriminate between high mountains or low oceans and mighty or timid beings. As such, humans do not have any right and authority to destroy each other and, most importantly, the environment for their selfish gain and expenses. The *Prithvī Sūkta* maintains that attributes of the Earth, such as its fertility, beauty, etc, are for everyone and that no particular group or nation has exclusive authority over them. That is why the welfare of all (*abhyudaya*) and hatred toward none is the core value for which all the earth’s inhabitants ought to strive. At the same time, for the harmony of the Earth, the non-living things are also equally important, and they too should be protected and preserved as a part of the family of Mother Earth. Verse 26 of *Atharva Veda* states “Rock, stone, and dust constitute our motherland, which being well-guarded by us retains its

independence. To this gold-breasted motherland, my adoration do I pay.” *Vedic* seers warn that one should respect this idea of unity, interconnectedness, and interdependence and value and care for nature least whole ecosystem feels disturbed and collapse. The care, nurture, and protection of the environment are not only for the present generation but for the future as well.<sup>22</sup>

## 5. Hindu Goddesses Associated with Nature

The worship of God, in the form of Mother, is a unique feature of Hinduism. Through the ages, the doctrine of the Motherhood of God has established a firm root in Hinduism. Both in the *Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas*, *Prithivī* (Earth) is addressed as the Mother in whom all the creations dwell. It is through and upon her that everything manages its sustenance. She is the home of all the creation, both living and non-living. In *Vedic* philosophy, the woman is revered and regarded for being the creator of the world. The goddess tradition is and continues to be a great fascination for the Hindus in particular. Right from the *Vedic* tradition up till now, several goddesses are revered and worshipped, and they are all linked to nature in one way or the other. The goddesses are given various names; she is called *Aditi*, the boundless Mother of all; she is called *Lakshmi*, the one that bestows beauty, power, and wealth; she is also called *Sarasvati*, the boundless river.<sup>23</sup> Alongside, there are also many female Hindu pantheons in relation to nature such as *Savitri*,<sup>24</sup> *Ushā*,<sup>25</sup> *Rātrī*,<sup>26</sup> *Aditi*,<sup>27</sup> *Prithivī*,<sup>28</sup> *Sarasvatī*,<sup>29</sup> *Aranyani*.<sup>30</sup> With the passage of time, the reverence and functions of these vedic deities were transformed and are mostly associated to goddess *Durgā*<sup>31</sup> and *Sītā* etc.<sup>32</sup>

## 6. The Outlook of Eco-Feminism According to Hinduism

In the Hindu tradition, female goddesses have taken the lead in the formation and restructuring of the world and the universe time and again when the need arises. Almost all of the goddesses are linked to one natural entity or the other. In the *Vedic* tradition, we find that humans are not alienated from nature, but they are

part of nature, and that is why the *Vedic Rsīs* (sage) show great reverence to nature through their teaching and practices. The level of their reverence is so high that they perceive God even in plants and trees. Hindus accepted nature as divinity; as such various trees and plants are used in religious ceremonies and worship. Some trees and plants are considered so sacred that it is believed that some particular gods and goddesses reside in them. They grasped the understanding that in the exploitation of women lies the exploitation of natural balance and vice-versa. As all are related, the destruction and distinction of one element will ultimately bring chaos to the natural order.<sup>33</sup> The goddess tradition in Hinduism expresses and explores nature and devotion and the divine-human relationship.

The majority of the Hindus perceive divinity in many aspects of nature. Many animals, snakes, mountains, rivers, trees, and, indeed, the entire universe pulsate with something divine. They personify natural phenomena as divine or where the deities reside. Most of the life-sustaining rivers of India are considered to be female. Rivers are perceived to be nurturing mothers that provide food and water, and when angered through human's reckless activities they flood the Earth; It is believed that by bathing in the great rivers of India, one is said to be both physically cleansed and morally purified of one's sins (*papa*) and acquires merit or auspiciousness.

However, despite this strong belief in the religious purity of the rivers, from an environmental perspective, rivers today have become severely polluted as a result of rapid industrialization and the release of toxic human and industrial waste and various human's actions. The rivers that are supposed to purify human beings, physically, morally, and ritually, are said to be at the receiving end of *adharma* or unrighteous behaviour.

### Concluding Remarks

Until the dawn of modern times and industrial society, the Earth was perceived, regarded, and respected as a Mother and a goddess

and the life-giver and the nurturer of all beings. Earth is believed to be a mother who generates, sustains, and nurtures all forms of life, thus making the Earth eminently feminine. As *Atharva Veda* 12 states;

O Earth, O Mother, dispose of my lot  
Ingracious fashion that I be at peace.  
In harmony with all the powers of heaven  
Set me, O Poet, in grace and good fortune!

Earth was divine and maternal until the coming of so-called development. The once upon a time offspring or the child of mother earth now strives to be the master over it. The earlier mother-offspring relation has now turned into one of the resource-exploiter. The earlier attitude of respect and veneration has turned into the attitude of conquering, possessing, and exploitation. Human beings no longer consider the Earth as a mother, instead, it has become an object to be used and exploited. This change of attitude towards the mother earth has led to consider the Earth as a lifeless being. The divinity and veneration are lost and is replaced by the rampant exploitation of natural resources for one's selfish gratification.<sup>34</sup> In this regard Vandana Shiva comments;

The shift from Prakriti to 'natural resources,' from Mater to 'matter', was considered a progressive shift from superstition to rationality. Yet the shift is regressive and violent. It entails the disruption of nature's interconnectedness. For women, whose productivity in the sustaining of life is based on nature's productivity, the death of Prakriti is simultaneously the beginning of their marginalization. The ecological crisis is, at its root, the death of the feminine principle.<sup>35</sup>

Indeed, the fertility of the Earth and women are explicitly connected. Women and nature are associated not with passivity but creativity and the maintenance of life. From the perspective of women engaged in their struggle for survival and the struggle for ecological preservation, one can come to an understanding that both are similarly linked in their fight against exploitation by the

dominant patriarchy.<sup>36</sup> Women and nature both alike produce and reproduce life, not just biologically but also through their role in providing sustenance. Thus, in a more practical term, eco-feminist sees the decisive role of women as healers and defenders of nature passively or actively. It is not that women are like animals, plants, etc. but women's social location as mediators of nature can be engaged to resist exploitation of the environment.<sup>37</sup>

In many societies, women remain voiceless in the downplay of the economic monopoly, and so is nature. Women and nature are continually exploited and are used for economic gain by the people in the dominant structure.<sup>38</sup> Women's knowledge and work, as integrally connected to nature, are ignored or manipulated. The immense exploitation of women and natural resources concerning raw materials and dispensing as waste has become like a legitimized nature of work.<sup>39</sup>

In India, the majority of the people who live in rural areas are dependent on natural resources, and these natural resources are cared for, nurtured, and harvested mostly by women while men-folks spend their time mainly in other manual works or income generated activities. Women mostly occupy the agricultural occupation like the planting of seeds, harvesting, watering, etc. According to the survey of the *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations* (2018), in India, agriculture with its allied sectors is the largest source of livelihood, with 70 percent of its rural household still dependent primarily on agriculture for livelihood.<sup>40</sup> So, an agriculturist will, by any means, be dependent on natural resources for his/her farming and daily sustenance. Also in the *Indian Economy Survey* (2018) vivid statement is made by Chenthil Iyer (Horus Financial Consultant) that; "Further, the economic survey says that with growing rural to urban migration by men, there is 'feminization of agriculture sector,' with the increasing number of women in multiple roles as cultivators, entrepreneurs, and labourers."<sup>41</sup> Thus undoubtedly, one can sum up that women face more consequences when nature is affected, and

this explicates the women nature's integrated continuum. Women are biologically closer to nature than men, so they necessarily care more about nature. Not only that, but women are also the primary sufferers of environmental degradation and forest resource depletion, for it is women who walk miles in search of water and firewood, particularly in rural areas. Women and children perform most of the water-related work like fetching, cleaning, washing, etc.<sup>42</sup> Without a doubt, trees, forests, and forestry are eco-feminist issues.<sup>43</sup>

For many, eco-feminism may imply only matters related to the oppression of women and Earth, but eco-feminism argues that there is no primary form of oppression, but depending on one's position in the society, the oppression may vary.<sup>44</sup> For some, the oppression may simply be a personal issue, for some household, cultural, social, political, mental, or spiritual oppression, whereas for some even physical oppression. From Vandana Shiva's perspective, women's liberation cannot be achieved without a simultaneous struggle for the preservation and liberation of all life on this planet from the dominant patriarchal/capitalist worldview.<sup>45</sup> As natural resources become more and more limited on our finite planet, a shift in our worldview has become compulsory where we can achieve sustainability on this planet and find our place as a species. Humans must acknowledge that we are part of the more extensive web of life that provides for our survival, and therefore we must protect that fragile web of life, not as dominators but as partners with every other life form on the planet.<sup>46</sup>

Indian eco-feminism calls for an "ecological ethic emphasizing the interconnectedness between humanity and nature." As such, it rejects the western concept of dualism.<sup>47</sup> Today, nature is wounded by human's careless and selfish acts of exploitation. The destruction of the environment and the oppression of women are easy to do because nature and women have been objectified as "others." Eco-feminists call for a

restoration of the feminine, for the restoration of the spiritual dimension of living which is lost in the productive/consumptive materialism of our whiter than white mentality.

The oppression faced by Indian women maybe different from that of the women in other parts of the country as Smith in her writing *Eco-feminism Through an Anticolonial Framework* arguing that, unlike Indian women, the majority of the white women may not experience colonization as a primary form of oppression as the native women do.<sup>48</sup> However, the struggle on the fight for women and nature emancipation is real in all parts of the world.

Although, in Hindu thought, the forests and rivers are seen as holy, and the embodiment of gods and goddesses, the massive exploitation of nature is far from being able to be amended. The Ganges, despite being considered as the Mother, is being polluted colossally in the name of religious practices of throwing ashes of the dead, immersing of idols, offcuts of the *diyas*, and showering of flowers etc.<sup>49</sup> The idols/images of the goddesses can be seen in every nook and corner of India, but contrary to that, strict subordination is fostered towards women in various aspects of social and family life. Hinduism today strictly excludes women from *Brahmanical* education, and in many temples within the country, women have been prohibited entry with the notion of purity and impurity.<sup>50</sup>

However, Hinduism did not always have a glorious past. Some women in Hinduism did not enjoy full vitality in history. Epics like the *Ramayana* tells of the suffering of *Sītā* within the male misogynistic world; the tests she had to endure in the hands of her beloved husband *Rāma* which eventually led her to return to mother earth and into the furrows from which she came.<sup>51</sup> There are numerous rites like *Sati* where women were forced to sacrifice at the pyre of their dead husbands. There are also innumerable cases of discrimination and exploitation in the name of caste and gender. However, the goddess tradition is in full vitality till now;

the only residues now are to honour and respect both women and nature as a life-giving source without which the world will be void and deceased. The Hindu Eco-feminist understanding, if taken and practically applied, will also be able to contribute largely not only to the Eastern quest for equality and justice for all the creations but can contribute to the total and wholesome understanding of eco-feminism.

## End Notes

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- 21 Devi Chand, *The Atharvaveda*, 539.
- 22 Devi Chand, *The Atharvaveda*, 534 - 540.
- 23 Denise Lardner Carmody, *Women and World Religions* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981), 40-41.
- 24 Savitr is a golden deity possessing great powers that even Lord *Varuna* or *Indra* cannot resist. She destroys bad dreams and drives away evil spirits. Gods have become immortal, and humankind enjoys a long life because of her grace. The name *Savitr* is derived from one of the Sun gods extolled, in the *Vedicmantra* entitled *Gāyatri*. The *mantra* is as follows "May we meditate on that excellent, Glory of *Savitr*, the God, that she may stimulate our thoughts." This holiest of the holy *mantras*, which every *Brāhman* is compelled to recite daily from the time of their initiation until their death, stands for the *Vedic* learning. *Savitr* is fittingly personified as the chaste wife of *Brahmā*, who symbolizes *Vedic* ritualism and wisdom. Gaurinath Sastri, *A History of Vedic Literature*, (Calcutta: Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, 1982), 60; and, Jitendra Nath Banerjee, "The Hindu Concept of God," in *The Basic Beliefs of Hinduism*, edited by Kenneth W. Morgan (Calcutta: YMCA Publishing House, 1955), 73.
- 25 *Ushā*, the boundless dawn, is celebrated in some twenty hymns where she is mentioned as the wife of the *Surya* and Mother of *Agni*. To her, the *Vedic* poets portray the aspects of a woman. She wears gay costumes like a dancer unveiling the charms of her physical beauty. Rising resplendent as if from a bath, she looks extremely beautiful. She is borne in a dazzling car drawn by ruddy steeds. With her appearance, the darkness of the night starts going away, and she heralds the advent of light and the Sun. She opens the gates of heaven through which comes the light. She awakens the world from slumber. Every day she appears in the same place and at the same time. *Ushā* is also said to be what drives life and is related to or moves with *ṛta*, cosmic, social, and moral order. She is known as the goddess of reality, and the maker of time. *Ushā* knows her time and never misses her directions, and through her shine, she reveals the paths of the human, making it easy for them to traverse Gaurinath Sastri, *A History of Vedic Literature*, 63; David Kinsley, *Hindu Goddesses: Vision of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1987), 7; H. D. Griswold, *The Religion of the R̥gveda* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1971), 248-249.
- 26 *Rātri* is the presence of power, which gives rest, comfort, and security and protection to the creation and keeping them in place. *Rātri* and *Ushā* are often associated together as the weavers of time and mothers of eternal law representing the stable, rhythmic pattern of the cosmos, and endless appearances. They illustrate the coherence of the created order of vigour and rest, light and dark, and the systematic flow of time. There is only one hymn attributed directly to *Rātri* in the *R̥g Veda* in which the goddess of the night is invoked. Like her sister, *Ushā*, she is a daughter

- of heaven, and at her approach, humans, animals, and birds go to rest. *Rātri* protects her worshippers from the wolf and the thief; she guides them to safety. David Kinsley, *Hindu Goddesses: Vision of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition*, 13.
- 27 The most outstanding attribute of *Aditi* is her Motherhood, and she is the unbroken Earth, who is a divine mother or a *devmāta*. She is believed to be boundless, unbroken, entire, and unimpaired universal mother-earth, although she is said to have no definite shape. *Aditi* is exclusively associated with the natural phenomenon with a mother character and nature. In the *Brāhmaṇas* she is virtually identified with *Prithivī*. A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1974), 120; David Kinsley, *Hindu Goddesses: Vision of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition*, 10.
- 28 Goddess *Prithivī* is associated with the Earth, the terrestrial sphere where humans dwell. In the *Ṛg Veda*, she is mostly associated with *Dyaus*, the male deity associated with the sky, which is referred to as *dyāvapṛthivī* (sky-earth). Together they are said to be the universal parents who created the world and the gods. Thus *Dyaus* is often called the father and *Prithivī* the Mother. *Prithivī* is praised for her role of upholding and supporting all things, and she is comprehensive and is motionless, although sometimes she is said to have movement. The *Atharva Veda* hymn (12.1), which consist of 63 verses is exclusively dedicated to *Prithivī* as the one who cares, is gracious, kind, a giver and sustains life. David Kinsley, *Hindu Goddesses: Vision of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition*, 8-9.
- 29 *Sarasvatī* is associated with a particular river, revering her as a mighty goddess. However, it is uncertain as to which river she is precisely identified within the *Vedic* times. In the *Ṛg Veda*, her most important characteristics are those of a particular mighty river although it is not specific as to whether a goddess or a river is praised. As mighty, the waves of *Sarasvatī* are said to break down mountains surpassing all waters in greatness The *Ṛg Veda*, LXI. 8-14 gives a clear description of her greatness. She is praised for the fertility that she brings along to the Earth, and so is also called *subhaga* (bountiful). She is also believed to represent purity, like the purity of the running water. Early *Vedic* references make one believe that the *Sarasvatī* river originated in heaven and flowed down to the Earth. In the later Hinduism, *Sarasvatī* is related to the *Gangā* asserting her sacredness and the ever-flowing stream as the stream of celestial grace, which purifies and fertilizes the Earth. In later Hinduism, the nature and appearance of goddess *Sarasvatī* changed, mostly with her association with a river. Although complete detachment is not mentioned in her characteristics because she is associated with clouds, thunder, rain, and is said to be the presiding deity of rain. David Kinsley, *Hindu Goddesses: Vision of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition*, 10, 56-57.
- 30 *Aranyani* is believed to be a goddess and the Mother of the forests and all the creatures that dwell within them. *Aranyani* is a derivation from the word *Aranya* meaning forest in Sanskrit. *Aranyani* animates and protects the forest and also through the forest provides food for all the living beings, and thus she is revered as the chief expression of life and fertility. *Aranyani* has been described as elusive, preferring quiet glades in the jungle. She has no fear of remote places and keeps to the fringes of civilization without becoming lonely. She rarely appears before human eyes but is believed to wear anklets with little bells, but one can hear her moving through the forest. She also enjoys dancing among the trees. Goddess Garden, *Hindu Goddess Aranyani*, <http://www.thegoddessgarden.com/hindu-goddess-aranyani/>.
- 31 One of the most widely worshipped Hindu deities is *Durgā*. She frequently appears in household shrines, where she is worshipped as having the power to create life, and she encourages the growth of grains. *Durgā* is unmarried and does not lend her power, or *Śakti*, to any male. She is not a submissive goddess, but one who can hold her own against any male on the battlefield. She is believed to possess the power to create, maintain, and destroy the world. She is praised as responsible for the creation, sustenance, and withdrawal of the universe. She is a mysterious power, the very personification of knowledge, wisdom, and memory. *Durgā* also has a close connection with the fertility of the vegetation, and most importantly, she is associated with *Prakṛiti*. Swami Harshananda, *Hindu Gods and Goddesses* (Madras: Ramakrishna Math, 1987), 109; <http://www.womeninworldhistory.com/lesson11.html>.
- 32 Although *Sītā* is primarily known from the Epic, *Rāmāyaṇa* as the wife of *Rāma*, a similar name is also found, before Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* of a female divinity who is named *Sītā*. This deity is associated with agriculture as the goddess of fertility in *Vedic* literature. The word *Sītā* means "furrow" (the line made by a plough). In the *Kauśika-sūtra*, *Sītā* is associated with the rain. She is also the Mother of gods, mortals, and creatures and who is petitioned for the growth and prosperity of all. Even in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Sītā* is said to be born of the furrow and later returns to the same. David Kinsley, *Hindu Goddesses: Vision of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition*, 65-66.
- 33 Samuel Longkumer, *Pañca Mahābhūtas* (Kolkata: Punthi Pustak, 2009), 295, 297-298.

- 34 Joseph Peruma, *The Motherly Earth: An Ecological Ethics of Human-Nature Relationship* (Bangalore: Claretian Publications, 2002), 78-79.
- 35 Cited in Joseph Peruma, *The Motherly Earth: An Ecological Ethics of Human-Nature Relationship*, 79.
- 36 Vandana Shiva, "Let Us Survive, Women, Ecology and Development," in *Women Healing Earth* (New York: Orbis Books, 2003), 70.
- 37 Rosemary Radford Ruether, ed., *Women Healing Earth* (New York: Orbis Books, 2003), 4.
- 38 Margaret H. Ferris, "Sister Water: An Introduction to Blue Theology." *The Water and Culture Reader* Compiled and edited by Matthias Achubnell and others. Second edition (South Lake Texas: Fountainhead Press, 2013). 32.
- 39 Vandana Shiva, "Let Us Survive, Women, Ecology and Development," in *Women Healing Earth* (New York: Orbis Books, 2003), 66-67.
- 40 *FAO in India*, <http://www.fao.org/india/fao-in-india/india-at-a-glance/en/>.
- 41 Cited by Sushruth Sunder in *India Economic Survey 2018: Farmers Gain as Agriculture Mechanisation Speeds UP, but more R & D Needed*, <https://www.financialexpress.com/budget/india-economic-survey-2018-for-farmers-agriculture-gdp-msp/1034266/>.
- 42 Karen J. Warren eds., "Taking Empirical Data Seriously: An Ecofeminist Philosophical Perspective," in *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature* (Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2014), 6, 7.
- 43 Karen J. Warren eds., "Taking Empirical Data Seriously: An Ecofeminist Philosophical Perspective," in *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature*, 7.
- 44 Andy Smith, "Ecofeminism Through an Anticolonial Framework" in *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature*, 21.
- 45 Vandana Shiva, "Let Us Survive, Women, Ecology and Development," in *Women Healing Earth*, 69-70.
- 46 Rachel Brinker, Dr. Vandana Shiva and Feminist Theory, <https://womenjusticeecology.wordpress.com/2009/07/04/dr-vandana-shiva-and-feminist-theory>.
- 47 Aruna Gnanadason, "Toward a Feminist Eco-Theology for India," in *Women Healing Earth*, edited by Rosemary Radford Ruether (London: SCM Press, 1996), 77. The concept of dualism contrast the belief of monism (the theory that there is only one fundamental kind). Dualism is the theory of mental and the physical or mind and body and brain which are radically different things. In dualism, 'mind' is contrasted with the 'body', but at different times. Another contemporary understanding of dualism is that bodies are like machines that work according to their laws except where there are minds interfering with it, as such matter continues deterministically (a doctrine

that all events have sufficient causes) in its own right. Robinson Howard, *Dualism*, The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy (Fall 2017 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2017/entries/dualism/>.

- 48 Andy Smith, "Ecofeminism Through an Anticolonial Framework" in *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature*, 22.
- 49 Rosemary Radford Reuther, *Integrating Ecofeminism Globalization and World Religions* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2005), 49.
- 50 Rosemary Radford Reuther, *Integrating Ecofeminism Globalization and World Religions*, 49.
- 51 Arvind Sharma, *Women in Indian Religions* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), 12, 13.

# **A Critical Survey on the Development of the Nature and Purpose of Christian Education from 1<sup>st</sup> Century till 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

*Dr. N. Vivi Achumi*

## **Introduction**

Christian education is a lifelong process that begins from birth till death and it plays an important role in the all round development of the persons. It is a tool or an instrument that helps people to develop inner quality, and full potential of an individual. It helps an individual to grow into full personhood by constantly nurturing and maturing in the word of God. There is no specific area where Christian education is confined as it covers the whole area and all round development of a person.

## **1. Meaning and Definition of Christian Education**

Education is defined as a lifelong process, as old as humankind. But there is no definite concept of education. Education, according to Paulo Freire should be solely for liberating people from the control of powers.<sup>1</sup> The term education is derived from the Latin word 'e' and 'ducere' meaning 'to draw out.' It is usually defined as the process of developing or drawing out the faculties of the individual, or the training of individual for the various functions of life.<sup>2</sup> Paul H. Vieth also defines Christian education as "the efforts of the Christian community to guide both young and adult persons toward an ever richer possession of the Christian heritage and a fuller participation in the life and work of the Christian fellowship."<sup>3</sup> Christian education is a process whereby Christian learning takes place in a teaching-learning process, an adoption

and deepening of his or her Christian beliefs, attitudes, values and dispositions to experience and act in a Christian way.<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, Christian education is a lifelong process which addresses to the holistic development of an individual through Christian values and ethics. It is a holistic approach that brings out or draws out the potential in an individual in all the aspects of life-Spiritual, physical, mental, and social according to Christian principles. Christian education is an all round development of a person, and therefore holistic in nature. It nurtures, shapes and moulds the whole way of a person. It is an education that dealt on the whole process of growth and development of an individual, community and the environment.

## **2. Nature and Purpose of Christian Education**

The nature and purpose of Christian education can be classified into six different categories such as Christian Education for transformation which seeks to transform an individual's life in a community so that they can become agents of change.<sup>5</sup> Christian education as a Faith community describes that education should not be based on the old traditional system of school but rather it should focus on helping the community to evolve community thinking, feeling and acting.<sup>6</sup> Christian Education as Religious Instruction emphasises on the spiritual development and well-being of the community and to impart biblical knowledge, Christian faith and teachings in order to equip them to have a healthy vital relationship.<sup>7</sup> Christian Education as Spiritual growth emphasises that the main aim and goal of Christian Education should be able to attain spiritual maturity through God's transforming power.<sup>8</sup> Christian education for wholeness calls for an education that includes the whole community of both privileged and unprivileged and to help develop the all-round development of all society.<sup>9</sup> Christian education for liberation deliberates on the process of education so as to liberate the individual and to help them act and think critically in order to address the ethical and moral issues within the society.<sup>10</sup>

The nature and purpose of Christian education as described here is the process of helping humans to develop the relationship with God and to nurture their character and action in the likeness of God. It also aims to provide the community to have strong biblical basis that will guide their Christian faith and will help to meet the needs of the individuals and to critically analyse the social, moral, ethical and spiritual issues in life.

### **3. Historical Development of Christian Education In Different Period**

The historical development of Christian education throughout the different period with its inception from 1<sup>st</sup> century till 21<sup>st</sup> century is discussed here mainly. The writer here attempts to bring out a brief sketch of the various developments of Christian education throughout the century.

#### **3.1. Biblical Origin of Christian Education in the Old Testament and New Testament**

The biblical origin of Christian Education takes its developments both from Old Testament and New Testament. The education during the Old Testament has been discussed in two different patterns such as Hebrew education and Jewish education. The Hebrew education mainly focused on home education where family played an important role. Here we see that the father's role as an educationist was very important and mother's role was only limited to girls.<sup>11</sup> The Mosaic Law and oral traditions of the people of God were taught besides which, laws, morals, customs, patterns of life, religious knowledge and social obligations were taught by the parents at home and family.<sup>12</sup> In the Jewish education system, it falls into three different periods such as from exodus till Saul's reign, beginning of kingdom till Babylonian captivity and finally ends with the birth of Christ.<sup>13</sup> Synagogue was the only learning institute where education was imparted to the learners and laws were taught. The memorisation of scriptures was strongly emphasised. Education was mainly imparted to boys

in the Jewish society and girls were not given the platform to learn and to educate.<sup>14</sup> The education was informal and practical, yet it was authoritarian in teaching by the parents. Universality of education for all was not implemented at all in the Old Testament system of learning.

The New Testament system of education was totally different from the Old Testament because we see that a great importance for teaching was emphasised. Jesus was the greatest teacher ever who taught both the individual and the crowd. A wide innovative ways of teaching methods was used by Christ to educate the people during this period.<sup>15</sup> Paul, the apostle of Christ was also regarded as one of the prominent teachers of this time. He educated the people regardless of their gender and races about the Gospel.<sup>16</sup> Henceforth, education in the New Testament times can be evaluated as more oriented towards the teaching of laws and growing under the Christian teaching of Christ.

#### **3.2. Christian Education in the First Five Centuries (1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Century)**

Christian education in the first five centuries aimed to provide education on the basis of doctrinal instruction and training of individuals to be godlier.<sup>17</sup> The two early schools<sup>18</sup> gave out formal education who trained the pupils morally and spiritually for Church ministry. The learning system was designed for both old and young who included instructions on baptism, listening to scriptures and sermons. Later a wider understanding of Christian philosophies and thoughts were also imparted.<sup>19</sup> Early Church also produced very prominent teachers like Origen and Augustine. They emphasised on strict learning system where students were to be bound with rules and teachers were to be an example.<sup>20</sup>

#### **3.3. Christian Education in the Medieval Period (6<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> Century)**

During the Medieval period because of the need of efficient and trained clergy in the Church, schools were opened by the

Churches. The schools were religious in nature and it centred on the memorisation as key skills for students. Education was imparted more on theoretical level thus neglecting the practical aspect of learning.<sup>21</sup> The role of parents in imparting education is not visible. Thomas Aquinas emphasises that teachers should be more knowledgeable and more thorough as to what they are teaching.<sup>22</sup>

### **3.4. Christian Education in the Reformation Period (15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> Century)**

A new perspective of education was witnessed during the reformation period. It was the era where education was meant for all ages and for all people regardless of being rich and poor.<sup>23</sup> It was the period where reformers like Martin Luther and John Calvin stressed on the accessibility of compulsory universal education for all and started translating the scriptures in vernacular languages. It was during this time that broader goals and foundation for schools were stressed and laid.<sup>24</sup> Luther's zeal for establishment of schools and imparting proper Christian education to the individual and society as a whole served with great purpose. He emphasised that parents give out proper home education for children, teaching them home values and discipline.<sup>25</sup> John Calvin, on the other hand comes in line with Luther that it is through Christian education that people can come closer to God.<sup>26</sup> He also mainly stressed on children's education and parents to be home educators.<sup>27</sup> However the teaching method used by the reformers was more of memorization, corporal punishment and one way process of learning. Learners could not gain much from the monotonous art of education because it was confined to certain set of rules laid by the educator alone.

### **3.5. Christian Education in the Post-Reformation Period (16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> Century)**

The education system during the Post reformation period was a transforming period because new approaches of learning were

adopted. Learning was done on the basis of using one's reasoning power. Education was regarded to be the answer to help find learners to understand things they wanted to comprehend. John Amos Comenius 'Prophet of Modern education' emphasised that it is education which signifies human prosperity and progress in life. He developed a formal or systematic system of education during the post-reformation period keeping in view the needs and interest of the learner.<sup>28</sup> And he categorised school system into four different stages<sup>29</sup> giving a much clearer view of understanding students and imposed relax teaching method rather than a compose discipline life. One distinct teaching propagated by Comenius is opposition of corporal punishment. John Locke's method of teaching was more of experience and practical teaching. He also ensured the idea of giving a sound physical, social and mental development.<sup>30</sup> The educationist of this period stressed on the method of learning through use of objects, practical works and teaching out of experiences and rejection of corporal punishment.

### **3.6. Christian Education and Psychological Movement (18<sup>th</sup> Century)**

The 18<sup>th</sup> century was a period of progress of enlightenment and an age of reasoning. It was also a period of psychological movement where numbers of education psychologists came to the limelight. Many new educational theories developed. It was this moment that people could freely use their reasoning power to question powers above them and could offer them a chance to believe in their calibre.<sup>31</sup> Jean Jacques Rousseau shunned the old traditional system of education and made child as the centre of education. He gave a new meaning to education as a complete living. We can say that his aim of education is to help the child to learn and develop naturally, free from the corrupting influences of the society.<sup>32</sup> He opposed the bookishness knowledge and favoured that life's enriching experiences can help shape a child for a better life.<sup>33</sup>

Johann H. Pestalozzi based his educational philosophy on activity centred learning/play method and strongly opposed the

traditional system of education. He gave importance on creating an atmosphere of love so that a child can be secured. He also emphasised on the method of creating child friendly classes where maximum activity learning should be implemented such as demonstrations of class lessons and induction of field trips.<sup>34</sup>

Friedrich Froebel known as the father of kindergarten stressed on the play life of a child to develop his/her mentality. He began the kindergarten educational system so that a child's fullness can be formed well. It is through that a child's primary medium of learning is fulfilled.<sup>35</sup> Froebel favored child centered approach and so he designed tools called 'Gifts' to enhance the method of learning so that they will participate actively in the activities.<sup>36</sup>

### 3.7. Christian Education in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

Education in the 19<sup>th</sup> century progressed much more than before. Educationist came up with many new challenging theories to enhance the learning systems. It was no longer based on teacher centred rather the two ways process of learning, i.e., teacher and child centred was implemented. We see rising of new personalities like Horace Bushnell and John Dewey who contributed so much in the progress of education patterns.

Bushnell's theory of Christian nurture is based on the central idea that children of believers were to be considered as different from children of unbelievers. He also emphasised that Christian home should be the primary place for nurturing a child.<sup>37</sup> Bushnell encourages parents to be a living example to their children and to lay down good examples. He stressed that parents must take their children into their own feeling, as loving and joyous element, cherish and encourage good, and live a better life in the spirit of their children.<sup>38</sup>

John Dewey education begins from birth and continues throughout one's life. He does not believe in any ultimate aim of education, for he finds the aim of education in the process of life itself.<sup>39</sup> Dewey emphasized direct experience as the method

of teachings. The spontaneous activities of the children should provide the natural condition for the growth of knowledge. He rejected artificial stimulation for learning and is of the view that, if learning is to be effective, it must come from within, that is, it must come forth from the natural interest, true efforts and motivation of the child. The child should learn by doing.<sup>40</sup>

### 3.8. Christian Education in Modern Period (20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> Century)

The 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century people witnessed a new modern method of Christian education. Paulo Friere, Thomas Groome and Ivan Illich were the educationist who propagated that it is education that should help people to liberate from all oppressive conditions. Freire pedagogy and educational philosophy centres on the human potential for freedom and creativity in the midst of the historical reality of cultural and political-economic oppression.<sup>41</sup> Freire regarded learners as objects, adaptable and manageable beings, storing only what has been taught and instructed to them without developing any critical consciousness.<sup>42</sup> He strives for a common dialogue relationship of a learner and a teacher. Henceforth, it can be a process of learning where both ends grow together.<sup>43</sup>

Thomas H. Gromme, proposes freedom as one of Christian education purpose where the language freedom is broad enough to induct all the values of God's reign like justice, peace, love, reconciliation, hope, joy, mutuality, equality and more.<sup>44</sup> Gromme stresses on his Christian education tool known as "shared praxis" to guide the learner who is on a pilgrimage towards a meaning.<sup>45</sup> He also strongly emphasised on the totality or holistic development of a learner through experiences.

Ivan Illich also stressed that the primary aim of education should be to liberate the individual and help him/her to explore and create a new sense of freedom to understand things through Christian education.<sup>46</sup> He opposes the idea of the modern structured schools which delineates the poorer students.<sup>47</sup> He is also against the sale of curriculum by the school which offers no values but

mere staple products that doesn't benefit them. Illich critiques the idea of school and wants a society that lays the ground for the conception of a school to be more conducive to the needs of its environment. Illich also calls for a school free society so that students can have access to learning in their own rather than being caged up in the bookish knowledge and within the boxes of their school.<sup>48</sup>

### Evaluation and Conclusion

Christian education has been tremendously changing with the passage of time and from the ideas and thoughts of the different philosophers of different centuries and periods one can see the change in the structure of Christian education. In its inception, Christian education was only confined to home teaching and learning of mere Christian values. But we can see a drastic transformation of Christian education's purpose and its wider perspective as to develop the holistic being of an individual. The abolishment and opposing of corporal punishments and rote memorisation in learning patterns are an eye opening. A child can benefit or learn effectively only when it is child centred pattern of learning. Out of the activities, craft works, play and experiences learned, a learner will have enough spaces to grow and to learn creatively. Education should no longer be a boring set of system but keeping in view of the new existing patterns it should interest a learner. The Christian education learning patterns has experienced a shift over the centuries. Education can be a liberative weapon and to transform our society too. The traditional system of education should be done away. The so called school texts and curricula based learning system should be removed. And that in today's context Christian education should be holistic in approach. It should impart more values, innovative teaching methods and should be concerned about transforming inclusive society.

### End Notes

- 1 Paulo Freire, *Education for Liberation: Addresses by Paulo Freire and Critical Reflections on Indian Education* (Bangalore: ECC Publication, 1983), 22-23.
- 2 Thomas Davidson, "Education," *The Encyclopaedia of Social Reform*, edited by William D. P. Bliss (New York & London: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1897), 520.
- 3 Paul H. Vieth, *The Church and Christian Education* (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1947), 52.
- 4 Jeff Astley, *The Philosophy of Christian Religious Education* (Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1994), 9.
- 5 James E. Loder, "Transformation in Christian Education," *Theological perspectives on Christian Formation: A Reader on Theology and Christian Educators*, edited by Jeff Astley, Leslie J. Francis and Colin Crowder (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 280-282.
- 6 John Westerhoff, *Will Our Children have Faith?* (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), 51
- 7 Karen B. Tye, *Basics of Christian Education* (St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice Press, 2000), 10. Cf. Groome, *Christian Religious Education: Sharing our Story and Vision*, 22.
- 8 Lois LeBar, *Focus on People in Christian Education* (New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell, 1968), 34. Cited by Akheto Sema, *Understanding the Nature and Purpose of Christian Religious Education* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2011), 35.
- 9 Peter Schreiner, Esther Banev & Simon Oxley, editors, *Holistic Education Resource Book: Learning and Teaching in an Ecumenical Content* (Munster: Waxman, 2005), 84-85.
- 10 Daniel S. Schipani, *Religious Education Encounters Liberation Theology* (Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Education Press, 1988), 12. See also Sema, *Understanding the Nature and Purpose of Christian Religious Education*, 129.
- 11 James E. Reed and Ronnie Prevost, *A History of Christian Education* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 46.
- 12 Harold W. Burgess, *Models of Religious Education: Theory and Practice in Historical and Contemporary Perspective* (Wheaton III: Victor Books, 1996), 27.
- 13 C. B. Eavey, *History of Christian Education* (Chicago: Moody press, 1979), 54.

- 14 Abram L. Sachar, *A History of The Jews*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. rev. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), 61. Cited by Reed and & Ronnie Prevost, *A History of Christian Education*, 49. See also Peter P. Person, *An Introduction to Christian Education* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1963), 23; Eavey, *History of Christian Education*, 64.
- 15 Edward L. Hayes, "Establishing Biblical Foundations," *Christian Education: Foundations for the Future*, edited by Robert E. Clark, Lin Johnson & Allyn K. Sloat (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), 35-36. See also Sema, *Understanding the Nature and Purpose of Christian Religious Education*, 12; Reed and & Ronnie Prevost, *A History of Christian Education*, 65- 67.
- 16 Richard N. Longenecker, "Paul," *A History of Religious Educators*, edited by Elmer L. Towns (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1975), 52.
- 17 Daniel C. Stevens, "The History of Christian Education," *Foundations of Christian Ministry: An Introduction to Christian Education for a New Generation*, edited by Michael J. Anthony (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992), 44.
- 18 Here the two schools refers to Catechumenal and Catechetical schools.
- 19 Kenneth O. Gangel & Warren S. Benson, *Christian Education: Its History and Philosophy* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 89-90.
- 20 Augustine, *The First Catechetical Instruction*, trans. Joseph P. Christopher (Westminster. Md: The Newman Press, 1952) 14:20, 46. Cited by Reed and & Ronnie Prevost, *A History of Christian Education*, 99. See also cited by Towns, ed., *A History of Religious Educators*, 56-58.
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- 32 Chaube & Akilesh Chaube, *Western Educational Thinkers*, 57-61. See also Reed and & Ronnie Prevost, *A History of Christian Education*, 242.
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- 43 Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos, rev. Ed. (London: Penguin Books, 1996), 52.
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## Mission as a Quest for Justice and Identity

*Ashish Kumar*

Two weeks ago, I met groups of activities engaged in helping the Bahujan community in India. They helped the Bahujans to recognize and respond to the injustice done to them over the centuries. This paper on the mission as a quest for justice and identity emerged from serious interaction with the mission of these activists to bring justice and provide identity to Bahujans. The Bahujan community of India comprises 2/3rd of India's population and hence the term Bahujan. In the caste system prescribed by Manu, the Bahujans are the fourth and the lowest. They are not Dalits who are considered outside of the caste system.<sup>1</sup> The plight of the Bahujan experienced in India under age-old cultural and religious practices resulted in the commodification and discrimination of millions of Bahujans from the time ancient Indian Scriptures were written. This paper deals with Mission as Quest for Justice and Identity in light of the marginalization and subjection of the Bahujans.

### The Meaning of "Margins" in Context of Mission, Justice and Identity

The term "margins" is understood missiologically with *diakonia* (servant ministry) expressing solidarity and empathy to the oppressed. The *diakonia* (servant ministry of Jesus Christ) invites one to be proactive and take strategic action to speak against injustice and fight for human dignity. People/community who holds power are at the centre of the society and power. These are the ones who are at the "centre" (as against margins) who take advantage of their position of being in the centre and strategically

push others to the fringes. Margins are forced to deal with trouble; their stories remind us of the importance of faith-filled patience and trust.<sup>2</sup> Margins are the ones who live on the fringes. They are the ones who are many but are oppressed by powerful/affluent few. Margins are the ones who are without choice. They cannot choose to live the way they currently live or lived in the past. They cannot shape up the present to direct the future. Margins are the ones who are help-less, voice-less, courage-less, vision-less and power-less. They have no dreams, aspirations, prospects, opportunities, options, respect, and dignity for the future. A remarkable sense of tolerance marks margins as they have tolerated centuries of injustice and oppression. Margins also lack consciousness (conscious-less) of being exploited.

The Bahujans of India suffered under the dominant few who took advantage of their existence to get the menial works done by them and yet treated them with contempt and offence. Even in the present, the Bahujans are subject to inhuman treatment. Few, of course, are chosen as MPs, MLAs and in other Public Services, but the majority masses are prevented from receiving any benefits. They are fooled by the reservation system, which has served the interest of a minuscule section. The majority of the Bahujans are toilers in the unorganized sector with no guarantee of steady income or retirement welfare. Farming has turned out to be a loss, pushing the community to deeper poverty, hunger and also towards suicide. There are two realms where oppressions are being carried out against the margins:

- a. Political realm: The oppressors use political factors to continue and justify the oppressive measures. The leaders in the political realm create legal codes to favour their interests and marginalise the victims. In this manner, the political realm legalises oppression and generates a legalised system where margins remain on fringes.
- b. Religious realm: History has shown that religion was used time and again by oppressors to silence the oppressors

and legitimize the marginalization of the victims.<sup>3</sup> This used religious text (texts were created, altered, deleted for a specific purpose), religious sanctions (religious priests created traditions) and religious stories/myths to carry on the process of oppression. Manusmriti legalizes oppression through divine code encoded in religion, ritualistic and social life.<sup>4</sup> The Christianity of the west legitimized slavery by using Biblical text. Hinduism used Vedic text and Manusmriti to legitimize the oppressions on Bahujans and Dalits. A study from antiquity reveals that crafting codes of oppression from the religious realm had a long-lasting effect on society than the political realm. Oppressions from the political realm were powerful but short-lived. However, oppressions that were carried out through religion were subtle and its impact crossed centuries.

- c. Social realm: The social realm involves oppressive societal norms and regulations which controls the life of people. In the case of Bahujans, the social realm restricted the privileges and human rights of the Bahujans. Oppressive norms of the social realm, too, have a long-lasting effect.

### **Quest for Justice in Mission**

There is a call for justice all over the world. Christian missiological reflection in Asia, Africa, and Latin America has radically changed because of justice issues. The primary focus of mission in these regions primarily talks about justice; hence we have seen several theologies emerging from these regions, including liberation theology, womanist theology, Dalit theology, tribal theology, etc. The core of these theologies/missiological reflections is the issue of justice. In Christian missiology, justice is a salvific word. The eschatological vision proclaimed by the Christian Scripture is grounded in the hope of establishing justice all over the earth.<sup>5</sup> The whole world is concerned about justice. So what is so special

about the Christian mission in the quest for justice? The Central Committee of WCC in 1991 emphasized that the significant context of the mission is towards the work of justice & peace and integrity of creation.<sup>6</sup> In the Christian mission, justice is not a concept, but it is a life issue. Christian missiological reflection on justice emerges from God himself. The term justice in missiological reflection is more a verb than a noun. Micah 6:8 –“What does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, and to love kindness.” It is not a legal norm as it stems out from human freedom. Biblical justice is a value that guides relationships.<sup>7</sup> Biblical justice is a value that requires one to make conscious moral and spiritual choices. Biblical justice also is distributive justice. This distributive justice is furthered by missionary proclamation of the gospel, people of God prophetic struggle for justice and peace.<sup>8</sup> The prophets of the Old Testament reminded the people of Israel of its missionary calling – to be faithful to Yahweh, ensure justice, care for the weak, and be people of the promise and the kingdom. For Christian mission, justice is an indissoluble and indispensable dimension of the mission of Jesus Christ.

The Hebrew words *sedeqah*, *mispat* and their derivatives are used interchangeably. These words are translated as righteousness and justice. The Latin American theologians have related the work for justice integral to God’s work of salvation and healing.<sup>9</sup> James 1:27 has attempted to interrelate justice, holiness and mission, stating that religion which is pure and undefiled before God is caring “for orphans and widows in their distress” and keeping “oneself unstained by the world.” This emphasis helps us see the holistic Christian mission and not dissect it into evangelism and social concern.

Having talked about the values and nature of justice from a missiological perspective, let us switch our attention to the justice issue of Bahujans. They are the poor majority of the country. They are the ones who are represented mainly by unorganized working classes, bonded labourers, sanitation workers, unemployed

or underemployed, slum dwellers etc. They are also the most malnourished, illiterate or less educated, sick or die early. They are the ones who are denied justice, even legal justice, protection, education, health care. For centuries, they have been the victim of discrimination and injustice. I am quoting just two verses from the Indian scriptures, which highlights the level of injustice done to Bajujans over the centuries.

Manusmriti, 2 Chapter VIII, Verses 412-414

*But a Shudra, whether bought or not bought (by the Brahmin) may be compelled to practice servitude, for that Shudra was created by the self-existent merely for the service of the Brahmin. Even if freed by his master, the Shudra is not released from servitude; for this (servitude) is innate in him; who then can take it from him.*

Gautama Dharma Sutra, 4 Chapter XX, Sutras 4–6

Now if he (a Shudra) listens intentionally to (a recitation of) the Veda, his ears shall be filled with (molten) tin or lac. If he recites (Vedic texts), his tongue shall be cut out. If he remembers them, his body shall be split in twain

In a society like ours, what role can mission play in bringing justice to the people who were victims of caste discrimination for centuries? Can the mission alter the mindset accustomed to the oppression and has tolerated and assimilated it as part of the accepted norm?

### **Quest for Identity in Mission**

The word identity is derived from Latin *identitas*, meaning which means sameness. The primary concern of this notion is a relation. Whether individual or group, the identity stands for one’s being, represented by a name. Thus, the name identifies the status of the person or the group. E.g. a Bahujans sums up

various identifiers for being a Bahujan in the country of India under the caste system. One can understand identity from three perspectives: ontological, relational and oppositional. From the ontological sense, identity is taken in itself without considering the other. From the oppositional sense, identity is taken in the context of others. Finally, in the relation perspective, identity works as a “bridge” for crossing over to the other.

The problem then before us in the mission is, the identity of Bahujans are corrupted. It is corrupted by political force, by religious sanction and by social norms. The mission’s goal is to reform the lost identity of the Bahujans and restore them an identity that is fully human and fully Indian. Thus, in the Christian mission, the work is to redefine and reaffirm the identity of the Bahujans.

### **Struggle and Resistance in Mission as Quest for Justice and Identity**

Justice comes through struggle. Injustice is a force assaulting human dignity. Love is an opposing force that opens the path of justice. Deenabandhu quotes, “At an earlier stage...It was argued that Christians need to have ‘spirituality for combat’ (for justice and dignity). Today we are more inclined to talk about ‘spirituality through combat, recognizing that it is actually through the struggles that we discover as well as affirm our faithfulness.’”<sup>10</sup> People in mission shy off the existential life issues or feel it is too strenuous to carry out. This indifferent attitude to existential life issues results in many abandoning social justice on the margins of spirituality. While Jesus called “to hunger and thirst for justice” – Matthew 5:6,10 the oppressor forced margins to remain hungry and thirsty for the oppressor’s benefits. Therefore we need to re-emphasize the centrality of justice in the Christian mission, which needs struggle and resistance. A true spirituality alone can bring ultimate justice. Therefore, resisting all forces that work against the vision of justice’ and ‘life for all’ need to be the core of the Christian mission.

The struggles and resistance for justice and identity incorporate the concern of human rights, evolving developmental challenges, social justice matters, protection of the weak, and empowerment of the deprived and oppressed. The struggle and resistance is not by the sword but by peaceful negotiations. A negotiation or dialogue can pay the path of justice. Awareness works like magic. The mindset of Bahujans has tolerated the oppression and has become insensitive to the act of oppression. Bringing awareness is an act to ignite the sleeping mind and awaken it to realize its self-worth. Such aware conscience itself will seek justice and space for Bahujans, which is long lost.

For instance, the Bahujans live in the second-largest country in terms of population. However, over the centuries, just a handful of the country’s population (5%) have violated the fundamental human rights of the Bahujans and subjugated them to serve the high caste in the name of religion sanctioned by religious texts. The mission for justice involves the struggle against the age-old social practices sanctioned by religious texts and culture.

The struggle for justice and identity must switch the attention from relief projects to self-help programs so that Bahujans of India eventually help themselves. This empowerment can happen if the minds of Bahujans are awakened. The below paragraphs focus on the need of empowering people in the quest for justice and identity.

### **Empowering People Through Mission in Quest for Justice and Identity**

The Christian mission empowers people to love justice in creating a society centred upon compassion and love. Empowering people creates an interdependent world. Empowering people is a significant task in the struggle against injustice. Empowerment occurs within a process of ongoing micro-political negotiation. Political empowerment has not proved to bring socio-economic empowerment.<sup>11</sup> This is an essential recognition in doing mission and a significant step in the direction of establishing justice. A

sincere effort in holistically empowering (socio-economic-political-educational) people addresses the needs of the poor.<sup>12</sup> It is an effort in the direction to help people to help themselves. As we struggle for justice, we may perhaps need to refocus our attention on the possibility of sustaining the spirit of empowering people at all levels to deal with the situation and life issues. There is emerging solidarity among the marginalized groups of Dalits, Bahujans, women, etc., out of their everyday experience of suffering to embrace just social order based upon justice and equality. In this emerging solidarity, the mission must participate in these grassroots movements for justice and freedom of the oppressed. Christian mission participation in this grassroots can include empowering Bahujans by English education, providing income generational opportunity, and providing political space that has a liberating effect. The association of the Christian mission with the marginalized group is the healthy ‘communion’ that can bring justice and identity to the Bahujans of India.

So what does empowering the oppressed involves? Is this bombarding with theological lectures as received from Western theology? Or is it translating the theology of the Bible in terms of the needs of the Bahujans? Gene Wilkes says, “Empowerment is giving power to those with the knowledge and knowledge to those with the power.”<sup>13</sup> The needs of the Bahujans are an opportunity for work, water provisions (bore wells for drinking water & irrigation, pumps for irrigation etc.), loans for seeds & fertilizers, goats & buffaloes; dairy cooperatives, training in farming, income generation training, housing, education programs, preventive health care, social forestry, soil conservation etc. The needs of the Bahujans are numerous; however, the concentration of the mission is to shift from providing them with food to providing them with skills/resources to earn food. In order words, empowering consists of walking with the oppressed to reach a stage where the oppressed learns to carry the struggle for freedom on their own.

## “Reclaiming” As a Strategy to Plea for Justice and Identity

Faith in God of justice must help one to “reclaim” the lost privileges and identity. One needs to identify that Gospels speak about the love of God, which opens the path of justice here and now. Justice comes through reclaiming (often repeated and persistent reclaiming). *Diakonia* then is helping the voiceless reclaim the lost human dignity, identity, and *place* in human society since the oppression was done through spiritual/religious sanctions. The ones who are suffering need to reclaim new spirituality.

- a. *Reclaim new spirituality*: The subjugation of Bahujans are because of religious sanctions/spiritual oppression. Hence, the act of liberation involves reclaiming new spirituality, which is devoid of any sanctions against the Bahujans. The new spirituality incorporates love (with God, for God & with people, for people) that opens up the path of justice.<sup>14</sup> Reclaiming new spirituality also incorporates identification of the systematic methods of oppression and categorical denunciation of the same. The process of identification of methods of oppression takes one to the history and culture. The process of denunciation of methods of oppression also brings one to the present and gives them a vision for the future.
- b. *Reclaim the identity*: Reclaiming the identity involves the persistent and rather stubborn struggle to gain space from the oppressors.<sup>15</sup> The space is not necessarily the physical space (which is needed, say land), but mostly it is the privileged space currently in the control of the oppressor. This privileged space includes space in higher levels jobs, space in centres of advanced education & technical institutes, space in leadership, space in politics, entertainment, sports etc. This privileged space also includes sharing the same table of fellowship with the

oppressors. Reclaiming the identity mainly involves the change of mindset. In other words, Bahujans refuse to act and behave as timid and introverted as their earlier mindset was conditioned. Also, the oppressors do not behave with superior feelings whenever they meet a Bahujan. This change of mindset is one of the goals of reclaiming the identity.

### **Commodification of Gospel Resulting in Denying Fullness of Life to Millions**

The present age of global Christianity is witnessing a new phase in the history of Christianity. This new phase is rather disappointing and resulting in denying the fullness of life to millions. The new phase in Christian mission is concerned with commodification of the Gospel and association of church and leaders with populist and amoral political leaders for economic gains. The commodification of the Gospel has resulted in ineffective public engagement and led many into superficial spirituality away from the realities of life. The poor and marginalized are not the centre of work of the mission anymore. The cause of the poor and marginalized are neglected, and the pseudo leaders promote false spirituality that is unconcerned of the neighbours' sufferings. What does the commodification of the Gospel involve:

- a. The commodification of the Gospel involves branding the services of Christian mission & ministry into products for sale. It converts religion into goods/services that can be harnessed to deal with existential needs.
- b. The commodification of the Gospel involves the association of church/churches with amoral political leaders for political/economic/sociological gains.
- c. The commodification of the Gospel also involves media, technologies and other mediums to entrap people with misrepresentations of the truth.

The commodification of the Gospel is involved with a plan different from that of the mission of Jesus Christ. It encourages injustice and unethical means of self-seeking. It seeks to multiply wealth and create a competitive spirit of steady income flow rather than strengthen the church and preaching of the Gospel for the cause of mission and justice. In commodification of the Gospel, Gospel is used for the sake of organization/mission and not mission/organization for the sake of the Gospel.

This dramatically affects the cause of justice and the identity of Bahujans. The commodification of the Gospel does not empower Bahujans; instead, it exploits them. The commodification of the Gospel distorts the original meaning and does more significant harm than good. One must make a renewed thinking in redeeming mission from being commercialized.

### **Conclusion**

The paper is brought out from an intense interaction with activists committed to the cause of justice and the identity of Bahujans. The mission to bring justice is not limited to one people group alone viz Bahujans, but it is a step towards bringing justice to the world. The mission of justice is a cooperative effort from all sympathizers in empowering, strengthening the oppressed and helping them to struggle for their own rights and dignity. The mission to bring justice and provide identity is not limited to rights, but it further expands to reclaim the lost identity. Every individual has an identity that marks their existence in the world. Oppressors distort this identity to their own sake, and hence, the Bahujans need to reclaim their glorious past and identity. It is not only an effort to come out of poverty, but it is also an effort to reclaim quality education, income opportunities, space of dignity in society and a new spirituality free of religiously sanctioned oppressive texts.

This paper suggests that the quest to bring justice and identity within the Christian fold is possible only when we de-commercialize the Gospel. The commodification of the Gospel

has only harmed the oppressed. There is no space for justice and identity when religious leaders have alternate interests. Hence de-commercialization involves de-branding of Gospel for profit. It also involves de-association from amoral political leaders. Further, it also consists of shunning of usage of media for misrepresentation of the truth.

### End Notes

- 1 Please see this post for more information on Bajujan's and Dalit: Valliammal Karunakar, "The Dalit – Bahujan Guide to Understanding Caste in Hindu Scripture," [https://medium.com/@Bahujan\\_Power/the-dalit-bahujan-guide-to-understanding-caste-in-hindu-scripture-417db027fce6](https://medium.com/@Bahujan_Power/the-dalit-bahujan-guide-to-understanding-caste-in-hindu-scripture-417db027fce6) (16 Nov 2019).
- 2 Christopher L. Heuertz and Christine D. Pohl, *Friendship at the Margins Discovering Mutuality in Service and Mission* (Illonis: IVP Books, 2010), 100.
- 3 B. T. Gopalakrishna, *Chaturvarna: Unified Theory of Hindu Caste* (Bangalore: BT Gopalakrishna, 2013), 49.
- 4 B. T. Gopalakrishna, 50.
- 5 Deenabandh Manchala, "Mission as Struggle for Justice: From the Perspective of Those Who are Denied Justice" in *Quest for Justice: Perspectives on Mission and Unity*, ed. by George Mathew Nalunnakkal & Abraham P. Athyal (Chennai: ISPCK, 2000), 42.
- 6 Norman E. Thomas, *Missions and Unity: Lessons from History, 1792-2010* (Oregon: Cascade Books, 2010), 107.
- 7 Deenabandhu Manchala, 46.
- 8 Norman E. Thomas, 109.
- 9 Christopher L. Heuertz and Christine D Pohl, 52.
- 10 Deenbandhu Manchala, 50.
- 11 John P. Crank, *Imagining Justice* (London: Routledge, 2003), 251.
- 12 Cf. Norman E. Thomas, 217. Norman considers that those who concentrate only on Charity and not on empowerment do not do justice to the poor and suffering.
- 13 Gene Wilkes, *Jesus on Leadership: Timeless Wisdom on Servant Leadership* (Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2011), n.124.
- 14 Manohar Chandra Prasad has discussed the marginalized exploring new religions searching for new spirituality and identity. Cf. Manohar Chandra Prasad, *Lamenting Loss and Resisting Repression: Towards Dalit Solidarity*

in *Challenging Caste Oppression Through Collective Lament* (Bangalore: Crossroad Publication, 1998), 114.

- 15 Paula M. L. Moya argues against reclaiming identity. For Paula, "reclaiming identity is inadequate unless it allows a social theorist to analyze the epistemic status and political salience of any given identity..." cf. Paula M. L. Moya, "Introduction," in *Reclaiming Identity: Realist Theory and the Predicament of Postmodernism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 7.

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## **The Theoretical Bases and WACC'S Christian Principles of Communication in the Context of Communication Revolution with Reference to the Churches in India**

*Rev. Dr. Joel Patrick*

### **Introduction**

Today the communication revolution is drastically changing the world. In India the reality of communication revolution has reached a vast majority of middle class people even though the masses are still poor. The reality created by the middle media such as the satellite channels are spreading to a vast majority of people. At the same time this is a 'non-reality' for the lower middle class and poor people who form the majority of population. It is non-reality because for a large number of lower income people such a technology has yet to become a reality. But for the middle class who form nearly 35 percent of the total population it has become a reality. In this inescapable reality various modern communication technologies have become inevitable and essential elements of society.<sup>1</sup>

Michael Traber,<sup>2</sup> in the light of today's reality of communication revolution, argued that though information and communication were drastically changing the world, instead of establishing commonality and solidarity, communications and the communication that exists in today's reality tends to reinforce divisions, widening the gap between rich and poor, consolidating oppression, and distorting the reality in order to maintain.

The significant issue in this article is the presentation of theoretical bases which will enable a subsequent analysis of

Christian Principles of Communication and their potentials for playing an innovative role in the context of today's reality of communication revolution with specific to the churches in India. The discussion on WACC's Christian principles of communication, in general would centre on Participatory, Community, Liberation and Cultural Approaches.

### **Communication**

Communication is a key thread in the fabric of life. It shapes us mentally, socially, emotionally and spiritually. Communication — including the Word made flesh and Holy Scripture — is the way in which God is made known to us, and the way we respond. Communication forms and sustains churches, communities, society and at the same time develops and maintains our individuality. There are several attempts for definitions of communication by many Communication scholars. Denis Mcquail defines communication as a process, which increases commonality. It is also a process in which relationships are established and maintained. Communication is very essential for any human being. 'Everybody needs communication in order to live and relate to a human community.'<sup>3</sup>

### **Communication Revolution and Its Effect**

The contemporary period has come to be labelled variously as 'Information Age,' the 'Communication Age', and most recently the Cyber or Networking Age.<sup>4</sup> During the past two decades, the development of communication technology has tremendously changed human lifestyles all over the world. A totally new environment has been created<sup>5</sup> through satellites and information superhighways.<sup>6</sup> With the advent of communication technology, new kinds of social relationships have been formed and internationalized.<sup>7</sup> This is a Global Information Context - the Communication Revolution, today's reality in which sophisticated means of communication have become part and parcel of social and cultural interaction.

Citizens of developed and developing nations alike live in a global information context where information is a commodity that currently rivals factors such as control of natural resources, capital and industrial production as an important determinant of global power. Here the traditional arbiters and purveyors of “culture” (including governments, churches, educational and scientific organizations) have lost much of their influence when compared to the influence of communication revolution.<sup>8</sup>

Public discourse increasingly takes place around an agenda set by the media. People, whether they live in any parts of the world, now have nearly simultaneous access to the same images and viewpoints in the interpretation of events. Marshall McLuhan's *Understanding Media* writes: ‘Today, after more than a century of electric technology, we have extended our central nervous system in a global embrace, abolishing both space and time as far as our planet is concerned’<sup>9</sup>..... ‘We now live in a global village....’<sup>10</sup> In long industrialized nations and newly industrialized nations alike, the social, political and cultural arenas of life are defined and debated in ways controlled by the communication technologies. They (especially the media) play an ever more important role in such events as political campaigns, the overthrow and creation of governments, and in the way wars are planned, fought and interpreted. The communications increasingly shape consciousness and define the quest for the meaning of life. This is the changing context, the reality where the churches also exist.

### **Churches Attitude Towards Communication Revolution**

‘For years church leaders who were concerned about the communication revolutions have been asking how to get the churches to take the changes seriously. What will it take to coax churches to become really involved in radio, television, satellites and computers – to join the communication revolution? This seems like a fairly straightforward challenge to churches to become more relevant to the times in which we live.’<sup>11</sup> It raises questions such as: should the church be concerned about such a reality of

communication; what can the church do to face up to this reality. How can the churches participate in the communication process? Lonergan reminds us in *Method in Theology* that “A community ... is an achievement of common meaning.”<sup>12</sup> And we must recall the practical advice of Dulles, in 1971, in a prophetic document: “The Church cannot wall itself up in a cultural ghetto at a time when humanity as a whole is passing into the electronic age.”<sup>13</sup>

On the other hand the churches in India do participate in the communication process by sharing different types of methods of communication. For example through their educational institutions, social service organisations, missionaries, priests and media institutions, The question lies here is What do they communicate? They communicate the gospel to others. Churches view the communications (media) as a means to evangelise people of other faiths hence one of the main purposes of using the media is to evangelize the masses. This is seen as an extension of the pulpit. Before 1946 individual missionaries brought audio visual aids to India which was used for their own denominational programmes. These aids were used primary to inform people about the gospel. In this approach the purpose was to convert people to Christianity.<sup>14</sup> Thangasamy points out that the churches communicated by the gospel through education, economic and social services and media. Thus Churches looked at the media from a conventional perspective in which preaching and conducting services were the main forms of communication: audio-visual media were used to enhance such participation. They were seen as extensions of the churches sermons and Sunday services.<sup>15</sup>

Thus their methods in communication involve preaching, conducting services, printing, singing, and performances even though preaching and worship services are the dominant forms. Each church has its own way of communication, though some of the churches are involved in-group and interpersonal communication whereas in general the churches<sup>16</sup> in India had a negative attitude not only towards the modern media but also

towards local culture.<sup>17</sup> Even though the mainline churches in India are ecumenical in nature, many of them have a particular theological leaning which is reflected in their attitude towards media. Many of them have fear of the media in general.<sup>18</sup> They find it necessary to engage with the media but do so on their own terms. Even when they get an opportunity to use the media they try to achieve their own goals. Though they used periodicals and magazines as their means of informing both Christians and people of other faiths about their work, there was less interest in using audio-visual materials among missionaries and church workers. C. R. W. David notes that, the majority of churchmen (sic) and church leaders considered the movies as occasions for temptation to sin. The negative attitude created by some missionaries and some churches might have contributed to their disengagement in the communication process of Indian people. They chose instead, to use their own media and their forms that were relevant, or not shared by the people. Thus the Churches tried to use the media that were open to them, but that others had neglected the opportunities that were available to them. Only a few churches in India adopted local forms and cultural means of communication to adopt and practice the Genuine Communication process.

### **Wacc's Christian Principles of Communication**

In 1986, at the suggestion of Hans W. Florin, then WACC's<sup>19</sup> General Secretary Michael Traber drafted WACC's Christian Principles of Communication.<sup>20</sup> And WACC began to make policy statement from 1986 onwards with the adoption of these principles recognise the way in which the mass media affect people's lives. While pointing out the problems of the existing structure of their mass media and its use by the owners, they recognise the participatory, liberating and prophetic characteristics of communication. These principles demonstrate that WACC is also interested in encouraging communicators to engage in people's communication process.<sup>21</sup> Thus WACC defined its understanding of the role of communication today

in the form of its Christian Principles of Communication. These Christian principles of communication stand in sharp contrast to the secular division between rich and poor, free and oppressed and against media manipulation of the masses and its use by the owners. It recognized five crucial components of good communication, emphasis in subsequent work on the six main areas Traber had identified: communication ethics; the right to communicate; communication and religion; communication, culture and social change; communication education; and women's perspectives hence, WACC's five Christian Principles of Communication are:

- Communication is participatory
- Communication creates community
- Communication liberates
- Communication supports and develops cultures
- Communication is prophetic

### **Wacc's Christian Principles of Communication**

#### **1. Communication is Participatory**

The Oxford Dictionary defines the term participate as:

Take part: to take part in an event or activity

Have a quality: to have a particular quality

Involvement: the act of taking part in an activity

From, 15<sup>th</sup> century. Ultimately in Latin *articipare*, from *particeps* "sharing," literally "taking part,"

The term 'participation' has complex meaning still difficult to find an appropriate definition. Ascroft and Masilela point out that this concept has been very poorly defined as well as very much inconsistent, abstract and ambiguous. The interpretations of what participation ranges from people taking passive or active roles in project implementation, decision-making to empowering to the extent of political participation.<sup>22</sup>

### **Approaching the Theories of Participation**

‘The participatory model of communication does not consider the sender anymore in the first place, nor his or her expectations and interest but tries to see sender and receiver on the same level and to consider the communication process as a happening between two equals. Everett Rogers and Lawrence Kincaid define their ‘convergence model’ of communication as “a process in which the participants create and share information with another in order to reach a mutual understanding.”<sup>23</sup> In this view, communication is a “joint occurrence, a mutual process of information sharing between two or more persons.” Communication is not any more conceived as a one-way and top-bottom affair but as being horizontal between the participants. The more A and B converge the more mutual understanding is reached the more communication takes place. There is an area of mutual understanding which is the convergence reached in a communication process.’<sup>24</sup>

Thus Communication means a process of creating and stimulating understanding as the basis for development rather than information transmission.<sup>25</sup> Communication is the articulation of social relations among people. People should not be forced to adopt new practices. People needed to be encouraged to participate rather than adopt new practices based on information. This understanding of communication was central to the ideas developed by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire,<sup>26</sup> whose writings and experiences became an influential strand in participatory communication. The goal of communication should be conscientization, which Paulo Freire defined as free dialogue that prioritized cultural identity, trust and commitment. His approach has been called “dialogical pedagogy” which defined equity in distribution and active grassroots participation as central principles. Communication should provide a sense of ownership to participants through sharing and reconstructing experiences. Education is not transmission of information from those “who have

it” to those “who lack it,” from the powerful to the powerless, but the creative discovery of the world. He diagnosed the problems in the Third World as problems of communication, not information as persuasion theories proposed. Solutions, then, needed to have an understanding of communication that was not limited to the application of Western ideas.

Certainly, participatory communication has not lacked critics. Even though vindicating some tenets of participatory theories, other positions argued that they were elaborated at a theoretical level and did not provide specific guidelines for interventions. One problem in participatory models was that it was not clear that communities needed to be involved for certain results to be achieved. In some cases such as epidemics and other public health crises, quick and top-down solutions could achieve positive results. Participation communication ignores that expediency may also positively contribute to development. Belabouring through grassroots decision-making process is slower than centralized decisions, and thus not advisable in cases that require prompt resolutions. Participation might be a good long-term strategy but has shortcomings when applied to short-term and urgent issues.

Another problem was that participation in all stages does not have similar relevance. It was not clear what participation entailed. If decisions were made outside of the community and the latter was assigned the role of implementing and evaluating results, some positions argued, participation was limited to instances that depended on decisions previously made.<sup>27</sup> It was not true participation and, therefore, maintained power inequalities. Another problem was that the focus on interpersonal relations underplayed the potential of the mass media in promoting development as participation and process. Little attention was paid to the uses of mass media in participatory settings, an issue that is particularly relevant considering that populations, even in remote areas, are constantly exposed to commercial media

messages that stand in opposition to the goals set by programs. This lack was particularly evident in Freire's theory of dialogical communication that is based on group interactions and underplays the role of the mass media.

Participatory approaches usually avoided the issue that people who lived in nondemocratic societies might be wary to participate out of fear of retaliation. Moreover, people can be manipulated into participating. This would violate local autonomy and the possibility that members might not be interested in taking an active role. Participatory communication did not offer the chance not to participate, and implicitly coerced people to adopt a certain attitude.

### **Participatory Communication in the Churches**

Freire's model and participatory models in general proposed a human-centred approach that valued the importance of interpersonal channels of communication in decision making processes at the community level. The recommendation was that individual, churches, communities and the societies rely more on interpersonal methods of communication rather than national media and technologies, and the structures in the churches, and they should act as facilitators of dialogue.

To create healthier relationship in the church, the congregations need to acknowledge the damage their communication patterns have created in the past and correct them in the present congregational culture. With growth and supervision, however, the clergy person and the congregations can learn to avoid the pitfalls of communication that impair individual and congregational functioning. The Participatory Communication is needed to be practiced first between clergy and the congregation and the churches as a whole could be the facilitator of dialogue to the communities and the society. Here the Congregation should be encouraged to participate in decision-making, implementation, and evaluation of projects. This would give a sense of involvement in the lives of the churches and communities; this would provide

them with a sense of ownership and skills that they can use beyond the timetable of development projects.<sup>28</sup>

Thus, a good deal of courage is needed for the churches to name and correct poor communication. Clergy who name and stop negative communication behaviour can help reshape congregational culture. They cannot do this alone, however as congregation joins the work of communication transformation, the number of individuals modelling more effective communication increases, as does the possibility of changing old patterns. Here congregation do need to believe that change is possible, that the congregation as individuals and clergy are not powerless, that, in fact, people within a congregation have the power to change it through Participatory communication.

### **2. Communication Creates Community**

Since the late nineteenth century, 'the use of the term community has remained to some extent associated with the hope and the wish of reviving once more the closer, warmer, more harmonious type of bonds between people vaguely attributed to past ages.'<sup>29</sup> Before 1910 there was little social science literature concerning 'community' and it was really only in 1915 that the first clear sociological definition emerged. This was coined by C. J. Galpin in relation to delineating rural communities in terms of the trade and service areas surrounding a central village.<sup>30</sup> A number of competing definitions of community quickly followed. Some focused on community as a geographical area; some on a group of people living in a particular place; and others which looked to community as an area of common life.

### **Approaching the Theories of Community**

It is helpful to begin by noting that community can be approached as a value.<sup>31</sup> As such it may well be used to bring together a number of elements, for example, solidarity, commitment, mutuality and trust. It comes close to the third of the ideals that were inscribed on many of the banners of the French Revolution – fraternity

(the others, as you will most likely remember, were liberty and equality). Socialists such as William Morris talked similarly of 'fellowship':

Anthony P. Cohen's argues that communities are best approached as 'communities of meaning.'<sup>32</sup> In other words, "community" plays a crucial symbolic role in generating people's sense of belonging.<sup>33</sup> The reality of community, Cohen argues, lies in its members' perception of the vitality of its culture "People construct community symbolically, making it resource and repository of meaning and a referent of their identity."<sup>34</sup>

Indeed, it is very significant that the notion of community recurs in major religions: ... the Christian ideal of the communion of saints and the congregation and the Eucharist as forms of community; the centrality of *umma* or community in Islamic traditions and contemporary practice and theology; community is prominent theme in Judaism, and in Buddhism. Confucianism is not, of course, a religion, but neo-Confucianism is closely intertwined with Buddhism and with traditional religious cults of the family and ancestors, and Confucian norms of family and community life are politically significant in many contemporary contexts.<sup>35</sup>

As Lee and Newby<sup>36</sup> point out, the fact that people live close to one another does not necessarily mean that they have much to do with each other. There may be little interaction between neighbors'. It is the nature of the relationships between people and the *social networks* of which they are a part that is often seen as one of the more significant aspects of 'community.' Elizabeth Frazer said that, "The aspiration to community is an aspiration to a kind of connectedness that transcends the mundane and concrete tangle of social relationships."<sup>37</sup> According to Buber, 'We can only grow and develop, when once we have learned to live in relation to others, to recognize the possibilities of the space between us. The fundamental means is dialogue. 'All real living is meeting' he once wrote.<sup>38</sup> Such meeting isn't just between two people. Buber

believed that in such encounters the eternal could be glimpsed. In speech and silence there was great possibility. In dialogue, a person is present to another (and the other), they are attentive and aware - listening and waiting. In the stillness of this 'in-between worlds' they may encounter what cannot yet be put into words. This helps in building up the relationship that creates community

### **Communitarian Communication in the Churches**

The aim of the Churches today should be to break down of all kinds of barriers which prevent the development of communities with rights and justice for all - particularly such barriers as race, sex, class, nation, power and wealth first in the churches itself and then strive to do it in the communities and the society, since Genuine communication cannot take place in a climate of division, alienation, isolation and barriers which disturb prevent or distort social interaction. True communication is facilitated when people join together regardless of race, colour or religious conviction, and where there is acceptance of and commitment to one another.

In the churches, there is a need to promote and support community-based media and access points through financial support, training, preferred access to licenses, frequencies and technologies, including technologies that facilitate links between traditional media and new ones. The notion of "group media" drew from Freire to call the media that are means for small groups to develop a critical attitude towards the reality of self, the group, community, society and church through participation in group interaction. Group communication has helped marginal groups to speak to one another, to articulate their thoughts and feelings in the process of community organizing.<sup>39</sup> Community-based forms of communication such as songs, theatre, radio, video, and other activities that required group intervention needed to be promoted in the churches in India. More than mechanisms to disseminate information, the Churches could provide opportunities to identify common problems and solution, to reflect upon community issues, and mobilize resources. Community members, rather than

“professionals”, should be in charge of the decision and production processes.<sup>40</sup>

Thus, communication, including the use of alternative media, can revitalise churches, communities and rekindle community spirit, because the model for genuine communication, like that for communities of all kinds, is open and inclusive, rather than unidirectional and exclusive. But a community must not be seen as the local community alone. A community of peoples and nations, as well as a community of different churches and religions, has to emerge if humankind is to survive. Therefore, one aim of churches work is the breaking down of all kinds of barriers which prevent the development of communities with rights and justice for all - particularly such barriers as race, sex, class, nation, power and wealth.

### **3. Communication Supports and Develops Cultures**

Communicators have a responsibility to use and develop indigenous forms of communication. They have to cultivate a symbolic environment of mutually shared images and meanings which respect human dignity and the religious and cultural values which are at the heart of Third World cultures. One of the greatest assets of today's world is its many different cultures, revealing the richness of God's image in all its diversity.<sup>41</sup>

UNESCO defines culture as including ‘the whole complex of distinctive, spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs.’<sup>42</sup> Culture is the totality of human endeavours in a given time and place. People are constructs of their culture. Culture gives people their identity and dignity. It is every day expression and future aspirations. Culture and development are intertwined because culture underpins development and reinforces it. In defining culture Taylor noted that it ‘..... is a complex thing which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morality, laws, customs and all the dispositions and habits

acquired by man as a member of society.’<sup>43</sup> Culture is society's way of life including its language, religion, organization of family, etc. Culture is best learnt through its language.

### **Approaching the Theories of Culture**

A people's basic culture and need for cultural identity are part of the dignity of the human person. Many countries and peoples are now rediscovering and redefining their basic cultural identities. This is particularly urgent where culture, language, religion, gender, age, ethnicity or race have been attacked or treated with contempt by members of other cultural groups.

Global communication structures are now being set up in such a way as to threaten the cultures and priorities of many nations. More seriously, the entertainment industries, particularly television and home video programmes, are creating a media environment which is alien and alienating. The Western criteria of the mass media have already been adopted by the national elites in Asian countries. They set the 'standards' of what can rate as 'professional' in media productions, often preventing the emergence of alternative forms of communication.

Scholars like Herbert Schiller and Cees Hamelink spoke forcefully on cultural imperialism and cultural autonomy; even more powerful voices emerged from the African and Asian countries to defend the value of their culture for enduring change on people. They expressed their belief that the key development in the developing countries lies in the traditional cultures in which the life of the people has taken a deep root. Scholars like Frank Ugbojah, Wang and Dissainayake, Sonaike and Paul V. Ansa are notable among them.<sup>44</sup>

These scholars claimed that social change stands the best chance of becoming permanent if it is in consonance with the accepted ways and values of the people. Further, general participation in the process of effecting change enhances its internalisation which in turn ensures permanence. They also consider that the success the culturalists approach derives its

strength from its effectiveness to persuasion and attitudinal change.<sup>45</sup>

In Carey's view, communication is a process that arises out of the cultural reality in which participants of the process share and exchange their messages. In such an understanding, communication, as a process, is conditioned by the social and cultural context. There are no more senders and receivers in this process, as they both share the media in order to engage in it. They are involved not merely in the process of sending and receiving information but of sharing and participating in the process of celebrating and understanding each other's lives within their social and cultural framework.

For Carey the ritual understanding of communication does not exclude the process of information transmission or attitude change.<sup>46</sup> Communication, as a ritual event, occurs in a community's life without any meaning being shared or constructed but simply as part of celebrating life. This cultural view highlights the importance of the interactive characteristics of communication.

### **Cultural Communication in the Churches**

Carey's view leads to a realisation that Christian communication should not be understood merely as communicating the Christian faith in the form of an information package or as a set of rules and regulations to solve ethical issues. From this cultural perspective, Christian communication can best be interpreted as a process in which the communicator and the audience participate and engage in a search for religious and social meanings. While they interact through their cultural forms and celebrate their life together they can share each other's experience of faith and life. In order to interact with the audiences, the Churches need to engage in the audience's process of communication regardless of their religion and beliefs.<sup>47</sup>

If this cultural approach is interpreted theologically, it can be argued that God is no longer a mere sender but the one who shares and participates with human beings in the process of

communication in order to understand and to be understood by them. God's involvement in the process of communication cannot be seen as an exchange of information about himself but as a celebration of life together with human beings by sharing aesthetic experiences, faith, values and sentiments. This view would help the churches give importance to the cultural view.<sup>48</sup>

Theologians have tried in many different ways to interact with the local culture and other religious faiths in order to understand the gospel through the Indian mind. The gospel could be interpreted through the local forms of communication, particularly through the Indian tradition of storytelling. Indian sages used a wide range of communication techniques to help their audience to interpret their beliefs (e.g. dance, drama, telling Puranas (long stories), dialogue displaying images, arts and yoga). These methods employ different aesthetic elements – excitement, humour, suspense in order to attract and maintain the attention of the audience. They also have implicit ways of interpreting people's beliefs and worldview. There are cultural aesthetic elements that have to be mixed with new forms of communication in order to make Christian communication interesting and attractive. Dudde argues that Christian tracts must be attractive and use Indian artistic forms to make them attractive.<sup>49</sup>

There is a wide range of material, talented people, cultural forms, instruments, artistic element and methods available to the Churches and Christian communicators to choose from in an Indian context. If such cultural forms together with modern aesthetic elements are used in audio-visual programmes, then the churches can contribute both to new hermeneutic forms of the gospel and also to the local culture.<sup>50</sup>

On the other hand there is a fear among the Churches and Christians that these attempts might distort the gospel message. To remove this fear, Christian communicators and the Churches have to show their Christian audience that cultural elements in India can provide better communicative forms than most Western

forms. It is a two way process in which Churches and Christian communicators use indigenous forms to interpret the gospel to a Christian audience and at the same time are able to interact with people in India as they did through education and social services by sharing the local cultural genre and by the audience's medium and by using their hermeneutic forms. By sharing and using local cultural means and forms can the churches share the gospel with the wider audience regardless of their religion and race.<sup>51</sup>

#### **4. Communication that Liberates**

The Oxford Dictionary defines the term Liberation as:

Being set free; the process or state of being liberated and release from social stereotyping; gaining equal rights for a particular group by setting its members free from traditional socially imposed constraints such as those arising from sexual or ageist stereotyping

Communication that liberates, enables people to articulate their own needs and helps them to act together to meet those needs. It enhances their sense of dignity and underlines their right to full participation in the life of society. It aims to bring about structures in society and in the church that are more just, more egalitarian and more conducive to the fulfilment of human rights.<sup>52</sup>

#### **Approaching the Theories of Liberation**

Freire's liberation model centres on creating the structures of thought to empower the oppressed to understand themselves and their circumstances and create their own self, social and cultural knowledge so they can emerge into a world of their own making and control. The centring idea is that freedom of self-determination is not the end but the means. Freire articulated this idea as a theory of emancipation or liberation.

In his book *Pedagogy of Oppressed*, he explained this as a dialogue about emancipation through a process of developing critical consciousness. Based on his work with the poor and

oppressed, he developed teams who worked in common with people at the local level.<sup>53</sup> The process has an anthropological feel to it; the habits and the ideas and the social, cultural, and work activities are studied and used as the data from which themes are developed to use in the dialogic interplay of locals and the assisting teams. This process continues through the creation and implementation of a curriculum of the people that becomes the path to self-awareness and empowerment. It is a distinctive curriculum of the people and for the people created for special schooling in a unique context. Although Freire's work is a politically controversial, it has demonstrated viability as a process. It is an example of a model based on theory emerging from practice rather than a model emerging from practice based on a research experience.<sup>54</sup>

The biggest critique of liberation theology is that it tends to reduce faith to politics.<sup>55</sup> Gutiérrez responded to this criticism by giving "politics" two distinct meanings-- the effort of the human race to discover their potential, and the search for power. Gutiérrez argues that liberation theology is not for power, but rather for aiding the efforts of humans to discover their capacity.<sup>56</sup> Archbishop Romero argued that popular movements and the church are closely related in a positive way, and always have been, but the two are not necessarily fused into one.<sup>57</sup> A second criticism from the mainstream Catholic Church is the use of Marxism to analyze history and then devise a solution. Many argue that this approach creates a revolutionary praxis and, while claiming to liberate the poor, actually create more violence and oppression.<sup>58</sup> Again, the liberation theologians argue that they are not necessarily advocating an economic system based on Marxism, but rather a system that is uniquely Latin American.

If we evaluate communication and mass media today in our context, we do not see the maximum existence of the liberative principle of communication. Most the media are used as a form of power.<sup>59</sup> They are used for the maintenance of the status of the

powerful. Communication proper cannot be carried out between the superior and the inferior. Genuine communication advocates the equality of all human being.<sup>60</sup> The liberative principle of communication helps and enables them and articulates their needs.

Liberative principle of communication creates community. The people of Israel became non-community as they were enslaved in a foreign land. However, after their deliverance from their slavery the old non-community or slave community became the new community. They were being united as a community of God's children. We are living in a society where there are people of various kinds. We are divided by sex, class, race, power and wealth.<sup>61</sup> Christian communication as the responsibility of all Christians should solve these differences together.<sup>62</sup>

### **Liberative Communication in the Churches**

The Christian church from the beginning was understood as a community of liberation from slavery and oppression, drawing on the ancient theme of Israel as an exodus community from slavery in Egypt and a journey to enter into the Promised Land. Baptism was at first embraced as the sacrament of conversion and transformation through which one entered this community of liberation that overcame all social hierarchies of ethnicity, class and gender, a baptism into the Christ-nature in whom there is no more Jew nor Greek, slave or free, male or female. But this vision of a community of discipleship of equals was quickly spiritualized and the concrete reference to changing social hierarchies denied.

Soon the patriarchal voice was reinstated in the household codes: Wives obey your husbands, children your parents, slaves your masters, a reiterated demand for obedience of subjects to their lords in New Testament texts that itself witnesses to the fact that many Churches and so do Christians understood baptism and entry into the church as really overcoming these relationships of domination socially, as well as spiritually.

This vision of the church as a community of liberation in which all members share ministry somewhat equally has been

continually recovered in Christian history, in medieval Beguine communities, in Quaker meetings and Methodist class meetings. Most recently the development of Base Christian communities as the ecclesial expression of Latin American liberation theology has rediscovered this understanding of church. Although, the critique of patriarchy has been implicit in this reclamation of small face-to-face communitarian understandings of church, this has seldom been made explicit. Thus women-church or feminist forms of Base Christian community represents a major new step of understanding patriarchy as the central expression of the powers and principalities of sinful distortion of human existence on the planet and understanding church as a community of liberation from patriarchy.<sup>63</sup>

If the church in its essential nature is a community of liberation from patriarchy then it should most particularly witness to an alternative pattern of relationship between its members based on a discipleship of equals and mutual empowerment. It can witness to an alternative relationship of humans to each other and to the rest of creation in the larger society only if it witnesses to such alternative relations in its own basic processes of life, and ministry in its sacraments, educational work, administration and mission to society. A church which claims to be the sacrament of liberation for society while it embodying the worse patterns of oppression internally is compounds sinful distortion with hypocrisy and is simply unbelievable.

Constructing a church of liberation from patriarchy requires dismantling clericalism. This means we have to understand the utter incompatibility of clericalism with a liberative understanding of church and ministry. Clericalism is the separation of ministry from mutual empowerment in community and its distortion into hierarchically ordered castes of clergy over laity. The clergy then monopolize sacramental action, education and teaching, administration and leadership in mission, turning the laity into passive dependents who is to receive these services from the clergy and carry out their orders, but not participate in shaping,

defining and embodying these activities themselves. Ministry becomes the special preserve of the ordained, rather than based in the community and articulated within and by it.

## Conclusion

In light of the above analysis, the church is faced with three challenges: first, to provide an alternative environment to the communication revolution, namely, face-to-face community: the Participatory Communication; second, to penetrate the communication revolution with community spirit and indigenous forms of communication that challenge the communication's own values and instead communicate fundamental human values; and third, to teach parishioners (and the public) how to understand the ways in which the communication revolution are being manipulative to the extent of losing one's identity.

One of the reasons for the churches' disengagement in this process of communication revolution is due to its theological perceptions and hermeneutic principles. Unless one identifies this exact problem and address this issue from a theological perspective the attitude of the church may not be changed towards this reality of communication revolution. By changing the attitude this paper tried to bring out that the church would or should engage in this process along with people, though the church in India does not have control over this reality of communication revolution. In such context, indeed the critical elements of the communication revolution need to be recognised in the WACC's Christian Principles of Communication in order to have a balanced approach towards the communication.

William F. Fore in his book *A Theology of Communication, Religious Education* asserts that "The task of Christian Communication is to reveal our internal history and the internal history of our community, in such a way that it will help individuals to ask what meaning life holds for them and their community. The content of Christian Communication is not a series of logical propositions, or wall charts with connected squares "explaining"

God's plan, or texts from the Bible committed to memory, or creed, or theological statements. The content of Christian communication is essentially what God has done in the lives of individuals.

## End Notes

- 1 John Joshva Raja, *Facing the Reality of Communication* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2001), pp. 1.
- 2 Michael Traber (b. 1929) was educated in Switzerland. In 1956 he was ordained into the Bethlehem Mission Society from where he went to the USA to study sociology and mass communication at Fordham University and New York University (1956-60). He gained his PhD in mass communication. He joined the staff of the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) in 1976 as director of its fledgling Periodicals Development Programme and editor of its quarterly journal Media Development. He was the member of WACC from 1976 to 1995. Fr Traber regularly taught media ethics at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. For the past 10 years, he also taught communications and practical journalism at United Theological College in Bangalore, India. On March 11, 2006 WACC presented him with an Honorary Life.
- 3 Franz Josef, Eilers. *Communicating in Community* (Indore: Satprakashan Sanchar Kendra, 1996), pp.18.
- 4 Keval J. Kumar, *Mass Communication in India* (Delhi: Jaico Publishing House, 2003), pp.1.
- 5 Marshall, McLuhan. *Understanding Media: The Extension of Man* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1964), pp.7-16.
- 6 Canter Laurence, *A and others. How to make a Fortune on the Information Superhighways* (Glasgow: Harper Collins Publishers, 1995), pp.10.
- 7 C. R. W. David, *Communication in Theological Education: A Curriculum* (Bangalore: BTESSC, 1986), pp.49.
- 8 Global Communication for Justice, a National Council of Churches Policy Statement by National Council of Churches, A Policy Statement Approved by the General Board, November 11, 1993 in <http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=281>, retrieved on 12-11-08.
- 9 Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*. (New York: Mentor, 1964), pp. 3
- 10 M McLuhan and Q. Fiore, *The Medium is the Massage* (New York: Bantam 1967), pp. 63.

- 11 William F. Fore, *The Church and Communication in the Technological Era* in <http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=632> retrieved on 7-10-2008.
- 12 Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), pp. 79.
- 13 Avery Dulles, *The Church Is Communications: Catholic Mind 69* (1971), pp. 13.
- 14 P. A. Thangasamy, *The Evangelistic Need and Opportunity The South India Churchman*, (September), pp. 209-212.
- 15 Ibid. 209.
- 16 The churches include CNI, CSI churches, Lutherans and charismatic churches.
- 17 D.G. Moses, *Evangelism-The Mission of the Church to Those Outside Her Life* (The South India Churchman June), pp. 4-5.
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