Chapter-6

Ideas of Civil Society: An Alternative View

This chapter deals with the question of alternatives to the western ideas on civil society. . Main effort of this chapter includes whether there are any alternatives available to the existing western notions or are they one of uncontested kind. Clearly, the scholarship on the question of civil society, as we have tried to examine in the previous chapters, has been rich and provocative. The present chapter seeks to think through alternative ideas already available on civil society and to go beyond them in to the plane of normative theory. In this attempt, it has been proposed to use the following resources to arrive at the alternatives for constructions of ideas of civil society as follows, (a) critical reading of existing ideas of civil society in Indian context. (b) Thought processes of nationalist movements or its leaders as explored in previous chapters (c) critical interpretation of existing social movements and civil society practices and (d) selectively drawing from western sources of political philosophy to illuminate such an alternatives constructions.

For the above assessment, the present chapter argues for a kind of Communitarian-Republican version of civil society by drawing ideas from Gandhi and Tagore. It argues for a critique of modernizing role of civil society. It criticizes civil society for articulating desire and the need for development. It emphasizes the space available in non-state realm which is being constituted by the economy, political agencies, and civil society. Though, industry, state, and bureaucracy have always been harping on the need for development, implying efficient utilization of resources. Civil society is also viewed as a cluster of agencies, to create an ethic necessary for efficient use of resources. However, the emphasis in this ethic is to be created through voluntary efforts without deploying the coercive powers of the state. This chapter thus criticizes the modernizing role of civil society. It attempts to capture the crisis of modernity or crisis of political institutions of modernity. The crisis has been due to the failure of institutions of political modernity to recursively reproduce themselves. Political modernity could not be institutionalized and could not take hold in the minds of the people. This is due to gap between increasingly centralizing and

modernizing role of the state and the basic ethic of the people. The role of civil society, it has been argued, is to mediate between non-modern institutions of the people and the institutions of state differently imagined. Non-modern institutions are those institutions untouched by the modernity and they are communities, institutions, and networks in which people directly participate. The idea of civil society includes all such institutional processes and networks. It includes their transformation. The linking of local institutions to the state institutions would take place via the idea of participation at local level, which would help state to overcome social atomism. This could be further enunciated through a cursory examination of the existing theoretical conjectures.

The existing work on civil society can be broadly classified in to three theoretical stand points.

a. **Critical modernist perspective** on civil society is available in variety of writings. It has undergone various shifts and turns in the hands of different writers. However the crux of this can be summarized as follows, it outlines communities' local networks and social movements as agencies of civil society, replenishing the truncated modernist culture of political system. It involves a thorough critique of modern state and its institutional matrix. It advocates recognition of true needs of the people by the system. It is a culturally grounded critique of evolution of political system in India.

b. There is a second one broadly **Neo-Marxist** in its theoretical thrust. It attempted to conceptualize political processes with the use of concepts such as: civil society, political society and democracy. It equated civil society with bourgeoisfication of society in terms of restricting the use of civil society to associations and institutions based on modern principles and norms. However, there is a realm of public activity that does not conform to modern principles of public life and stand in a pedagogic relation to modern elite, i.e., sphere of subaltern activity reflecting its culture. The former is called civil society while the latter is political society; civil society is set itself against democracy while the latter is a site of democracy in a post-colonial system. It stems from subaltern school.

c. Third stream privileges **Liberal egalitarian values** in imagining normative goals of civil society. It projects identities as enemies of civil society.

Upholding constitutional values even in civil society, violating its voluntary nature is central pull of this argument which can be called liberal.

The three positions can be mentioned as Critical modernist, Neo-Marxist and Liberal with gravity pulling towards social movements, subaltern politics and constitutional values respectively. The idea of civil society invoked in each case varies, not merely because of the agency that each stream emphasizes on, but also because of the distribution of the normative weight differently in each of the cases. The first and the second invocations of civil society emphasizes on the power of the modern sector which needs dissection. They would like to articulate the resource of non-modern cultures to articulate a critique of power of the modern_system. They emphasize on unalienated nature of non-modern cultures. It has to be sustained because the major form of violence and domination takes place through modern forms. Civil society is equated with the agencies and processes that attempt to sustain unalienated character of non-modern institutions. It can be sustained through the emphasis on local participation of the people directly in which their epistemic frameworks also gets involved in the processes of transformation.

Liberal framework emphasizes on the role of the state in altering the value framework of the people. It treats that the values of the people are backward and hierarchical. It needs transformation by the active agency of the state. State should transform the practices of the people by gradually altering the values of the people through its policy in various fields. This could be understood as educatory role of the state not only through schools, but also in educating citizens in to the bourgeoisie politics.

Alternative ideas of civil society in Indian context

In the following a detailed analysis of the some of the treatments of civil society would be discussed in order to unravel them and arrive at a better conception of civil society that will address concerns arising out of specificities of Indian situation and yet remain committed to ideals of liberal freedom. In the following, four cases would be specifically discussed.

The central concern of all the four is about the critique of modern culture in different realms. All of them find modernity as one of hegemonic and destroying the culture and ways of life of the people. In includes economy, liberal institutions, scientific knowledge, technology driven media and culture. However their main focus is on political modernity. Their faith in the emancipatory potential of the modernity in liberating societies from the clutches of tradition has evaporated with the emergence of different social movements like presents movements, ecological movements, movements for peace. This work is also moved by the same concern to articulate a theory of civil society in opposition to dominant versions of it. Dominant versions of civil society are deeply entrenched in modernist impulse, i.e. the constant drive to modernize aspects of society and culture hither to non-modern. This impulse never gets totally fulfilled because there would always remain a space of traditional to be modernized. Civil society has been expressed as an ensemble of institutions and mobilizations to realize the modernizing impulse. This work tries to construct and alternative to such a conception. This has been attempted by the set of thinkers proposed to analyze here. They have brought in the resources of theory of modern social science to argue for a version of civil society that resists modernizing impulse of the dominant conception.

Precisely to articulate a critique of modernity within the traditions of nationalized movement, this work did a long excursus on ideas and concepts that concern a critique of colonial modernity. Tagore has attempted a critique of the nation and a critique of modern civilization by Gandhi; both the ideas offer a conceptual resource that can split wide open colonial modernity from the vantage point of alternative ground prepared by them. Both the critiques uncovered various dimensions of colonial modernity seeping in to public culture of the native society. Both of them did articulate alternative ideas prescriptive in nature to guide the practices of freedom movement and also they may offer avenues to overcome constitutive limits of national movement and make possible an alternative to western nation state. Tagore offered *Swadeshi Samaj* and educational experiment in Santiniketan to transcend the divisions that engulfed colonial and nationalist public spheres and move towards universal humanity. The idea is to overcome divisions imposed by

nationalized politics between Indians and British and between various antagonistic groups within Indian society. Gandhi has proposed alternatives in the concepts of *Swaraj, Satyagraha,* Non-violence and *swadeshi.* These ensemble of ideas and concepts offer an alternative to the state centric political system and proposes guide and alternative route to a good society. It offers a trenchant critique of all modern institutions and suggests preservation and sustenance of integrated form of social life based on *Dharma.* It is a form of life, which constitute capacity for autonomous moral reflection untouched by concealed forms of power of modernity. This integrity of forms of life is key to the idea of alternatives for Gandhi. Thus the resources of a tradition of reflection as available in practices of national movement helped in evolving an alternative to the British rule. Thus theorizing civil society should be able to integrate resources of critique.

The cases of theorizing civil society in Indian context considered for analysis have one common characteristic: their critique of modernity. The specific characterization of modernity and alternatives proposed to it varies on the basis of one's vantage point and theoretical and analytical ground that one occupies. The overarching frame of theory and the specific molding of it to articulate different analytical and normative issues determine construction of specific version of civil society.

Uberoi articulates alternative to western conceptions of civil society. This had originated "with the separation of the state and the church, state and civil society and state and economy. It had emerged after the collapse of embodied economy".[1] The distinct space for individual action emerged. This space caters to the need of the individual for self-exploration and self-realization. The cooperation among groups of individuals for meeting their personal, social and psychological needs led to the emergence of civil society in the west. Uberoi articulates an alternative to it because it could be well argued that in Non-western civilizations, the idea of autonomous individual

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[1] Giri Anant Kumar, "Civil society and the Calling of Self development", Unpublished paper presented at annual meetings of the German sociological association. Uberoi J.P.S, "On Civil society" in Jayaram N. (ed). *On Civil society: issues and Perspectives*, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 2005 Chattarjee Partha, *The Politics of the Governed*.

has not existed. As a result, civil society consequent upon private individual action is a practical impossibility. Uberoi alters the gravity of civil society towards a different direction. He articulates a Gandhian view of civil society as *swaraj* in the sense of "Its national autonomy, self expression in political economy, customs and morality". [2]

The dynamism of civil society for him, "inspired in the modern world by a new religion, secularism or pluralism, civil society alone has the inherent power to find a people's principle of history and so to change the common usage, the custom of the country as well as itself, as in the Gandhian view of the self rule and self reform, the one being the condition of the other". [3]

He further observes that, "Civil society is truly the locus of God realization or self-realization as well as of the common usage or custom".[4]

Here Uberoi adopts Gandhian view. There are many kinds of articulation of Gandhi are available. This one is a specific sociological rendering of civil society imbued with Gandhian spirit. It is in the locus of civil society a true change takes place. True change is in the sense of change unaffected by processes of modern economy and polity and a change that take place in the spirit of genuine dialogue or self-rule and self reform in the Gandhian sense. Self-reform or purification of self from us stings is essential for the self rule. An impure self cannot rule itself. Change in the civil society should take place in the autonomous processes of society without being influenced by the state led processes of modernization and development. It goes through a process of self-rule and self-reforms. In this spirit, "the struggle of civil society in India during the modern period runs parallel to the rise and recognition of the vernaculars and vernacularism everywhere in language, labour and culture; and it is a story of religion and politics proceeding from Kabir to Mahatma Gandhi. Its political culmination, if we may call it that is

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[2] Uberoi, J.P.S, On Civil Society, P.77
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*

the movement for the linguistic reorganization of the states of the union after 1950." [5]

Thus civil society for Uberoi consists in struggle for the vernacular forms of life to assert itself and gain recognition against the modern forms of life. Therefore Uberoi interprets Gandhi to conceptually invent creative activity within the vernaculars as consisting of civil society. Gandhi spearheaded the movement in civil society outside the logic of power of the state. "Even in his civil disobedience he was the supreme witness to the causes of pluralism and social reform, Hindu-Muslim unity, the removal of untouchability and of *swadeshi* (home grown) as the love of one's neighbor and of his or her labour, putting the truth of God and civil society above the state and the transfer of power". [6]

Thus, for Uberoi, autonomy of civil society in all the spheres of life: in labour, culture, society and morals. Gandhian activism stood for him the sphere of civil society which includes issues like Hindu-Muslim unity, removal of untouchability and of *swadeshi*. The logic of civil society for Uberoi does not consist in modernization as a forced transformation of life for the ends alien to it or it is not even transformation through state directed action. For him, civil society implies transformation within the social field with an autonomous logic of its own. It is the logic of dialogue and through which self transformation takes place in self and talks to the other in a genuine dialogue which leads to mutual transformation and emergence of the new. The site of this process of happening is what he calls vernacular democracy. Thus he argues for the recovery of vernacular life and calls it vernacular democracy. Civil society does not cover modern rationalist associations, but it includes only vernacular life.

Uberoi's argument's strength lies in imaginatively interpreting Gandhian alternative in the context of sociology of tradition. It is not a philosophical reading, but a sociological adaptation of Gandhian alternative. It gives a broad historical stroke in understanding historical process in the long-

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[5] *Ibid* P.77-78
[6] *Ibid* .78

term context. It offered a definitive critique of dominant modernity pervading sociology and suggests alternate kinds of modernity emerging from within. However, this theorization is deficient in two respects. It did not offer the details of the life of vernacular democracy, the life world that is rooted in and what sorts of changes that are taking place within the provincial life. It does not conceptually extricate what are its contours. Civil society is not understood as bourgeoisie society but as a vernacular democracy and its specific contours. Secondly the dynamic change within vernacular society has been taking place which is described as God realization. It is quite abstract and does not clearly show mechanism or propelling factors of change. It is symbolically indicated that mechanism of change is not the state guided modernization, but as self transformation taking place within the civil society. The mechanism of change has been described in the west as deliberation etc., but in local contexts, it has been described as a self realization, self transformation and self-transcendence. This has not been in the classical sociological parlance and hence difficult to make sense of.[7]

Giri also carved out a conception of civil society with similar concerns to Uberoi. Giri outlines Indians modernities which have a role in creating spaces of public interaction that are similar to space of civil society in the west. "Indian modernities have emerged out of processes of criticism, creativity and struggles through history as in the revolt of Buddha, the rise of Upanishadic spirituality, Bhakti movements in Medieval India, movement for a new renaissance in 19th century and the multi-dimensional, anti-colonial and post-colonial struggles for freedom".[8] He further illustrates that, "Tryst with modernity's in India has involved a transformative dialogue between reason and tradition, tradition and modernity and rationality and spirituality which has shaped their paths, contents and visions".[9] In the process of dialogue there it has been created "public spaces of coming together dialogues and public deliberations which bear parallels to what we speak of civil society".[10]

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[7] Giri Anant Kumar.
[8] *Ibid* .P. 380
[9] *Ibid*.
[10] *Ibid*.

Thus for Giri the spaces of dialogue and deliberation are termed as civil society. These spaces are not specifically product of modern processes of limiting state action from intervening in individual affairs. It does not privilege epistemology as in the case of the west. "It is a project of ontological epistemology of participation going beyond the modernistic privileging of epistemology and dualism between ontology and epistemology".[11] Civil society involves total transformation, while the west privileged transformation based on reason and knowledge. In India dialogues in civil society involved transformations in tradition and modernity, rationality and spirituality. It did not privilege anyone in the two entities, but transformed both.

I suggest that the field of civil society consists of "an autonomous space, interpenetrated by overlapping and interpenetrative circles of society, religion, state, market, social movements/voluntary organizations and self".[12] It is multi dimensional in nature. Civil society is also a set of activities inspired "by love, labour, language, rules/laws".[13]

Love implies loving self sacrifice of leaders for the sake of others. It is a value which can be posited in contrast to all pervading masculinity in the culture of politics of modernity. Colonial and post-colonial politics are premised on an image of activist totally immersed in aggression towards others. Love of self-sacrificing nature is being practiced by Gandhi and several other leaders in post-colonial contexts. It is different from martyrdom glorified in nationalist movements all over the world. Martyrdom in those contexts is produced out of collective delusions, but not a product of concrete love born out of moral strength, but it is born out of being slave to mass Euphoria created for selfish purposes.

Civil society is constituted by struggles for invention of new public languages in poetry, politics and media. Bhakti movement upturned the sway of classical languages over the people. Similarly the demand for linguistic reorganization of states is simultaneously a demand for revival of languages.

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[11] *Ibid* P.381.
[12] *Ibid*.
[13] *Ibid*. P.384.

New social movements invented new public languages which undermined the sway of modernist language.

Labour is always an important value for civil society. The public discussion that one comes across over the dignity of labour itself is a symptom of conception of manual labour as low while mental labour is honorable. From Hegel to Marx, labour is the source of creativity and its organization by the economy give raise to dreadful consequences, otherwise a pleasant activity. Gandhi gave primacy to manual labour in the curriculum and also in one's personal life which gives one a sense of worthiness. Labour. 'productive' or 'unproductive', constitute an important dimension of the civil society. The relationships between labour, reward and respect or denial of it constitute the stuff of many civil society struggles. Laws and rules shape and structure the civil society institutions and its processes.

Thus civil society is multi-dimensional and multi-value site of activities. It has developed a specific character in India because of the specificity of route it has taken in the sense of trajectory of Indian modernity. They transcend the binaries of faith *vs* reason, traditions *vs* modernity, rationality *vs* spirituality etc. They resist the logic of the state imposed modernity.

Giri's conception adds a dimension to Uberoi in terms of values underpinning civil society, and its ability to transcend binaries of western knowledge. It offers an innovative understanding of social movements, religious movements etc. The logic of transformation remains open ended. The purpose of associations and institutions of civil society, as it has been described, is not a statist development. But however alternatives are open ended. Even some thinkers see virtue out of such an open ended nature of goals of civil society. But the logic should proceed to perhaps lay out vision/visions for civil society drawing from some streams of thinking with in the political philosophy.

Partha Chatterjee's[14] articulation of civil society in Indian context is informed by latest developments in post-colonial theory. It is quite influential and well debated. His articulation of civil society is bound with in a specific construal of Marxian theory. He uses Gramscian idea of hegemony and passive revolution along with Foucault's idea of governmentality to understand transformations in culture and politics in post-colonial democracies, particularly India. He understands nationalist movement as a failure to achieve hegemony among social classes in the process of passive revolution. Nationalism as an ideology could not be hegemonic among the social classes like peasants, Dalits, women and adivasis. The discourse of nationalism could not encompass the worldview of subalterns. There is a schism between the elite worldview and subaltern worldview. Nationalism shared with colonialism according to Partha Chatterjee, the epistemic framework of enlightenment in which Europe is described as agent of rationality, progress; civilization etc. Nationalism did not contest the enlightenment framework. It also visualized its future in the form of carving out a space for national power for itself and establishing a European style of nation state for itself. Nationalism as an ideology gradually took root in various fields including art, literature, sports, domestic life etc. Nationalist ideology has evolved a structure of thought to justify itself. It invented binaries in the structure of thought. For instance, binary of inner/outer was invented to justify the continuation of enlightenment principles in the outer world of state craft, science, technology and progress. The inner is the domain of private, culture and emotion. This division implicit in nationalist thought does not challenge the framework of enlightenment and carves it out to accommodate the 'irrational' within the framework of nationalism. This also parallels another split within nationalist consciousness between elite desire for modernization and subaltern's inability to fashion themselves according to the requirements of the national modern. The subalterns are viewed always as inadequately modern or a failure to fashion themselves as modern. Thus subalterns are always seen not as fit subjects of modernization. This also

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[14] Chatterjee Partha, *Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Post Colonial Histories*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994. *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World*, London, Zed Books, 1993.

parallels another conceptual division central to post-colonial democracy. Elite desire for modernization is spatially represented in civil society, while the subaltern inability to conform to the principles of modernization is constitutive of activities of political society. Thus civil society stands for project of modernization while political society stands in opposition to state led modernization. Civil society stands for modernization while political society stands for democracy. There is a contradiction between modernity and democracy.

Further Chatterjee argues "I find it useful to retain the term civil society for those characteristic institutions of modern associational life originating in western societies that are based on equality, autonomy, freedom to entry and exist, contract, deliberative procedures of decision making, recognized rights and duties of members and such other principles".[15]

Partha Chatterjee would like to restrict the term civil society to associations based on modern principles. This definition, he found it useful because it helps one to see the desire of the elite for modernization. The demand to reproduce original model of western modernity (civil society) in non-western societies continues to energize evolving forms of civil social institutions in modern India.

The state in India in colonial and post-colonial contexts has been able to reach large segments of the people through its policy, which almost includes its entire population, while the domain of civil social institutions described it as one of still restricted to small population. "The hiatus is extremely significant because it is the mark of non-western modernity as an always incomplete project of modernization and of the role of enlightened elite engaged in a pedagogical mission in relation to the rest of society".[16] There is a hiatus between the elite space of expanding modernization and the rest of the society ever failing to catch-up with the elite driven modernizations.

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[15] Chatterjee Partha, "Two Poets and Death," in *Lineages of Political Society, Studies in Post Colonial Democracy*, New Delhi, Permanent Black, 2011. P.83.
[16] Chatterjee Partha, "Beyond the Nation? Or Within?," *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol-32.No½ Jan. 4-11,1997. P.31.

Here, Chatterjee invents the idea of political society to capture the activities of a sphere which does not exactly conform to the modern principles.

State mediates with entire population through the instrument of policy. Population consists not of national citizens' constitution by civil society. Population is not a normative category in the sense that they are not national citizens'; it is an empirical and descriptive category. The mediation between the population and the state take place on the site of a new political society within the nationalist movement and this political mobilization took place via organizations like Indian National Congress. Here, the practices and methods of mobilization in political society are not always consistent with the principles of association in civil society.

Chatterjee explains the relation between the state and political society as follows, "The major instrumental form in the post-colonial period is that of the developmental state which seeks to relate to different sections of the population through the governmental function of welfare, correspondingly if we have to give a name to the major form of mobilization by which political society (parties, movements non-party political formations) tries to channelize and order popular demands on the developmental state. We should call it democracy".[17]

The idea of political society raises several conceptual problems for the idea of modern state. The issues that political society raises are most of the times do not meet the standards of legality or violate the bourgeoisie legality of property rights. This is a kind of challenge to modern state yet it cannot stop endorsing the moral force of the claims of the population constituting political society. Secondly, the populations constituting political society are not fully modern and hence not the fit subjects of sovereign nation-state. They are not citizens because they are not subjects of normativity of bourgeoisie culture. State does not recognize them as rights bearing subjects, but only as objects of policy, as the governmental function is to dispense welfare. This is an anomaly in the consistency of the idea of state. Thus the idea of political society covers wide variety of activities of subjects, who are not yet citizens of the sovereign

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[17] *Ibid*, P.32.

nation state, yet make claims on the state. According to Chatterjee, state has been challenged from this space and it brings new meanings to the idea and practice of democracy.

Sanjeeb Mukharjee passionately argues for an alternative to Partha Chatterjee's classification of public life as civil society/political society. He strongly differs with Chatterjee for inventing the idea of political society to understand non-bourgeoisie modes of political action.[18]. Argument goes as follows,

(1) Idea of civil society has been viewed largely as a bourgeoisie category. It consists of autonomous individuals. It is a space of autonomy from the state and a discursive space characterized by reason, restraint, non-violence and politeness. This is a classic bourgeoisie notion of civil society. Its application is limited and cannot be expected to cover non- bourgeoisie conditions. In India there has been a long existing civilizational unity whose main characteristic is Dharma, which is an equivalent of natural law or Reason. This is for him, not to argue for going back to the past, but to envision futures that are in continuation with the past. The civilizational resources should not be discontinued by destroying tradition and taking a modernist path.

(2) For Chatterjee, political society articulates itself in the language of community. People come together and make claims as a community on the state and not as right bearing citizens. Here political society is conceived as a space outside the bourgeoisie legality and rights. Sanjeeb criticizes this. It has been orthodoxy in the academia that communities would disappear in course of modernity. However, communities continued to survive and took new forms. Liberal constitution and democracy altered communities. Without the idea of rights, communities would be extremely oppressive but the idea of rights and democracy made communities voluntary and can be claimed as civil society especially among subaltern communities.

(3) Bourgeoisie notions of law have limited potential. As peoples' struggles have been expanding to include the claims of the new struggles the

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[18] Mukherjee Sanjeeb, "Civil society in the East and the Prospects of Political Society," *Economic and Political Weekly*, Jan.30, 2010, vol – XLV, No – 5, pp.57-63

new notions of right and justice has to be formulated. These new notions of rights and justice should encapsulate notions of people not as mere objects of government policy, but as subjects of claims of rights and justice.

Thinking through Alternatives

Civil society should encompass values of nationalist leaders. However, Chatterjee's vision limited itself to a negative critique of bourgeoisie civility. It did not articulate itself in terms of a new alternative future. Any philosophy ought to include a vision of better future and hope. Chatterjee does not offer one. One has to look for such a vision in the values and praxis of our nationalist leaders.[19] Sanjeeb made a very convincing critique of Chatterjee with analytical focus on extension of the idea of civil society to non-bourgeoisie conditions, extension of the conception of legality to include the claims of recent struggles for rights and justice, specificity of Indian civilization and civil society in subaltern communities. All four themes mentioned here have emerged out of similar concerns like the present work. He continues and interprets the analytical issues central to Chatterjee's work and gives them a different slant. The extension of idea of civil society to non-western conditions in a different form is relevant to discussion on the use of the term civil society. However, what exactly should be the normativity of non-western conception of civil society is a perennial question. It should include only voluntary associations as in the case of the west, within the associational networks of civil society. Will it include non voluntary associations like the one based on caste, religion, ethnicity etc.? What sort of associations should constitute civil society? This takes Chatterjee's question into a different plane. Chatterjee is concerned with the question to make a distinction between associational practices of modern voluntary kind and mobilizations of people to make claims which are not individualistic in nature. His attempts are to look at non-bourgeoisie forms of public action as criticizing bourgeoisie democracy and forms of modern state. Sanjeeb has taken the question in a different direction. He likes to consider various groupings and communities which are continuation from the past as part of civil society. For instance, caste associations rooted in a specific geographical area is an example of this. They are part of civil society because they serve the function of mobilizing a certain castes on specific issues. These associations are not

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[19] *Ibid.*

voluntary association of western kind, but groups with hereditary functions and playing a key mobilizational role in the local polity. Hence, for Sanjeeb, the concern is to include as many organizations as possible which may not be of voluntary kind, but yet serving the cause of better communicating the local to the trans-local, and organizing the local. It does not merely serve a sociological function of integration; recognition of associations whose membership is not voluntary, and as a part of civil society it has a different normative role. It is connected to sustaining civilizational order by accommodating non-bourgeoisie organizations in the idea of civil society. Otherwise, these associations are consigned to theoretical negligence because they do not have pre-requisites to produce civility of a bourgeoisie kind. These non-bourgeoisie organizations constitute another kind of civility. The texture of non-bourgeoisie civility is seen as a source of non instrumental human behavior. It is a virtue because it sustains non-instrumental human behavior, which is a character of a civilization. This non-instrumentality of social relationships produces a kind of civil behavior. This acts as a critique of a moral order being brought into existence by modernity. By inclusion of non-bourgeoisie organizations within the civil society, it serves many theoretical as well as practical functions. It sustains continuity with the civilizational order in existence as these associations constitute the organizational aspects of a civilization. They also constitute and carry forward values central to such a civilizational order. These values determine the significant aspects of culture. Once these values are under threat, culture loses its autonomy and self identity. Thus the value framework of India as a civilizational order, their potential to be able to offer a critique of domination, the characterization of specificity of India as a civilizational order and the extension of the idea of civil society to include the non-bourgeoisie associational realm are not automatically related. One needs to state and examine the efficacy of their proposed consequences, though the ideas do not have a structure of utilitarian affectivity. The normative values constituting Indian framework and their incorporation in to the ideas of political system yield variety of theoretical possibilities. However one specific construal of such incorporation is quite influential pervading in disguised form has quite contrasting theoretical perspectives.[20] The incorporation of such values into framework of theory of politics and their practical relevance is key to the theory of civil society as well. The availability of values as a

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[20] See Kothari, Rajni, *Politics in India*, Hyderabad, Orient Blackswan, 2009.

guide to moral critique of domination or a moral social order is a very significant issue. However the structure of theory in which they assume relevance and intelligibility is crucial to the idea of civil society in Indian context.

The question of evaluation of liberal order's potential in transforming the conditions of the subalterns has variety of responses. Marxists had been critical of liberal democratic order. Partha Chatterjee and Sanjeeb draw from Marxist theoretical tradition. They had been critical of liberal democratic order. However, the evaluative concepts of liberal democratic order differ. For Chatterjee, there is a perfect match between liberal order, bourgeoisie legality and civil society. He saw bourgeoisie legal norms constituting civil society would structurally aid the perpetration of order based on private property. The idea of rights can be suitably applied only to citizens because they can only 'responsibly' exercise rights guaranteed to them. Thus, he sees a fit within liberal order while the resistance unfolds new paths whose directions in the non-west have not yet been charted. These new paths hold the key to the possible futures of democracy alternative to liberal order. Hence the idea of rights and bourgeoisie legality are not the possible sources of liberation for the subaltern in the non-west.

But, Sanjeeb witnesses a whole problem in it. He saw new renaissance taking place in subaltern communities and their struggles for rights, dignity and self respect. Some of the fruits of these struggles have been made in to legislations within the bourgeoisie democratic order, like right to food, right to information etc. He argues that these new entitlements should be viewed as such, but not as doles by a patronizing government. These new entitlements should be conceptualized as rights and issues of justice, he suggests. Such a conceptualization restructures the civil society as a domain of new rights thereby extending the scope of civil society. This leads to a new conceptualization of civil society as extended sphere and peoples' struggles are firmly rooted within civil society, democratic order and alternative notion of legality. He achieves this with surprising simplicity. Yet there is a lot of theoretic ground to be covered to reach such a neat revision, though he hints at possible trajectories which he had not subjected to critical discussion.

The above discussion brings out sharply one contradiction engulfing at the heart of post-colonial democracy: the contradiction between citizens and population.

The ideological constellation of liberal order projects a set of population as uncultivated citizens. Citizens share a culture of liberal order. They are participating as members of the political community. There are others, who are not guaranteed with citizenship rights. They are excluded from the participation in political community. They are excluded because they are not educated into rituals and ethics of citizenship. The ethics of citizenship is being shaped by the cultural standards of hegemonic social class. In Indian contexts, only upper caste educated male is seen as possessing the attributes of citizenship. Women cannot be effective participants in the culture of political community. They do not have pre-requisites or attitude necessary for citizenship. The cultural standards of citizenship are constituted by discourses of nationalism. The discourse of nationalism from time to time deconstitutes and reconstitutes the normative standard of citizenship. Here, these arguments put forwards the necessity to disenfranchise other social classes who cannot meet those cultural standards. In Indian contexts subalterns have always been described as not fit for being modern as they do not have necessary pre-requisites. Hence, they need to be educated and trained to be citizens. This gap acts as a main hurdle for full participation of individual from non-citizen sections. This gap Chatterjee would see as a question of power or hegemony. He views that the gap should be contested and criticized in theory and practice. This gap speaks of certain kind of constitution of organizational aspects of nation-state that nationalist leaders of freedom movement have questioned. They did not see the nation as an organization of homogenous individuals into nation-state. They did not see breaking up of age old ties and emergence of modern nation-state as an inevitable course for all nationalist movements. Tagore and Gandhi saw -at the heart of constitution of nation- a fundamental violence in terms of utilitarian ethics. Nation-state transforms life worlds into a kind of institutions pursuing utilitarian goals in terms of quantitative expansion of material values. Both Tagore and Gandhi theoretically and practically resisted emergence of such a form of life based on utilitarian values. Gandhi articulated an alternative form of civil community which would stall the process of instrumentalization of human relations. He visualized alternative ethics based on principle of *Swaraj, Satyagraha* and non-violence. These are not merely utopian critiques of colonial forms of governance. They can actually constitute a basis for alternative forms of social and political organization. The gap between the citizens and subjects and the failure of institutions of modern nation state can actually be

argued that there is a fundamental flaw in the institutional organization of modern nation-state. The gap between the citizens and subjects so theorized emerges from privileging a certain ideological constellation of nation-state. The same ideological constellation of nation has failed to disaggregate itself and take root in peoples' institutions and thereby transforming them. Thus the key problem of earlier theorization in terms of a gap between modern sphere of nation-state and the vast non-modern hinterland needs to be redescribed. Such a redescription becomes necessary in the context of limits imposed by the theoretical structure of earlier theorization of civil society.

The questions mentioned earlier would assume totally different color if the gravity of the proposed idea is altered towards the idea of participation. The participatory conception of civil society would alter the weight assigned to different ideas within the overall structure of the theory. It is proposed here that the idea of participation at various levels would address the question of gap between nation-state and vast hinterland of non-modern sphere. The idea of participation would ensure variety of life forms to participate at various levels of polity, whereby they can contribute to the overall life of the country on their own terms. They can participate from within their own epistemic perspectives. Thus the questions for such an enquire are of four types: the value framework of India as a civilizational order, its potential to be able to offer a critique of domination, the characterization of India as a civilizational order and the idea of civil society to include non-bourgeoisie associational realm.

If the gravity of theory is geared towards the idea of participation in village panchayats, caste associations, and voluntary organizations, then the question of transformation of non-modern sphere can be resolved in a better manner. The hegemonic idea has been to modernize the non-modern sphere. The modern has already been accepted as hegemonic in whose mould the non-modern has to be transformed. It leads to a kind of dominant-dominated relationship. The voluntary nature of civil society in a conceptual sense would take precedence over the non-voluntary and it is assumed that all non-voluntary groupings be transformed to voluntary ones. This is quite a daunting task and unethical as well. But, if the gravity is geared towards participation at multiple levels, the participatory conception of civil society would make possible the transformation of the 'non-modern` in a dialogic

mode. This idea of participation should be open-ended in terms of variety of epistemic stance of the participating subjects and the possible imagined futures. It depends partly on the conception of participation that one takes to. Thus the idea of participatory conception of civil society would be able to offer a better normative ideal for the societies to pursue than a mere negative critique of hegemony would do. It is an important task to delineate elements of such a participatory conception of civil society. Before going to do so, the following issues will be elaborated in leading to participatory conception of civil society. Firstly, the failure of modern nation-state to actually institutionalize itself in the soil stems from the fact that it normatively imagines an empty social space. In other words, the social side of liberalism is empty or it assumes social atomism. This has given rise to a vacuum between modern liberal state and peoples' traditions. Secondly, drawing from the ideas of nationalist leaders, the ingredients available in the thought as mentioned in the previous chapters would be delineated. The ingredients for making a participatory conception of civil society will be made available by translating the ideas available in nationalist movement into modern social science language. Thirdly, some issues arising out of sociology of voluntary associations in chalking out a participatory conception of civil society will be discussed. This discussion leads one towards thinking about participatory conception of civil society by making clear the necessary conditions for such a theorizing effort and necessary elements that should essentially constitute a participatory conception of civil society.

Accounting for alternative version of civil society

Crisis of nation-state?

There has been a schism between value system of traditional society and the modern institutional polity. It has been hoped that the reconciliation between the two would be achievable by the creative activity of politics.

According to Rajni Kothari, "In India, the legacy of a long tradition, the integrity of an historical culture and the great solidarities that were built through religious and social movements that were characteristically Indian had for long acted as buffer against an inherently fissiparous system. The dilemmas facing the leadership

arise from the fact that so long as the changes that erode the traditional bases of society are not channeled into a new pattern of institutional relationships, sustained by a new structure of opportunities and legitimized through a new set of universals, problems of political development turn in to problems of political survival".[21] Traditional bases of political authority are getting eroded. New types of integration of social roles are to be achieved by the political leadership. But the hope did not realize.

The antecedent values that Kothari lists in his work are: Hinduism, the caste system, political society, local solidarity, code of ethics and the role of elite, and movements of dissent etc. These are the values that shape the social stuff of modern polity. Kothari explains "it (Dharma) is the way in which one is expected to behave in different situations towards one's kin and fellow man, the old and the young, husband and wife, the poor, the aged, the infirm, the priest, the warrior, the merchants, the landowner, the scavenger, the farmer, the servant, religion, God and one's own soul".[22]

The antecedents have to be creatively integrated into his later work. He delineates all pervasive crises in all aspects of national life. The crisis emanates from the failure of institutions of political modernity to channelize the aspiration of masses into state structures. It is a crisis of state and it's in situations, political parties, NGO's and voluntary associations. They failed because modern institutions have a tendency to centralize, homogenize and bureaucratize the socio-political processes. They operate with a technocratic logic of instrumentalization of achieving political objectives. True participation has not been ensured. Instead political goals are achieved through the power of money, muscle and expertise. Thus political modernity failed due to the failure of communicative capacities of modern institutions to channelize organic expression of aspirations of the masses. Thus the crisis of nation-state has occurred due to its inability to translate values of Indian society into the framework of nation-state. Again, this problematic can be argued differently. Drawing from Gandhi, the institutional organization of nation-state is premised on fundamental violence. Because it destroys civilizational connections between humans spiritually imagined as specific roles and transform them into mere objects for modern mechanism of power. They are programmed to behave in a specific way thereby

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[21] *Ibid*, P.3.
[22] *Ibid*, P.27.

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transforming the ontology of their existence into rationalistic mode. Hence, reinfusing the public life with organic expression of the people is the necessary task to bring in a fit between people's traditions and governing institutions. This can be achieved only by decentralized participation of the people at various sites like social movements, voluntary organizations and the Panchayats by which they bring in their own sense of politics. The crucial task of civil society is to reinfuse the political system with organic aspirations of local communities and institutions. Representative democracy instituted in India is oriented towards the centralizing politics in gearing all energies in electing members of legislative assemblies and Lok Sabha. Thus the process of electoral democracy itself is alienating, which needs to be rethought.

Inheriting the Ideas of Nationalist Era

As it has been discussed, Tagore and Gandhi offers a deep critique of alienating tendencies of onslaught of the modernity. They recognized impact of violence of modernity in terms of science's hold over culture, and destroying traditional ways of life. During modern times, nation is the predominant form of political organization of society. Tagore and Gandhi saw how violence is fast becoming constitutive condition of modernity. They proposed alternatives which would be helpful in reinfusing the peoples' organic expression into public life. They had different conceptions and its translation into social scientific language does not yield rich. However they are grown out of immersion in wealth of practical experience.

Tagore suggests two alternative experiments which can be interpreted as proto civil societies:[23] Sriniketan and Shantiniketan. The first one is concerning rural reconstruction in village which aims at empowering villagers from within their own perspectives. Secondly Shantiniketan is an alternative experiment in education to make cosmopolitan citizens of the world devoid of narrow identities of nation, caste, ethnicity etc. These experiments are alternatives to the emerging forms of mechanical governance of colonialism. The underlying ideal in both these forms of alternatives

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[23] These experiments in 19th century language are known as Utopias. However, Revisionist political theory resurrects these ideas to read alternatives to modernist state systems. Ideas in colonial countries are not even recognized in the official canons of political thought. However, it is time to reread them.

experiments is to make citizens realizing their potential. The potential to be realized is to be tapped and nurtured in the capacities of the human to be joyful or *ananda*. The capacity to be joyful comes from the possibility to be creative in contrast to the mechanical imitation of the state or the nation. This realization ought to take place from within the traditions as it is essential to be rooted in one's tradition which is the source of creativity. The ideal model for Tagore is a dancer. He privileged non-political forms of activity to the political. For him, humanity essentially lies in pursuing non-political activities. Thus for him, civil society consists of spontaneous activities of individuals and institutions promoting such a spontaneity. It includes literature, art etc., without being subjected to the control of the nation-state and transcends all boundaries of the nation. Thus for Tagore civil society consists in the texture of inter personal relations.

For Gandhi, there are set of ideas which constitute key to his possible conception of civil society. For him, the ideal citizen is not the individualist consumerist being of a nation-state seeking power endlessly. For him, the idea of a human is Satyagrahi, the seeker of truth, the self disciplining individual in search of truth. *Swaraj* in the sense of self rule over one self. Self-control involves control over one's own senses in order to reach the truth. Truth lies in treating other humans as human. This is constitutively possible only in a society deeply integrated with thick person to person relationships or a society of Dharma. Gandhi's efforts remained in sustaining such a society. It does not require institution of large scale which would destroy the Dharmic basis of human societies. It requires face to face communities. It emphasizes on the ideal of community life as source of virtues. The key virtue is non-violence understood as non-injury in negative terms, while love is the constituting factor of civil society.

Sociology, Modernity and Civil Society

Sociology is a modernist discipline. It approaches its object as if it is in the process of realizing its destiny towards total modernization. All kinds of group identities would dissolve in course of time and voluntary associations would emerge in their place.

Group identities have been thought of as retrogressive and inimical to progress and freedom. Voluntary associations are considered to be avenues of freedom because they allow individuals to make choice, this is in tune with general assumptions of telos of sociology towards modernization. However, the implications of inclusion of organizations which are not voluntary in nature in civil society have not been studied. Its implications to sustenance of a social order based on tradition also have not been studied. It has always been assumed that societies would inevitably transform from tradition to modernity. However structuralism[24] studies caste from within the perspective of members which is an example of non-voluntary organization, but it has remained a static approach without having analytical space for dynamic change.

There are alternative ways of looking at castes and caste associations which has emerged out of theorizing sociological processes as not necessarily leading to modernization as erasure of all social markers. Sanjeeb Mukharjee gives an example of working of an ingenuous subaltern caste panchayat. He shows how they are organized in representative and deliberative bodies, which could match any modern active civil society.[25] He describes how they are organized at different levels as councils to deliberate on issues concerning the caste as a whole. This is been similar to civil society, Sanjeeb asserts.

Raja Rao gives a fictional account of how a village transforms itself when undergoing an intense phase of Gandhian struggle.[26] During the process, they transcend caste divisions in participating in a Gandhian movement, without totally losing their identity, which would have made them totally strangers. They firmly remain rooted in their caste, yet seeking truth in their own way articulated in the persona of Mahatma Gandhi. It is a struggle between seekers of truth, Moorhty, Ratnamma etc., and the seekers of untruth represented by the character Bhatta, who seeks money and power. This is a typical example of transition of model of village in non-hegemonic manner. This is an example of counter modernity.[27]

Rudolph brings in a nuance of associational life and adds another dimension to it. Voluntary and ascriptive do not exhaust the conceptualization of associational life. The

[24] Dumont, Louis, *Home Hierarchicus,*Chicago,Chicago University Press,1980.
[25] Mukharjee Sanjeeb, as cited above.
[26] Raja Rao, *Kanthapura*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press 1974.
[27] For a philosophical treatment of the novel, see Puri Bindu, *Gandhi and the Moral life*, New Delhi: Mittal Publications.2004.

dichotomy precludes hybrid or constructed forms of association.[28] He introduces a new notion called intentional associations "caste a vehicle for maintenance of a hierarchical society was converted via caste associations into a means for the mere numerous lower castes to mobilize and participate in ways that challenged ritual hierarchy. No one was born into a caste association she/he had to become active within it by an act of choice, including having to shape its social and political goals".[29] Thus caste association is not purely a voluntary association nor an ascriptive association. It is an association of constructed type in the sense of it being imagined into existence by a collective. Its collective imagination is being reshaped most of the times. Thus, it is an intentional association. "The objective conveys that those who participate in, they have chosen their ascriptive identity".[30] He argues that they create collaborative and cooperative convention. They also mediate between individual and social wholes or individuals and the State.

There are varieties of associations. One kind of conception of associations inherently favors voluntary kind. It viewed associations of voluntary kind as agents of modernization as they are based on choice of individuals which would promote freedom and equality among individuals. There is another conception of associations as collectives being together to carry out social reproduction. The collective is formed not on the basis of individual choice. It is a sort of association which has been functioning for years and emerged out of the spontaneous processes of social survival. This conception is invoked by romantics, Marxists and subaltern school. If civil society includes only associations of modernist kind, it would lead to freedom and equality, but its scope would be very limited. On the other hand, if associations are perceived as internally democratic and deliberative, it wouldn't fit into transition narratives. It would only fit into feel good stories of existence of democratic organizations within one's own culture. It doesn't lead to a liberal individualist notion of civil society. It makes a notion of civil society sustaining a kind of collective organization. But it corrects urban centeredness of civil society. It makes possible inclusion of the rural into the vision of the civil society.

Civil Society: Alternative perspectives:

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[28] Rudolph, sussane.H, "Civil society and the Realm of Freedom," *EPW*,May,13,2000.
[29] *Ibid*, P.1767.
[30] *Ibid*.

It has been argued that liberal modern institutions could not succeed in reproducing themselves. The culture of liberal institutions could not shape the habits of the people. They remained aloof from popular beliefs and practices. As a consequence, the communication between popular traditions and liberal institutions has been remained as mechanical. Mediating institutions like political parties and bureaucracy could not successfully translate peoples' aspirations and mobilize them into institutional avenues. But, these Institutions followed other means to bypass peoples' aspirations. Political parties have resorted to money power and muscle power. The process of representation has been centralized in the sense that the candidates for elections are nominated by central party leadership. Decisions of developmental issues are centralized by bureaucracy. The manner of decision making has been handed over to experts with specialized knowledge of each field.[31] Thus, this undermined the legitimacy of liberal democratic institutions. They have become centralized and bureaucratized. This vacuum needs to be filed up. It is important from the point of view of legitimacy of the state as well.

The alternative is republican model of decentralized participation. The participation at local levels on issues concerning the commons by the people can enable strengthening the legitimacy of the state. Participation in local life strengthens bonds of community among the people. Local communal life strengthens civic virtues necessary for leading a good life. It also involves a community a conception because participation in local community life invokes an argument for emphasis on community. It is republican because it involves an argument for participation in the sense of popular participation. Secondly it involves an argument about social movements, voluntary networks caste associations etc., acting as a check against the unilateral actions of the government. These organizations and movements become entrenched in the system to act against the government and at the same time to support the government as well.

Republican theory in the western world has four main features, they are,

(a) Political equality in the sense of equal moral worth of persons with the traditional republican emphasis on the importance of political equality.

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[31] Kothari Rajni, *State Against Democracy : In search of Humane Governance*, Delhi, Ajanta Publication, 1988, P-202

(b) Freedom as non-domination or absence of dependence.

(c) More deliberative form of politics.

(d) For deliberative politics to succeed there must be a sufficient supply of civic virtue.[32]

These four features of republicanism are generally applicable to all the western societies. But each theory carves out specific elements of its theory in a particular mould. The four features mentioned above are applicable to individuated societies. Republicanism can be a viable philosophy even for non-individuated societies. What is being articulated here is a loose use of the term republican to articulate certain needs arising out of the failure of liberal modernist forms. In the west, both republican and communitarian philosophies emerged out of the failure of liberalism to generate collective spirit among the community or liberalism's social atomism.[33] Liberalism destroyed bonds of community and failed to create fresh bonds. Both liberalism and communitarianism aims to address the lacunae in their philosophies. Similarly in Indian context, the failure of modernist state institutions to accommodate peoples' aspirations demands a rethinking of modernist institutions. The alternative idea of civil society proposed here attempts to address these lacunae. It is an idea of civil society based on participation in local communal life. It promotes civic bonds, strengthens social solidarity, and ensures cultural sustenance. There should sufficiently develop their inter-subjective understandings and role definitions to establish a mutually recognized sense of duty which is an addition to liberal understanding, which primarily privileges universal abstract subject. It is also different from subaltern approach which merely privileges resistances and authentic expression of community. To put it in Neo-Aristotelian understanding, some strands of Republicanism emphasizes on the idea of self-rule and individual self-realization as interconnected. Individual realizes himself in connection with others in the process of political by leading a virtuous life. Good life itself is virtuous life. There is no good life outside the life of virtues. Subaltern school talks about resistance or individual action as without a moral end, while republicanism views individual as anchored in particular form of life and self-realization is possible only within that form of life. Thus, human life is

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[32] See Dagger Richard, "Communitarianism and Republicanism" in Gaus, Gerald. F & Kukathas, Chandan, (eds) *Hand Book of Political Theory*, London, Sage Publications.2004.

[33] Kenny Michal," Global civil society: A liberal- Republican Argument," *Review of international studies*, vol 29, Dec-2003.

anchored within a certain form of life. The realization of virtuous life is possible only within that form of life.[34]

The participatory conception of civil society in a Republican mould will be discussed in its different aspects. In this examination, the ideas were drawn from the discussion on critique of nation and modernity by various nationalist leaders.

Participation in local communities

For Gandhi, a society based on *swaraj* is only acceptable form of alternative to modern state. Here people governed their affairs themselves; *swaraj* involved the constantly confirmed consciousness of being in charge of one's destiny, not just liberty, but power. It would be composed of small self-governing village communities. He expected the communities to manage their affairs by themselves. Beyond the relatively self-sufficient villages, "the country would be organized in terms of expanding circles. Each tire of government would enjoy considerable autonomy and a strong sense of community".[35] Thus, the Gandhian vision is based on an idea of participation as being integral part of community. One is part of a community in the process of participating in it. The process of participation involves exercise of self-transcending virtues. That is exercise of virtues in the interest of community, as a whole exercising virtue itself leads to good life. There is no human life pursuing good outside the frame work of morality constituted by community. Community could be modern as well as traditional. For Gandhi, the reference point is traditional community bound together by the norms evolved by the community. However such a community does not remain as a soil for the growth of hatred or unreason, as it is a dynamic community that evolves through a process of dialogue in which one attain self transcendence and becomes one within the community. Republicanism, as a philosophy, emphasizes the process of overcoming selfishness. If civil society is founded on selfish interests, it would lead to conflict of interests and it would automatically break down without reaching a common goal. Hence it is essential for any groups that constitute civil society to attempt and to transcend beyond one's selfish interests, and arrive at common interests. Taking pride in public interests, and willingness to sacrifice for the sake of public interest is the essential component of Republican notion

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[34] Parekh Bhikhu, *Gandhi: A very short introduction*, Newyork, OUP. 2001. P.99.
[35] *Ibid.*

of civil society. Deliberation is an associated idea of participation within the civil societies and political bodies. Deliberation is a process of opinion formation and arriving at decisions through mutual discussion under the formal guidance of standard of reason. The standard of reason demands presence of formal procedures within the deliberate bodies. However, in contrast to this, some theorists propose the idea of patriotic conversation. [36]

"Difficulties with the content of this rules (deliberating) aside, there is also a more general problem. It arises from the fact that the rules in question are said to have their basis in theory, meaning that they are considered detached from any practical context; …. But it is only within practical contexts that persons may skillfully judge what – and what is not - appropriate to a given conversation, and this requires not application of some theory but, if anything, the degree of sensitivity which comes from the successful employment of one's common sense. Now common sense is an interpretive form of judgment which must be distinguished from theoretical reason in that it is incompatible with application of a previously formulated systematic whole to a context".[37]

Patriotic conversation avails such a practical form of judgment. This kind of Patriotic conversation may be the preferred form of organization of the local republics. In deliberative forums, norms instituted are derived from abstract theory.

Gandhian idea of participation assumes unanimity among the members of the village or groups which would be achieved in the process of participating in the common life of the group? But, politics suffer from endemic conflicts. This needs to be transcended by a process of conversation. Gandhi assumed that the conditions itself are so structured in simple life, that there would no scope for bitter conflicts. However patriotic conversation equips better to overcome the limits of unanimously organized village groups.

Participation does not mean merely participation in one's own village communities. It includes participation in a variety of practices like social movements, voluntary organization etc. Each practice is constituted by its own rules. Participation includes participation in all those public movements. The idea of participation is aimed at transcending one's private interests to reach some agreed upon common good.

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[36] Maynor John, "Modern Republican democratic contestation: A Model of Deliberative Democracy" in Honohan Fseult and Jennings Jeremy, *Republicanism in Theory and Practice*. London, Routledge, 2006. PP.125-139.

[37] Blattberg, Charless, "Patriotic, Not Deliberative, Democracy" in Weinstock, M. Danial & Nadeau, Christian (eds). *Republicanism: History, Theory and practice,* London, Frank Cass, 2004, P. 158. Also see, pp..155-174.

Different movements, agencies, and voluntary organizations practice variety of notions of participation. They are not theoretical, but arising out of practical conception of participation. There is an idea of the local participation inspired by the Gandhian ideas. The idea of local participation involves participation of the members of the community in undertaking activities, and taking decisions by themselves without the involvement of the experts like bureaucracy or technicians etc. In the participation of the local community, NGO's are involved as conscientising agents by making people aware of their illusory perceptions, without losing essential connection among them and with the environment. This invokes a sense of moral community which is constituted free of politics of power and this community is seen to be always in contestation with the idea of competitive institutional politics. This kind of participatory politics miss the public dimension of politics. Politics, as a public activity conducted within a shared vision or spectacle. It involves an element of performance in the sense of politics as performance in public within a spectacle. This visual spectacle is available to all for viewing and participation.

There is also another conception of participation being practiced. It is concerning assertion of identities or castes or communities in public. It could be in the form of associations or movements or electoral politics. It involves a public dimension of politics. It involves articulation of public issues in a shared manner; public is one that concerns all. They share a common interest, but the public interest is more than mere aggregation of interests of all. Public assumes larger dimension because it demands sacrifice of narrow egoistic self-interests to public-interests. However, constitution of public interest is also constantly criticized and questioned. Under such circumstances, there appears to be an anarchy or lack of publicness. But, Gandhi has articulated a community that does not theoretically exclude any. Exclusions could be overcome through a constant questioning of one self and one's illusory self-perceptions. This leads to an idea of a community based on shared beliefs and practices, devoted to itself and functioning according to Dharma. It avoids conflict within and achieves harmony with the Gandhian notion of 'extending circles'. Each community is self sufficient in itself and becomes part of a larger community. The normative conception of civil society of a republican kind in Indian context should constitute a communitarian spirit in the local levels. The basic units of self organization at lower level should be self-reliant community. These communities should be represented at higher levels in legally constituted deliberative bodies. After the lower

level of community participation, there should be a new level constituted by deliberative bodies representing various communities, associations and networks. The constituting agencies of civil society could be local communities, associations, caste associations, networks devoted to promotion of certain causes etc.

Organizational aspects of civil society

Civil society includes all associations, social movements, mobilized organizations of castes etc. Mobilized sections of caste only constitute civil society. And caste in itself is not a constituent part of civil society. Mobilized aspects of caste or caste associations can be considered as part of civil society. It includes voluntary as well as non-voluntary associations. As it has been discussed earlier, there are no ascriptive associations in its pure sense. All associations are one of constructed kind. It has been mentioned of intentional associations are constructed and imagined. Caste association is one such example. Though caste is an ascriptive category, the associations formed out of caste are not ascriptive, because members choose the associations. There are also associations devoted to promotion of specific causes: private and public. Private associations are formed to promote specific individual interests - life games, sports, literature etc. There are associations devoted to public purposes like, protection of environment, public cleanliness, healthcare, education etc. Again there are associations devoted to democratization of political and social structure. Some organizations are formed to fight against caste discrimination, to fight for rights of women, adivasis etc. There are specific associations like trade unions, national, local etc. Thus, there is an immense diversity of associational life in civil society. But not all of them are engaged towards political centre. Some are directly engaged with the state in demanding on few issues, or altering legal framework, seeking financial aid etc. Also, there some other associations that are devoted to social transformation. In the process of social transformation, they seek support of the state in pursuing their projects. Some associations are purely religious and undertake activities for promotion of religious, Dharmic and social activities. Mathas and temple trust like, Tirumala Tirupathi Devesthanam and Ramkrishna mission can be mentioned in this category. Thus, civil society in Indian context, there emerges two types of associations. There are associations who are integrated into the state. They are associations constituted by the law, and they address state in resolving their issues. They are structurally integrated

into the state. There are associations purely devoted to social and spiritual transformation. These associations are to be thinly controlled by the state. They should be left to fend for themselves in their own causes which might lead to social cohesion and integration. Thus, India is not primarily a State centric civilization. In India, society existed autonomously from the state. State never tried to integrate autonomous associations fully into the structure of the state. Those associations be continued to survive, away from the influence of the state. There are state centric associations which are in some ways connected to the state. These associations should be legally constituted in such a way that they develop as autonomous organizations within themselves, through creating legal roles. They remain deliberative within themselves because law ensured so. They are also interconnected to all other associations not by law, but by inter subjective understandings. This realm of inter subjective understandings and shared meanings make possible a civil society. Such ideas of inter subjective understandings are provided by culture rooted in social conceptions. Civil society, in its course depends on such social conceptions and also alters such conceptions. Caste associations, depend on caste as a mobilizations mechanism, and in turn, change the functions of the caste. At the same time, creating widely shared inter subjective understandings has to be achieved by civil society. It can be inferred that civil society should promote broader identities than caste, religion etc. Associations of civil society should mediate between society and the state. Such mediation should be constituted by law. Deliberate intermediary institutions channelize social demands, and put them before the state. At the same time they fill up the vacuum that characterized the liberal democratic state. Republican civil society brings in social content into the emptiness of the state. Thus, society is integrated in the state.

Civil society and cultivation of civic virtues

According to Republic conception, for a political system to function effectively, it requires an active and virtuous citizenry. Civil society plays an enormous role in making virtuous citizen. It is a school of citizenship one learns to be proper citizen within the organizational structure of civil society. Civil society ought to promote virtue of a good citizenship. Like, there are personal virtues and political virtues. Personal virtues are like honesty, generosity, courage, reasonableness etc. And, Political virtues are law

abidingness, willingness to listen, and willingness to reason and adjust oneself to tolerance etc.

But, there are traditional virtues in the Gandhian sense of the term. Non-violence, self-restraint, duty boundedness etc., are virtues essential for a community. And, what sort of virtues are to be promoted remains a relevant question. Going by the Gandhi, he was not advocating state-centric civilization. For Gandhi, political virtues necessary for a liberal state are not his preferred virtues. For him, sustaining a civilization centering on right conduct, Dharma is key to lead an autonomous life. It requires virtues of a Satyagrahi, self-discipline, non-violence etc., are some of the virtues necessary for sustaining an ethically grounded civilization. For a meaningful life, it is important to cultivate ethical virtues rooted in the life of a cultural tradition. A civil society need not necessarily be a society of a national scale. It can also be rooted in the contexts of local life. Sustaining local life itself leads to growth of ethical virtues. It imagines an ethical life grounded in tradition. These diverse traditions are interconnected through a legally constituted and sanctioned space of intermediary organizations. Traditional moralities should be sustained by civil society and the law. This is contrary to what has been going on in the name of modernizing function of civil society.

Civil society and epistemic aspects

Civil society within western tradition is firmly rooted in rationalist epistemology. Reason is the critical tool which offers a critique of power. Reason would clear all superstitions and divine based explanations. However, the recent approaches criticize the objectifying role of reason in social life. And argue that the reason brings in instrumental rationality into social life. It brings in an element of control into social life by scientific knowledge. In course of time, the role of scientific reason in controlling human affairs has been realized.

The alternative notion of self, society and transcendent are available in Gandhian thought. It has been made available to academicians by critical commentators like Miri.[38]

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[38] Miri Mrinal, Identity and Moral life: New Delhi OUP,2003.

He proposes that, Gandhi could be interpreted, to argue that there are alternative epistemologies according to which self and other are not connected by domination but via dialogue.

It takes the question to a new field. What is the role of non-rationalist epistemologies in the constitution and sustenance of civil society? It has been argued that, civil society as an institution is premised on reason? It is reason which makes possible the dialogue between the varieties of viewpoints. All those viewpoints ought to subject to the scrutiny of reason. Gandhi offers an alternative by invoking the multi dimensional idea of community making, with an active participation of all the members. Here, it involves the possibility of survival of non-rationalist epistemologies encoded in traditions. There were several attempts to recover community knowledge in the process of participation. Traditional knowledge could not succeed in a Darwinian kind of survival of the fittest race. However initiatives of community survival and participation preserves traditional knowledge laws, also should adopt an approach of legal pluralism than legal monism to incorporate community knowledge into law making.

Civil society and critique of power:

It is an intrinsic part of any civil society to offer a critique of power and inequality. Neither republican approach nor Gandhian approach stresses too much on equality. Republicans emphasize on political equality, while Gandhi points to spiritual equality of all humans. For Gandhi transcendent is the source of critique of inequality and oppression. For him, the pursuit of truth is the medium with which civil society could question inequalities. There are two kinds of civility: traditional and modern. Traditional civility seems to endorse inequalities, while modern civility seems to be destroying inequalities and power. Gandhi upturned that understanding. He criticized the epistemic frameworks that constitute modern inequalities. Modern inequalities are product of scientific understanding of society. By debunking that understanding, he retains the epistemic control of traditional perspectives. It institutes a notion of spiritual equality of all, thereby guaranteeing moral equality without resorting to rationalist epistemology. Hence, he makes possible the critique of inequality within interpersonal contexts by appealing to God

or other kinds of moral authority. Thus, the question of inequality is addressed within the community and inequalities are not questioned in straight forward manner in other contexts as well, but the idea of integrity of community, and identity of the larger community, is what makes critique of inequalities possible.

Thus the following are features of alternative view of civil society argued here.

a. Civil society consists of communities, associations' of networks, social movements etc., which includes both voluntary and non-voluntary associations. These associations should not be of a kind restricting them to immediate self-interest. These associations vary from caste associations to religious associations.

b. These associations and organizations of civil society be legally sanctioned in the sense that their role should be legally tied to formal institutional mechanisms. These associations and movements role should be integrated with institutions, in such a way that, these inputs will translate into policy outputs.

c. These associations are seedbeds of civic virtue. Civic virtues are necessary for good citizenship cultivated in communities and associations. These associations as far as possible are rooted in local traditions. Local traditions, prepare individuals to be civic members of the community, though they do not make one a full citizen.

d. Republican notion of civil society has emphasized on participation at local levels. Participation at local levels ensures the spirit of community, which allows scope for cultivation of virtue. This version does not emphasize on universal political community of citizen making as key to civil society. It emphasizes on diversity of civic relationships at local levels, and making of good citizens in diverse cultures. It asserts that republican version of civil society emphasizes on universal qualities of citizenship. This version emphasizes on diverse roles of individuals as rooted in tradition like mother, village, elder, scientist etc. It places priority on diversity of epistemologies as constituting in civil societies.