
“Self & Other – Conditioning by Hegemony & Political Dicta”: LITERATURE OF TOPIC

Time: 5:30 – 8:45 PM

Date: March 16, 2004

Venue: Jibanananda Sabhaghar, Kolkata

Speakers: Sree Abhijit Roy, Sree Suman Mukherjee & Sree Nabarun Bhattacharya

■ **Self & Other**

This concept refers to the process of self-identification. Knowledge about self is a process, where one finds out the similarities and differences of the self with the other. This identification is important because the acts of a person depend immensely on this understanding and it constitutes a very important part in understanding of the world. Now, there are many sets of factors considered important by ‘self’ to judge the similarities and differences. These sets have been under conditioning by several matters. As the result, sometimes we see the ‘self’ as the ‘Hindu’ and the ‘other’ becomes the ‘Muslim’; sometimes as the ‘Indian’ and the ‘other’ becomes the ‘Pakistani’; sometimes as the ‘Man’ and the ‘other’ becomes the ‘Woman’; sometimes as the ‘Unbiased’ and the ‘other’ becomes the ‘Communist’. This way, the ‘self’, when conditioned collectively, gives birth of a class. Culture transforms over time. So, the sets of factors also change and self-identity also changes over time. Under conditioning, we are provided with different masks to put on our faces to generate ‘self’. Who does provide them?

■ **Hegemony**

Hegemony means a situation when two cultures interact and the economically superior culture dominates the culture of the economically inferior one. If two cultures have a development gap, then their interaction results into hegemony. The economically superior side can possess two identities, - either 1) they are from outside of a country or 2) they are inside an economy where the economically inferior side, residing in the periphery, forgets to see the superior side as the reason of their weakening, where the superior side resides in the center. A culture has its own way of evolution. But, in hegemony, a culture renders some conditioning over the evolution of another culture. The problem is that this conditioning is not carried with an objective that is mutually beneficial. Rather, the economically superior culture conditions the inferior one only for its own benefit. The conditioning of the relation is based up on progress of wealth and comfort of the superior one. The superior one does not feel any need for provision of development of the inferior one to the stage the superior one is in. This, in turn, when provides a good degree of development in technology and communications in the economically inferior culture, the transformation of the economically inferior culture leads to a situation when the material and intellectual property of the inferior one is extracted out by the superior one and the development gap increases for ever.

■ **Political Dicta**

The word ‘Politics’ means some actions to decide and implement the procedures of development of mass along with the actions subsidiary to these actions. The field has no clear limits. Political parties differ on their policies and procedures. Still now, in no traditionally-set-democratic-structure, the stake of the sufferers in mass has been established. Politics in democracy has always been the field where only the traditionally-set-powerful-ones rule. The traditionally-set-powerful-ones are not interested to lose their power and they decorate the mass as per their need to keep the power in their hand. The governments create dicta those keep up what is going on. The set of factors incorporated in a culture by the governments and/or the opposition parties is called a particular political dictum. These dicta appear from the ‘self’ and need of the rulers, not of the sufferers.

For a community, where hegemony is an external factor problematic, the political dicta in a traditionally-set-democratic-structure is an internal factor problematic. When the traditionally-set-democratic-structure becomes a puppet in hand of an external economic power, the factors overlap and they settle after taking a bit time.

■ **Discussion in the Seminar**

1. The ‘relation between globalization and hegemony’ and ‘the political dicta in a conservative outfit’;
2. The base of settlement between the globalization and conservative outfit;
3. The formulation of ‘self’ and ‘other’ by hegemony and political dicta;
4. The techniques of conditioning of a culture by hegemony and political dicta and the role of media;
5. The problematic outlook and culture of the new ‘self’ as a result of conditioned transformation of culture;
6. The steps needed immediately to de-condition the problematic construction of ‘self’.