

The Self, the Savage and Diversity: A Study of Texts

Dr. S. Sridevi

Professor of English and Principal
Chevalier T. Thomas Elizabeth College for Women
Chennai 600011, Tamil Nadu, India
sridevisaral@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper aims at analysing the manner in which the ancient and modern world conceived the civilized and the savage. People have always felt distant from tribal communities and have constructed narratives projecting them as inferior to civilised societies, believing in their own myths that may be meaningless to other societies and building peculiar practices that may seem strange to others like the Indian caste system. The Enlightenment philosophy's negotiation has been one-sided as the people with 'voices' and 'expressions' wrote their versions of stories vehemently denying the existence of the others. Human thought and systems of languages accepted the division of civilised as advanced from uncivilized. Still, humanity moves on including all people under the umbrella of democracy, capitalism, and globalization.

Keywords: The Self, the Savage, Diversity

In human capacity for self-deception to believe emphatically in our goodness, the marginalised societies have been exploited under various schemes. Modern academia, influenced by western universities, has investigated this human project using the newly emerged social science of anthropology, Marxism, and other Enlightenment theories, that gradually led to postmodern thinking, questioning the silence of certain sections of society in mainstream writing. India too has come under this western ideology of egalitarianism and has created policies to include tribes and the marginalised groups into the mainstream. Educational institutions in India are encouraged to practice inclusivity in admitting students from all communities.

It is said that “the first tribe in India appeared from the descendants of African migrants around 65,000 years ago” and the “645 recognized tribes” found in India live across the country: “Bodo from Assam; Khasi and Garo from North East; Santhals from West Bengal; Bhil from Madhya Pradesh; Munda from Jharkhand; Andamanese from the Andamans; Warli from Maharashtra; and Gond from Andhra Pradesh.” The 2023 budget has proposed to recruit more teachers for schools in tribal areas. “Pradhan Mantri PVTG Development Mission” has been proposed to provide housing, road facilities etcetera (Karkun). All countries and all people quite naturally have classified tribals as inferiors and this history of human perception is well-recorded by western scholars.

The western countries classify other countries as lands with “high or low development of the industrial arts,” in the “manufacture of implements and vessels,” in the level of “scientific knowledge,” and the written down “moral principles,” and other methods of organizational methods of society. Ethnographers arrange the order of culture. But it is not “uncommon to find details of admirable moral and social excellence.” Human development’s principle has defined “savagery and civilization” as elements that “are connected as lower and higher stages of one formation” (Tylor).

“Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity,” and “immaturity is the inability to use one’s understanding without guidance from another.” Immaturity is the result of living without courage. “Laziness and cowardice are the reasons why so great a proportion of men, long after nature has released them from alien guidance” remain immature. The mature citizens “establish themselves as their guardians.” Immaturity is the result of easy living. There is “a strange, unexpected pattern in human affairs” which is “paradoxical” in nature. “A greater degree of civil freedom seems advantageous to a people's spiritual freedom; yet the former established impassable boundaries for the latter; conversely, a lesser degree of civil freedom provides enough room for all fully to expand their abilities.” Restricting one’s freedom will make sure that everyone has freedom (Kant).

Thus, once nature has removed the hard shell from this kernel for which she has most fondly cared, namely, the inclination to and vocation for free thinking, the

kernel gradually reacts on a people's mentality (whereby they become increasingly able to act freely), and it finally even influences the principles of government, which finds that it can profit by treating men, who are now more than machines, in accord with their dignity. (Kant)

Was there a historic period in India like the western enlightenment? The period that created acharyas who trained fellow people in disciplining their minds and bodies which created a social structure of worship and magic rituals might be the one which could have been the forerunner of Indian sciences and philosophy. The concept of 'deva' might have emerged at that time when a man disciplined himself from drinking wine and eating flesh. He concentrated on the soul's upliftment and chose an ascetic path.

"An ordinary man, by knowing more than others, is often seen to become the ruler of men," as the people with wisdom apply reason to their daily affairs and overcome all their adversaries. A disciplined person who applies reason to live is like "a disciplined warrior" who "is able to overcome a host of unrestrained savages." One can argue that "reasoning is the philosopher's stone that converts base metals to gold," as "rational souls safeguard reasoning as the greatest treasure. It yields the desired fruits of men like the wish-fulfilling Kalpa tree of paradise does with a thought" (Valmiki in *Yoga Vashista*).

Ancient societies from India and Greece and the eighteenth century European society have consistently recommended reason as an effective tool for mental well-being and living a meaningful and disciplined life or, as Kant said, living with a mature approach to life. Societies by default recommend that people should be reasonable and mature and do not recommend an intense, passionate approach to life. The tribe falls under the category of sensuality and passionate living – an immature approach to life.

A sinner is reborn as a tribal – is the ancient Indian attitude to the primitives. The tribal is condemned as being punished for the previous birth's mistakes. A dead savage hovers like a ghost in cemeteries, it is argued.

As a traveller is afraid of snakes and twice born brahmins dread demonic savages, so consciousness fears for its safety and avoids the company of the senses. Yet

from a distance, unseen consciousness directs the organs of sense to their various duties like the distant sun, from his situation in heaven, directs the daily duties of men on earth....Men's past actions make them born again as rakshasas among savages or as monkeys in forests...Whether a man leaves his body in a holy place or in the house of a low savage, or whether one dies at this moment or many years afterwards, he is released from his bondage to life as soon as he knows the soul and gets rid of his desires. The error of egoism is the cause of his bondage and its eradication through knowledge is the means of his liberation...Living friends can see the departed souls of savages hovering as ghosts over cemeteries... The past actions of men make to be born again as Rákshas among savages, and others as monkeys in forests; while some become as Kinnaras on mountains, and many as lions on mountain tops... (Valmiki in *Yoga Vashista*)

Ancient India has a definition for the quality of rational thinking - it means applying wisdom in practical affairs and living in a moderate manner, just like the ancient Greek thought. Living in a moderate and controlled manner is the way to live well, and liberating one's ego is the right way to lead one towards wisdom. Indian intelligentsia of the past isolated the majority of forest dwellers, people living in the fringes of society as sinners suffering for their past mistakes. India did not embrace all its people in an equal manner, and created different religious rituals and disciplines for selected people who perhaps were ready to give up many pleasures of life. Asceticism created a separate religion that could not be extended to all the people, either because of the difficulties involved in practising the rituals or because it was part of the organisational structure devised for kingdoms of those days. Ascetics were encouraged to study and their contribution to science, arts, medicine, and other subjects were phenomenal. A common religion and rituals, common celebrating styles and common religious systems were never established by one central religious centre. Temples were places of worship that did not allow hundreds of people to enter at the same time, and their architecture permitted only a selected few to pray at a time. Hence, in India, savages, primitives, tribals, people living in faraway places and others were never involved in the ritualistic religious practices of the ascetically systematised social behaviour. It could also be that the tribal communities were economically and culturally self-sufficient that they did not permit other ideologies to enter their

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well-guarded local empires. India did not go through the social processes of one messiah influencing a continent and converting all the people to his teachings and approach to life.

On the contrary, the eighteenth-century Enlightenment philosophy of Europe had been shaped by one religion and its commandments and practices which had one or two divisions but these divisions also followed the mainstream of the philosophy of one religion to which any one could convert to at any time. The philosophy shaped by this monotheistic society too viewed the primitive from other continents as inferior, but they are people from other lands and continents with whom it had negotiations only through Christian missionaries, initially and later through businessmen. Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) had strong views on tribal culture and felt they were innocent and not capable of becoming civilised like Europeans.

It is a great and beautiful spectacle to see man emerge from nothingness through his own efforts, dissipating, by the light of his reason, the darkness in which nature had enveloped him; rising above himself, soaring intellectually to celestial heights, striding like the sun across the vastness of the universe, and, what is grander still and more difficult, retreating back into himself, there to study man and come to know his nature, his duties, and his destiny. (Rousseau 48)

How did men civilise themselves? Did they acquire a civilised state suddenly? Or did they go through processes? When writers described “*savages*”, they were actually describing citizens. Intellectuals are not able to visualise a period during which their ancestors must have lived like “savages”.

The savage was “acquainted” with his body alone and he employed it to “different uses.” There are many questions that come up quite naturally to us: “Had he a sling, would it hurl a stone so great a distance? Had he a ladder, would he climb so nimbly up a tree? Had he a horse, would he run with such swiftness?” (Rousseau 91)

Enlightenment philosophy justified the superiority of the civilised man in its writings. “Savage man and civilised man differ so much at the bottom of their hearts and in their inclinations, that what constitutes the supreme happiness of the one would reduce the other to despair” (Rousseau 137). It analyses the reason for the failure of Christianity to include all the

tribes under its wing of theology, and it couldn't understand why the inferior people could not accept the theology of a superior people.

“Europeans have been toiling to make the savages” to follow the European style of living. Christianity attempted to civilise men from other societies. Though those people accepted Christianity as their religion, they were reluctant “to adopt” European “manners and customs.” Europeans perceived that these savages were unhappy in their surroundings and wondered why they preferred to live in their places. Because they “read in a thousand places that Frenchmen and other Europeans have voluntarily taken refuge” and “spent their whole lives among them, without ever being able to quit so strange a kind of life; and that even very sensible missionaries have been known to regret with tears the calm and innocent days they had spent among those men we so much despise” (Rousseau 147).

Are the savages not enlightened to judge their lives? Is the civilised man only worried about the conveniences of life? Is he worried too much about what people think about him? Does a city man know the pleasure of spending time alone with nature?

Should it be observed that they are not enlightened enough to judge soundly of their condition and ours, I must answer that the valuation of happiness is not so much the business of understanding as of feeling... for our ideas are more remote from that disposition of mind requisite for us to conceive the relish, which the savages find in their way of living, than the ideas of the savages are from those by which they may conceive the relish we find in ours. In fact,...all our labours are confined to two objects...the conveniences of life and the esteem of others. But how shall we be able to imagine that kind of pleasure, which a savage takes in spending his days alone in the heart of a forest, or in fishing, or in blowing into a wretched flute without ever being able to fetch a single note from it, or ever giving himself any trouble to learn how to make a better use of it? (Rousseau 147)

Enlightenment philosophy, with the exposure colonialism gave to missionaries and professors, began analysing the mind of the tribal man, who they thought, felt superior to the animals with whom he was living in close association.

...savage man living dispersed among other animals and finding himself early under a necessity of measuring his strength with theirs, soon makes a comparison

between both, and finding that he surpasses them more in address, than they surpass him in strength, he learns not to be any longer in dread of them. (Rousseau 91)

Human imagination and perception reached a new scale as Europeans began creating theories to describe people different from their own. The tribal is perceived as a lazy man: “alone, idle, and always surrounded with danger, savage man must be fond of sleep, and sleep lightly like other animals, who think but little, and may, in a manner, be said to sleep all the time they do not think” (Rousseau 94). Rousseau argues why the savage is perceived as inferior, as a savage experiences no passions beyond the basic needs:

It is by the activity of our passions, that our reason improves; we covet knowledge merely because we covet enjoyment, and it is impossible to conceive, why a man exempt from fears and desires should take the trouble to reason. The passions, in their turn, owe their origin to our needs, and their increase to our progress in science; for we cannot desire or fear anything, but in consequence of the ideas we have of it, or of the simple impulses of nature; and savage man, destitute of every species of knowledge, experiences no passions but those of this last kind; his desires never extend beyond his physical wants; He knows no goods but food, a female, and rest; he fears no evils but pain, and hunger; I say pain, and not death; for no animal, merely as such, will ever know what it is to die, and the knowledge of death, and of its terrors, is one of the first acquisitions made by man, in consequence of his deviating from the animal state. (Rousseau 97)

The “savage man” as understood by the European intellectuals knows only physical experiences, and not intellectual ideologies. His impulses are simple, like the instincts of animals. He doesn’t possess systems of knowledge. He cannot think. There are questions for which Enlightenment philosophy could not get clear answers: “What progress could mankind make in the forests, scattered up and down among the other animals? And to what degree could men mutually improve and enlighten each other, when they had no fixed habitation?” (Rousseau 99) These questions were later answered by the structural anthropologists, who observed and

studied the structures of kinship, myths and rituals of tribals and these studies launched social sciences, as the scientific method was applied to study human culture.

Rousseau viewed life from a dialectical perspective as of the “savage state and civilization,” and hence “the savage enjoys the missed blessing of a kind of primeval innocence, something less than virtue that was expected to be brought about either by the social contract or by enlightened education” (Sergio). Earlier John Dryden (1631-1700) had described the savage as a noble one in his popular play “Conquest of Granada by Spaniards:”

Almanz: No man has more contempt than I of breath,
But whence hast thou the right to give me death?
Obeyed as sovereign by thy subjects be,
But know, that I alone am king of me.
I am as free as nature first made man,
Ere the base laws of servitude began,
When wild in woods the noble savage ran. (Dryden)

Nature created man in a free manner and later man created laws that made man a servant to socio-political ideologies. “Man was born free, and everywhere he is in chains. Many a one believes himself the master of others, and yet he is a greater slave than they. How has this change come about? I do not know” (Rousseau 164).

The next generation of anthropologists like “Griaule, Dieterlen and Zahan have established the extensiveness and the systematic nature of native classification” of savages. It is found out that the tribal people called “Dagon divide plants into twenty-two main families” and “further divided into eleven sub-groups.” These are “divided into two series, one of which is composed of the families of odd numbers and the other of those of even ones.” The categories are more fine-tuned symbolizing births, seasons, trees, bushes etc. corresponding to “a social class and an institution.” Such classifications were found in other primitive societies in America too (Levi-Strauss in *Savage Mind* 39). Structural anthropology introduced the inner kinship and cultural patterns of the savages to the rest of the world.

Let us point out, first, that the kinship system does not have the same importance in all cultures. For some cultures it provides the active principle regulating all or most of the social relationships. In other groups, as in our own society, this function is either absent altogether or greatly reduced. In still others, as in the societies of the Plains Indians, it is only partially fulfilled. The kinship system is a language; but it is not a universal language, and a society may prefer other modes of expression and action. (Levi-Strauss in *Structural Anthropology* 68)

“In North Australia foods are distinguished as 'plant' or 'animal' by means of two special morphemes” and tribals called “Wik Munkan” have prefixed “the name of every plant or food derived from it with the term *mai* and every animal, as well as flesh or animal food, with the term *min*.” It used the term “*yukk*” as a “prefix for all names of trees or terms referring to a stick, a piece of wood or wooden object, *koi* for kinds of string and fibre, *wakk* for grasses, *tukk* for snakes, *kampan* and *wank* for straw and string baskets respectively” (Levi-Strauss in *Savage Mind* 45).

Primitive societies have... been said to treat the limits of their tribal group as the frontiers of humanity and to regard everyone outside them as foreigners...as dirty, coarse sub-men or even non-men: dangerous beasts or ghosts. This is often true, but what is overlooked when this is said is that one of the essential functions of totemic classifications is to break down this closing in of the group into itself and to promote an idea something like that of a humanity without frontiers. There is evidence of this phenomenon in all the classical areas of so-called totemic organization. (Levi-Strauss in *Savage Mind* 166)

The tribal communities live in a systematic manner, argued Levi-Strauss. The structure of their social organization is supported by an axis which is vertical, and they are operated by a system of contrasts (Levi-Strauss in *Savage Mind* 217). Structuralism studied the internal modus operandi of societies and argued that primitive societies operate like mainstream civilised societies too. Levi-Strauss accepted that he understood primitive societies primarily from a Satrean perspective, though different in certain aspects.

The savage mind totalizes...In Sartre's terminology, I am therefore to be defined as a transcendental materialist and aesthete. I am a transcendental materialist because I do not regard dialectical reason as something other than analytical reason, upon which the absolute originality of a human order would be based, but as something additional in analytical reason: the necessary condition for it to venture to undertake the resolution of the human into the non-human. And I count as an aesthete since Sartre applies this term to anyone purporting to study men as if they were ants. (Levi-Strauss in *Savage Mind* 245- 246)

Levi-Strauss' perspectives on tribals as self-sufficient organizations might help us to understand ancient Indian tribal communities that waged wars against other communities which have been described multiple times in puranas as wars between devas and asuras. Many mainstream festivals of India could be celebrations of war victories of people who wrote their stories. Written literature could portray the lives of others, who did not write their stories, as wicked and immoral. Both sides must have had opinions, but only one side has been recorded, and in course of time all mythical histories do become established truths, merely by repetition.

Anthropology, as an academic discipline, began to represent the procedure to understand the empirical diversity of human societies. "This first enterprise" of studying the structures of other societies would perhaps open "the way for others which Rousseau would not have been so ready to accept and which are incumbent on the exact natural sciences: the reintegration of culture in nature and finally of life within the whole of its physico-chemical conditions" (Levi-Strauss in *Savage Mind* 247).

Geographical conditions decide and create specific cultural environments and thus societies are different from each other structurally. "Theoretical knowledge is not incompatible with sentiment" and "knowledge can be both objective and subjective at the same time" as scholars who studied ethnography did acquire certain emotions regarding the subjects they studied. Moreover, it "shows that the concrete relations between man and other living creatures," especially in "civilizations in which science means 'natural science,' colour the entire universe of scientific knowledge with their own emotional tone" which can be interpreted as the

“result of this primitive identification and, as Rousseau saw with his profound insight, responsible for all thought and society (Levi-Strauss in *Savage Mind* 38).

This curious organization of ideas, parallel to that of the society, is perfectly analogous, except for its complication, to that which we have found among the Mount Gambier tribes; it is equally analogous to the division by marriage classes which we have observed in Queensland, and to the dichotomous division by moieties which we have found practically everywhere. But having described the different varieties of this system, such as they function in these societies, in an objective fashion, it would be interesting to know how the Australian himself sees them; what idea he himself conceives of the relations between the groups of things thus classed. In this way we could realize better what the logical ideas of primitive man are and the way in which they are formed. (Durkheim 14)

Logical development and reason-directed systems have been part of tribal societies, and their cultural behaviour has been organised and systematized. “We may therefore be sure that the primitive organization underwent an extensive process of dissociation and segmentation which has not yet ended” (Durkheim 22). “Primitive classifications are therefore not singular or exceptional” but “they seem to be connected” to the earlier “scientific classifications” and have the “essential characteristics” of scientific classifications including “hierarchized notions” and “have a purely speculative purpose.” It is understood that “the nature of these conditions is social” and “classifications were modelled on the closest and most fundamental form of social organization” (Durkheim 48).

Modern anthropologists and philosophers of social sciences have written scholarly treatises based on extensive sociological research, applying the scientific method, and have brought forth ideologies that are supposed to be based on facts. It would be an interesting feature to examine how ancient Greek philosophy represented the idea of a primitive or savage.

Clinias: The upshot of all this, I suppose, is that for millions of years these techniques remained unknown to primitive man. Then, a thousand or two thousand years ago, Daedalus and Orpheus and Palamedes made their various discoveries, Marsyas and Olympus pioneered the art of music, Amphion invented

the lyre, and many other discoveries were made by other people. All this happened only yesterday or the day before, so to speak. (Plato. Laws. 1366)

Human societies have evolved in the course of time, and systems and laws have been introduced gradually. The primitive man is the forerunner of civilization and systematic organization. Civilised societies have evolved gradually, learning to cope up with human capacity for creativity and order. Step by step man has built a system of music, art, literature and political governance.

Athenian: If we compare them with the era before the flood and with the modern world, we shall have to say that the many generations which lived in that way were inevitably unskilled and ignorant of techniques in general, and particularly of the military devices used on land and sea nowadays. They must also have been innocent of the techniques of warfare peculiar to city-life—generally called ‘lawsuits’ and ‘party-strife’—in which men concoct every possible device to damage and hurt each other by word and deed. Weren’t our primitive men simple and manlier and at the same time more restrained and upright in every way? We have already explained why... Let’s remind ourselves that this reconstruction, and the conclusions we shall draw from it, are supposed to make us appreciate how early man came to feel the need for laws, and who their lawgiver was... Presumably they felt no need for legislators, and in that era law was not yet a common phenomenon. Men born at that stage of the world cycle did not yet have any written records, but lived in obedience to accepted usage and ‘ancestral’ law, as we call it. (Plato. Laws. 1368)

The law evolved after languages came to be written, is the Greek assumption, just like any other philosophical expression of any country. We assume that written down languages bring forth advanced societies and so on.

Megillus: But we at Sparta ...think Homer is the prince of epic poets...he certainly seems to bear you out when he points in his stories to the wildlife of the Cyclops as an explanation of their primitive customs...

Athenian: And they arise among these people who live scattered in separate households and individual families in the confusion that follows the cataclysms. In such a system the eldest member rules by virtue of having inherited power from his father or mother; the others follow his lead and make one flock like birds. The authority to which they bow is that of their patriarch: they are governed, in effect, by the most justifiable of all forms of kingship... The next stage is when several families amalgamate and form larger communities. They turn their attention to agriculture, initially in the foot-hills, and build rings of dry stones to serve as walls to protect themselves against wild animals. The result now is a single large unit, a common homestead. (Plato. Laws. 1369)

Small units of family soon collected themselves and gradually Greek cities emerged. Larger communities could experiment with agriculture, and this resulted in social development in which more people began to be fed. Man began to operate in groups and gave himself more protection from wild animals. These general assumptions and opinions were accepted as truth, as people did not have opportunities to travel to other parts of the world, which has been made possible with global migrations after the development of the ship industry.

If you are having an argument you should listen to your opponent's case, and put your own to him and the audience, without making any defamatory remarks at all... In gratifying his ugly emotion, anger, and in thus disgracefully stoking the fires of his fury, the speaker drives back into primitive savagery a side of his character that was once civilized by education, and such a splenetic life makes him no better than a wild beast ...that is why no one must ever breathe a word of ridicule in a temple or at a public sacrifice or at the games or in the marketplace or in court or in any public gathering, and the relevant official must always punish such offences. (Plato. Laws XI. 1587)

It is taken for granted that the tribals are uncontrollable and have violent temper, and Plato's discussions suggest that gentle and civilised men should not get into violent arguments, and instead function in an ordered and disciplined manner. Uneducated people, if they become rulers, become tyrants. Education brings civility and gentle behaviour, Greek thinkers assumed.

Socrates: Now, if in the case of a tyrant who's a savage, uneducated ruler, there were in his city someone much better than he, wouldn't the tyrant no doubt be afraid of him and never be able to be a friend to him with all his heart? (Plato. Gorgias. 854)

The Greek intellectuals analysed the role of civility in politics and social life in general. They discussed the way writers have represented individuals.

Friend: Socrates, they say Minos was savage and harsh and unjust...

Socrates: I will tell you...A good human being is the most sacred of all of these, and one who is wicked the most defiled...For he (Homer) means that during the ninth year Minos got together with Zeus to discuss things, and went regularly to be educated by Zeus as though he were a sophist. So the fact that Homer assigns this privilege of being educated by Zeus to no one among the heroes but to Minos is extraordinary praise. And in the Book of the Dead in the *Odyssey*, he represents Minos...as giving judgement with a golden sceptre. (Plato. Minos. 1315)

The ancient Greek world exalted the value of education as a supreme quality that is supposed to have been highly adored by Gods and by poets and the intelligentsia. Training people towards a better life was one of the many mottos for them. Hence a man with an "irritable and savage temper" might become the "source of a number of crimes." During a Dionysius festival, such a man might become "dangerous," says the Athenian (Plato. Laws I. 1343). He continues to argue that Persians were practising "authoritarian government" and were "depriving people of liberty" and they had "destroyed all friendship and community of spirit the state." They wrecked cities and ruined "friendly nations by fire and sword," and they hated and were "hated in return "with savage and pitiless loathing. When they come to need the common people to fight on their behalf, they discover the army has no loyalty, no eagerness to face danger and fight" (Plato. Laws. 1386). The Persians had "millions of soldiers—all useless for fighting a war." He concludes that the Persian empire was "badly run at the moment" because the people were "kept in undue subjection and the rulers excessively authoritarian," which the Greek considered were barbarian and inferior (Plato. Laws. 1387).

The Persia that Nietzsche introduced to us through Zarathustra believed in love - not only in the love of one's own community but loving people across the world. Nietzsche attempted to go beyond Greek and Christian philosophies and thinking.

I teach you the friend in whom the world standeth complete, a capsule of the good, —the creating friend, who hath always a complete world to bestow. And as the world unrolled itself for him, so rolleth it together again for him in rings, as the growth of good through evil, as the growth of purpose out of chance. Let the future and the furthest be the motive of thy to-day; in thy friend shalt thou love the Superman as thy motive. My brethren, I advise you not to neighbour-love—I advise you to furthest love! — Thus spake Zarathustra. (Nietzsche)

The common man continued to practice the well-established perception of considering the primitive man as an inferior person is reflected in texts written down, in a natural and socially accepted manner. The messenger in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* uses the perception and we all accepted such expressions quite casually without questioning them.

Bless you, fair dame. I am not to you known,
Though in your state of honor I am perfect.
I doubt some danger does approach you nearly.
If you will take a homely man's advice,
Be not found here. Hence with your little ones!
To fright you thus methinks I am too savage;
To do worse to you were fell cruelty,
Which is too nigh your person. Heaven preserve
You! (*Macbeth*, Act IV. Scene 2)

In Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*, Claudio publicly denounces his fiancé Hero as a woman of no moral character. Finally, he calls her a savage woman who is sensual pampering her body hunger in a lowly manner, showing the contempt civilised society has and had for the tribal communities.

Claudio... Out on thee, seeming! I will write against it.
You seem to me as Dian in her orb,

As chaste as is the bud ere it be blown.
But you are more intemperate in your blood.
Than Venus, or those pampered animals
That rage in savage sensuality. (*Much Ado About Nothing*, Act IV. Scene 1)

The modern academic world of the “Western-trained social and cultural anthropologists” has promoted “the category” of “tribe” as “the single most prominent and dominant popular anthropological notion for imagining and referring to human society outside bureaucratic states.” Continuous research in the field has enabled that “the notion of the tribe took on a very particular role in the era of colonial expansion. It became the social unit – and characteristic life-organising social form – of peoples considered more primitive than the Euro-American colonists (*Open Anthropology Encyclopedia*).

Even during the period of Valmiki’s *Ramayana*, civilised societies (which might be termed by Levi-Strauss as primitive societies) had consciously kept away from tribals. King Raman is supposed to have treated them with equanimity and genuine respect and is hailed as a model of civility and gentleness. Vishwamitra curses the sons of Vashista that they “die and be reborn for seven generations in a tribe given to eating dog's flesh” (*Ramayana* 6). The tribal Chieftain Guha

had unbounded love for the royal family and for Rama. Being the chieftain of the tribes who dwelt on the banks of Ganga, he was a man of great prestige and power. Rama and Lakshmana rose to greet Guha, even while the latter was still at some distance from them. Guha welcomed them with a hearty embrace, saying: "Regard this land as your own. This place is as much yours as is Ayodhya. Who can hope to have a guest like you? It is indeed my good fortune." (*Ramayana* 43)

The *Mahabharatha* by Veda Vyasar presents communities as tribes. Yudhishtira is furious with Duryodhana and tells him, “After destroying family and tribe, would you yourself escape death by concealing yourself in this pond?” (*Mahabharatha* 181). Each of the kingdoms has been referred to as a tribe in the retold version of *Mahabharatha*. There is historic shift in the way Rajagopalachari has translated the original into English. In *Ramayana* the difference between the civilised and the forest was clearly described. In *Mahabharatha* the civilised

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societies themselves are referred to as tribes. One can infer how tribal kingdoms had slowly established themselves in the model of civilised societies.

Along with Krishna went many, including men of the Bhoja and Vrishni tribes, Dhrishtaketu, the king of the Chedi country, and the Kekayas who were all devoted to the Pandavas (*Mahabharatha* 58) ...Gandhari turned to Draupadi, who was in lamentation, having lost all her sons. "Dear girl," said Gandhari. "Do not grieve. Who can give solace to you and me? It is through my fault that this great tribe has been destroyed altogether." (*Mahabharatha* 189)

We see the same model in the Greek writing of Homer. *The Odyssey* narrates its society as in *Mahabharatha* - tribes have constructed themselves as civilised societies and kingdoms. The translators have decided to use the word 'tribe' to refer to kingdoms in both *The Odyssey* and *Mahabharatha*. The *Ramayana* could be an earlier legend, as its story directly negotiates with cities and forests.

And the godlike seer Theoclymenus replied, "Just like you, I too have left my land— I because I killed a man of my own tribe. But he has many brothers and kin in Argos, stallion-land, who rule the plains in force. Fleeing death at their hands, a dismal fate, I am a fugitive now, doomed to wander across this mortal world. So take me aboard, hear a fugitive's prayer: don't let them kill me—they're after me, well I know!" (*The Odyssey* 253)

The tribes merge into cities as described in *The Odyssey*. It tells the story of clans changing their lifestyles to become cities. Tribes and cities all become one unit.

There is a land called Crete ... ringed by the wine-dark sea with rolling whitecaps— handsome country, fertile, thronged with people well past counting—boasting ninety cities, language mixing with language side-by-side. First come the Achaeans, then the native Cretans, hardy, gallant in action, then Cydonian clansmen, Dorians living in three tribes, and proud Pelasgians last. Central to all their cities is magnificent Cnossos, the site where Minos ruled, and each ninth year conferred with almighty Zeus himself. (*The Odyssey* 321)

Alexander Pope introduces the difference between tribes and civilised societies clearly in his translation of *The Iliad*.

He said; the monarch issued his commands; Straight the loud heralds call the gathering bands The chiefs inclose their king; the hosts divide, In tribes and nations rank'd on either side. High in the midst the blue-eyed virgin flies. (*The Iliad* 134)

There were many clans or tribes living speaking different dialects and Pope calls them barbarous.

There, from the fields where wild Maeander flows, High Mycale, and Latmos' shady brows, And proud Miletus, came the Carian throngs, With mingled clamours and with barbarous tongues. (*The Iliad* 155)

“The tribes of Troy” (*The Iliad* 380) are described and we are told that “Rhodes the chief arrived at last: There in three tribes divides his native band” (*The Iliad* 145). The City of “Athens the fair” was nurtured by “the blue-eyed maid.” She is worshipped by all the people and “her altars blaze, And all the tribes resound the goddess' praise” (*The Iliad* 141). Tribes merging into cities happened naturally in the western countries, as these epics show us.

India solidified social differences as castes, as cities were caught in specially devised rituals and customs, and after a certain period they were established; rules were written down and and frozen so that tribes could not merge with civilised societies any longer, and tribes became outcastes forever. Inter-marriages between these tribes with no written languages and civilised societies with written languages were banned to get into kinship, and strict rules were enforced to keep the purity of the civilised clans with written systems, rules, grammar and literatures and myths.

The second problem confronts us with the kind of situation arising when the kinship system regulates marriage exchanges not between equals but between members of a hierarchy (either economic or political). Under that heading comes the problem of polygamy which, in some cases at least, may be shown to provide a bridge between two different types of guarantees, one collective and political,

the other individual and economic, and that of hypergamy (or hypogamy). This deserves much more attention than it has received thus far, since it is the doorway to the study of the caste system and hence to that of social structures based on race and class distinctions. (Levi-Strauss in *Structural Anthropology* 340)

Contemporary scholarship on caste in India views colonialism as an important fact that solidified caste and established the racial superiority of certain communities. “Colonialism plays a very important role in reproducing Brahmanism as a very important emblem of Hinduism” (Jangam).

German academia through the Christian missionaries came into contact with Sanskrit and Tamil documents, but they established Sanskrit as a language of Indian culture and identified India with it. Ziegenbalg’s extensive work in Tamil Nadu and his medical records of Tamil medicine are being studied by German Tamil Studies now by scholars like C.S. Mohanavelu who has done extensive research on German Indology with a special reference to German Tamilology.

The Christian missionaries looked beyond their horizons of theological thinking and extended their learning to philology and comparative mythologies and literature. Sanskrit as a language began to be identified with refinement, culture, civilization, and education, and began to represent Indian civilization...Franz Bopp established Sanskrit as a prime player in the comparative study of Indo-European languages and its related study of linguistics and developed a technique of language analysis. His scholarly treatise “Comparative Grammar of Sanskrit, Zend, Greek, Latin, Lithuanian, Old Slavic, Gothic, and German” was a great contribution to comparative linguistics, and it studied languages and established a strong link between Asia and Europe. The connection between the East and the West developed academic roots through these renowned oriental scholars and Friedrich Schlegel remembers Hamilton with respect in his preface to “On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians.” (Sridevi)

German Romanticism, perhaps, became an important factor in re-establishing the social supremacy of Sanskrit in India, and it was linked to caste system’s cultural remaking of its self.

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Dr. S. Sridevi

The Self, the Savage and Diversity: A Study of Texts

The tribals' reputation took a tremendous backlash with the establishment of German philology departments' research works and theories. More research is required in this field to study how the present Indian mainstream consciousness has been shaped by European and American linguistic and Oriental academia.

The German respect for Sanskrit which the people identified as “Oriental genius” has been shaped by William Jones who established the affinity between Sanskrit, Latin, Greek, German and Persian. Schlegel says that William Jones “first threw a light on this obscure study” and explains how Jones introduced the advanced intellectual position of India to Europeans and its “surprising discoveries” which have been made in the past “which remarkably illustrate the progress of human intelligence in those ancient times.” Schlegel recommends the study of “Oriental literature” and anticipates “that still more satisfactory results will attend the further prosecution” of research (Schlegel 465). Sanskrit created this impact on German scholars and developed their philological studies into a strong academic discipline during the nineteenth century, and these ideologies of languages slowly spread across Europe and America as scientific studies of languages and comparative philology. (Sridevi)

The German academia studied the structures of Sanskrit language and literature and later philosophers studied its social structures and could not locate the system of caste.

How came it that English supremacy was established in India? ... A country not only divided between Mahomedan and Hindoo, but between tribe and tribe, between caste and caste; a society whose framework was based on a sort of equilibrium, resulting from a general repulsion and constitutional exclusiveness between all its members. Such a country and such a society, were they not the predestined prey of conquest? ... Indian society has no history at all, at least no known history. What we call its history, is but the history of the successive intruders who founded their empires on the passive basis of that unresisting and unchanging society. The question, therefore, is not whether the English had a

right to conquer India, but whether we are to prefer India conquered by the Turk, by the Persian, by the Russian, to India conquered by the Briton. (Marx)

Indian kingdoms failed to incorporate the energy of the varied tribes, the western intelligentsia has perceived. Ancient academia in the kingdoms in the sub-continent did not observe the lives of tribals carefully like the European missionaries, as Indian religions were ritual oriented and intertwined with caste. These religions did not have a messiah who established ideologies for people who convert to its thinking patterns. Prophets based religions with messiah teaching intended to spread their ideologies, religious rituals and practices. The western academic world, its scientific method and the European colonial trade - missionary expansion created academic avenues performed a dual role: it helped traders destroy tribal cultures completely in other continents; it also absorbed them into their culture with its ideology of love and social welfare. Kingdoms in the Indian sub-continent did something differently – it retained and preserved the tribal culture but kept it outside social life and as far as possible used them as downtrodden workers in social hierarchy.

The German philosophy approached the multicultural religions of India interpreting brahmanism as a religion in the model of monotheistic religions. The nineteenth century intellectual was not able to perceive different types of worship patterns in the Indian sub-continent. He considered only the Vedas as written religious code and imagined that it was like the Bible. He uses the term ‘Hinduism’ to describe the religions of India. He introduced the Vedas as supreme and interpreted other religious practices as inferior - may be unconsciously. The autonomy of the individual living in India, his freedom to practice or create rituals, his choice in choosing rituals and systems, cannot be understood by Europeans.

Only Brahmans, educated in the Veda, formed, as bearers of tradition, the fully recognized religious status group. And only later a non—Brahman status group of ascetics emerged by the side of the Brahmans and competed with them. Still later, during the Indian Middle Ages, Hinduism entered the plain. It represented the ardent sacramental religiosity of the savior and was borne by the lower strata with their plebeian mystagogues. (Max Weber 269)

Nation/state model has disrupted tribal self-sufficiency in India. Dams and reservoirs were designed by engineers and democracy in India became one unit of focal power that could not be resisted by tribals any longer. A nation with a military system was many times more powerful than the ancient wars between cities and forests. It operates with a separate ministry to monitor the lives of tribals, and no tribal community can resist the power of a democratic government.

Even during the 1950s, when India began operating as a democratic nation, we notice the powerful manner the government took over impacting on the lives of tribals. Damodar Valley Corporation was one such example of a modern project planned in Jharkhand, “the country's first multipurpose project, a network of dams, thermal and hydroelectric plants which would lay the foundation for modern India... But building it was equally controversial. Thousands of local people, most of whom were tribespeople, were evicted from their ancestral lands to make way for its construction” (Mateen). Budhini Manjhiyain was one of tribals who was ostracised by her community for welcoming Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister by garlanding him at the inauguration of the dam.

In 1959, Nehru announced that he would go to inaugurate one of the dams, called Panchet. To her surprise, the DVC chose Manjhiyain and a colleague to welcome the prime minister...At the ceremony, Manjhiyain was asked to garland the prime minister. What she didn't expect though was that Nehru would playfully garland her back... The village headman summoned her and said that by garlanding Nehru, she had become his bride. He said she had also broken the Santhal code of marrying an outsider and, to atone for her offence, she had to give up everything and leave... The tribe proscribes marrying outside the community and violators are routinely punished with social ostracism...Manjhiyain knew that if she left, she could never return. She tried to resist and reason with the village head, but the community's verdict was swift and sure - to them, she had already become an outcast...Helpless, the 15-year-old picked up her things and left. (Mateen)

Current social sciences research on India must use these facts to reconstruct the past. How were the Indian tribals situated during ancient times, and how did the interaction between

cities and forests solidify into caste system? Did the ascetic decide to term all the so called undisciplined ones as the lowest? Did monarchy help to pass resolutions and create policies? Is it the nomad or the tribe never really bothered about the so-called hierarchies or classifications which actually did not affect them at all?

Today, democracy has bulldozed into forests and has dominated their lives and has branded them as scheduled tribes which is understood by Indians as low and inferior.

On the one hand, the 2002 awarding of Scheduled Tribe (ST) status to only high-caste Kangra Gaddis has reified emic exclusions, further alienated Gaddi-identifying Dalits and birthed new idioms of casteism. On the other hand, five Scheduled Caste (SC) groups that self-report as Gaddi and share Herderian commonalities of culture, language and history felt to constitute shared identity are ethno-politically mobilising to be recognised as Gaddis and within the ST quota (Wimmer, 2013). By advocating for a shift from Gaddi as high-caste tribe (janjāti) to a community (samudāy) of hierarchically scaled castes, Gaddi-aspiring SCs are hoping that advantageous forms of positive discrimination will follow from cultural recognition. They argue that caste-based Gaddi exclusions are not proof of difference but of sameness, what Freud termed the narcissism of small differences and what across India is reflected in mythologies of brotherhood rivalries instigating ethnogenesis and competing castes (Pocock, 1972, p. 67). (Christopher)

The situation has become very sensitive for every stakeholder as practicing equality hurts all parties involved in some way or other. India is going through a crucial period in its historical development because of the concept of equality which in a country without a common religion and a common language or common race becomes a highly complex domain.

In addition to tribal subalternity are deeper and more opaque caste-based social vulnerabilities and economic disadvantages. Sukhdev Viswapremi, the president of the People's Campaign for Socio-Equality in the Himalayas, described how the intersection of Dalit and tribal is overlooked in a scholarly and political context.

‘Based on extensive research across throughout Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and J&K, we have found tribes to be heterogeneous. So many people are surprised to find out that Dalits are discriminated against by tribals’ (personal communication, 2016). Viswapremi’s NGO operates across Himachal Pradesh and has deep organisational ties to the Backward Class Gaddi Organisation (sangathan), whose founding president was a ST-aspiring Gaddi Dalit. We frequently discussed the psychosocial discriminations against Halis and other SCs by Gaddis: caste slurs, marriage exclusions, ritual prohibitions, temple barring and spiritual disorientation. It is important to analyse these stigmatisations by recursively looping between state arbitration of ethnic classifications and the microaggressions and identity reformations that shape everyday life in the obscured margins of tribal society. (Christopher)

One has to wait and observe the change of events and see how the nation is going to tackle multiculturalism and diversity – genetic diversity as claimed by biologists - without monarchy. Contemporary biological research has begun to study the genetic features of regions at micro-level.

India is well-known for its autochthonous cultural, lingual and traditional diversity, which has drawn the attention of researchers to unravel the scientific facts behind it at the genetic level, by using various genetic markers namely, autosomal, X chromosomal, Y chromosomal and mitochondrial DNA markers ...This study was conducted with the aim to investigate the genetic diversity in population of Rajasthan based on Y-STR haplotype data ...The extremely high genomic diversity exhibited by studied population of Rajasthan is may be because of the fact that it has served as an important ancient human migration route. Indian Genome Variation Consortium's report showed that India has larger areas of genetic diversity than other worldwide populations. Previous genetic studies showed that India is a reservoir of amalgamated genetic material from various populations of the world. (Kumawat)

Eco-friendly approaches would recommend that we leave the primitives undisturbed. Other approaches might encourage that we practice social justice and treat everyone in the same manner giving them equal opportunities. Human migrations have continuously brought different peoples together, and clans find it difficult to absorb them. As humanity evolves, in future, biological research might also step in to understand race, caste and tribe. Genetic studies might become an important segment of cultural studies. New policies might be required to handle genetic diversities. Earlier written narratives might have represented the genetic diversity as high and low and have recorded human emotions from the perspective of the writer. Anthropology combined with empirical research might take us to the next level of understanding human civilization.

How did Valmiki represent the Deccan plateau? Were there monkeys? Were they tribes? Why does Kambar not ask these questions? Did the sculptor who chiseled tribes as gods gave them the face of monkeys? 'Van –naran' can mean 'forest-man' or tribal. Have the translations of the epic misguided the culture?

Hanuman is the monkey God according to the narration in the epic, but the fact that Rama and his people were continually and actively communicating at ease with him and his relatives and clan members, suggests that this was a metaphoric representation of a native tribe of Deccan India who were perhaps melanic, strongly built and forest-dwelling and hence different from the northern people. (Ganeshiah et al)

The hundreds of oral versions of Ramayana have incorporated the local goddesses, lands, and people. Adivasi communities have stories of Ramayana and some of them even worship Rama and Sita. Spoken stories of Ramayana continue to be adapted and created with add-ons even now (Tharuvana).

However, they are not unrelated to folklore outside the Ramayana. For example, in the 'Adiya Ramayana' (the oral version of the text which prevails among the Adiya tribe of Wayanad), there are popular characters from local legends and folklores, such as Valliyookavu Bhagavathi, Pulpalli Bhagavathi, Pakkatheyyam, Tirunelli Perumal, Siddhappan, Nenjappan and Mathappadeva; similarly, in

‘Chetty Ramayana’ (the text used by the Wayanadan Chettis), there are characters like Athirukaalan, Arupuli, Kandarpuli, Dammadam, Kaikalan and Thamburatti. In the same way, the ‘Chandrabati Ramayana’ (written in the 16th century in Mymensingh, East Bengal, by a woman named Chandrabati), was rejected by the Bengali pandits of her time but survived for more than four centuries solely through oral transmission. Written from the point of view of a woman, this version of the Ramayana was a unique piece of work featuring local Bengali goddesses like Mangal Chandi, Manasa, Banadurga, Sitala and Shashti. (Tharuvana)

The mainstream wrote versions of Ramayana and the tribes spread oral versions of the same, both living side by side one not affecting the other. This multicultural diversity sounds theoretically profound but in reality expresses itself as caste and slavery. “Until 1975, members of the Adiya and Ponniya communities were sold as slaves on the occasion of the Valliyoorkavu Temple festival. It was only in 1975 that slave trade was banned by law in Wayanad” (Tharuvana).

In political domains, however, especially as negotiated by tribal actors and tribal-aspiring applicants, the calculus is simpler: those groups scheduled as ST are tribal, and those groups scheduled as SC are Dalits, and never the two shall meet. Already-recognised STs accept the state as the final arbitrator of incentivised difference and exclude SCs based on their separate political classification as indicative of a different essence or kind. In contrast, scholarship on the relationship between caste and status continuity oftentimes lumps SC and ST together. While generalisations about these most disadvantaged populations highlight the failure of government reservations to establish equal competition between unequal social actors (Vaid & Heath, 2010, p. 156), it obscures the relative differences between low-castes and often high-caste tribals. By generalising about ‘SC/ST’ populations, it places the emphasis on their status relative to high castes and OBCs; it also suggests an equality-in-difference that obscures how caste exclusion operates within tribes. (Christopher)

Democracy has a big challenge of bringing forth social justice in a multicultural society with many types of religions, branded as Hinduism by the world, apart from other monotheistic religions, that still functions in a feudalistic model as far as prejudices, food habits, festivals and rituals are concerned.

While the race and caste debate in India is an old one, these positions have remained, at best, theoretical and intellectual exercises for scholars and government bodies. The opposition against Dalit organizations to include caste in the agenda at the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and related Intolerance (WCAR) at Durban in South Africa in 2001 reveals the caste mentality of the Indian state (Teltumbde Citation 2009). The basis of casteism and racism is discrimination that traces the descent of skin colour, caste categories, and social hierarchies. (Kikon)

The Indian experiences and negotiations with tribes took place in their own continent, but the primitive societies technically belonged to other regions. The environment encouraged the genesis of caste system. What were the exact reasons for the birth of caste hierarchy? Did Indian kings reject the culture of primitive societies?

It is no crime for Mlechchhas to sell or mortgage the life of their own offspring. But never shall an Arya be subjected to slavery... That land, on the border of which there are a number of forts giving shelter to bands of thieves, Mlechchhas, and wild tribes is a land with a constant enemy ... If he is destitute of an army, he should, as far as possible, attract to himself the brave men of corporations, of thieves, of wild tribes, of Mlechchhas, and of spies who are capable of inflicting injuries upon enemies... After entering into the king's (the enemy's) palace, they may kill the king in the tumult; when the king begins to run from one direction to another, Mlechchhas, wild tribes, or chiefs of the army, lying in ambush (sattrra), or concealed near a pillar or a fence, may slay him; or spies, under the guise of hunters, may slay the king when he is directing his attack, or in the tumult of attack following the plan of treacherous fights. (Arthashastra)

This was the socio-political set up in ancient kingdoms in which the kings were constantly threatened by wild men and other enemies. Feudalism had to protect itself from enemies of all types. The land had abundant human resources and created workers, servants and slaves out of its own society that spoke different languages and practiced different rituals. Opportunities were not given to the primordial societies or foreigners or Mlechchhas to absorb mainstream culture and become civilized. European theories cannot perhaps be used to understand the Indian mainstream royal ideology guided by the intelligentsia that looked at wild tribes as prospective invaders.

These Euro-American discourses draw from outmoded scholarship about tribal primordialism. Accelerating with European colonisation in the 16th century, tribes have represented a primitive social order in the Western imaginary. The Enlightenment formalised the dichotomy between European progress culminating with civilisation and timeless tribes mired in ‘savage’ sociopolitical units (Yapp, 1983). Henry Lewis Morgan’s (1877) formative theory of human development slotted groups into three broad stages: savagery, barbarism and civilisation as the teleological endpoint. Tribes were theorised as conglomerate kinship units based on clan affiliation and shared descent from common ancestry. Later evolutionist paradigms constructed societal progress as moving through stages of development, from pre-state egalitarian tribes based on non-hierarchical kinship bonds to territorialised state formations structured by social hierarchy and complex administrative institutions. Tribes were defined as egalitarian and homogenous, reproduced by clan-based isogamous marriage alliances, distinctly bounded from proximate social groups with whom they lived in a state of Hobbesian perpetual warfare. (Christopher)

Theories of tribal life and primitive culture by the enlightening philosophers were the beginning of knowledge of this aspect of human life. Europeans conceived human life as a development process in which the cities came to be looked up as the end of human hard work. Structuralism perceived kinship patterns of primitive societies and understood the similarities; still the emotions and prejudices of anthropologists could not treat such societies as equal to western societies.

The ancient people were organized on the basis of hordes or tribes; the tribes were political groups within a geographical setting. The members of the tribe all spoke the same language. The headquarters of the tribe developed into cities and the political power of the tribes was transformed into ‘city states which today are nations.’ In the words of Sir Arthur Keith ‘nations are big tribes welded together by force.’ (Majumdar 4)

The Indian situation is not as simple as exemplified by Sir Arthur Keith. In India tribes and castes have merged into a hierarchical establishment. Nation in India came to be a colonial intervention and not a natural development. Hence, it does not have natural answers to the questions arising from hierarchical systems established in age-old times. Modern India has feudalistic attitudes and democratic attitudes living side by side and in course of time we will know if Indian society evolves into a society of enlightened values.

It is also caught in the way the western academia has portrayed its religious systems and caste. It is viewing the Vedic works as the standard against which it is judging the rest of the sub-continent. Weber uses the term “classic Hinduism” to refer to the religious practices of a particular clan. There is bewilderment as to the concepts in the Veda regarding caste and the reality of caste as practised by the common man, who, if he has money, invites Sanskrit scholars to conduct marriage or any other rituals, without understanding the meaning of the Sanskrit verses at all. Classic Hinduism is practised in rituals and hymns and epic discussions by select clans.

The position of the Brahman, in classic Hinduism as well as today, can be understood only in connection with caste, without an understanding of which it is quite impossible to understand Hinduism. Perhaps the most important gap in the ancient Veda is its lack of any reference to caste. The Veda refers to the four later caste names in only one place, which is considered a very late passage; nowhere does it refer to the substantive content of the caste order in the meaning which it later assumed, and which is characteristic only of Hinduism. (Max Weber 396)

Scholars studying world religions include Indian religions in their study and call them as Hinduism treating Indian religions like monotheistic religions which follow a particular saint or prophet or messiah. They interpret Indian society just like any other society that follows such religions.

Messianism or Mahdism is the belief in the advent of a messiah who acts as the Saviour of a group of people. Messianism originated as an Abrahamic religious belief, but other religions have messianism-related concepts. Religions with a messiah concept include Judaism (Mashiach), Christianity (Christ), Islam (Isa Masih), Zoroastrianism (Saoshyant), Buddhism (Maitreya), Hinduism (Kalki) and Taoism (Li Hong). (Alma'itah)

Indian social topography is a challenge to any sociologist as it has imbibed multiple cultures and has adapted to diversity in a spontaneous manner. The contemporary democracy in India, a contribution of colonialism, has begun to blend the self and the savage in a much more flexible manner, though it might take centuries for castes to be either neutralised or take some other shape of existence. Clans are slowly losing their individual selves in all walks of life and are acquiring new identities. Capitalism and globalization are activating the processes, in spite of strengthening their local and individual identities of clans or tribes.

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