

AN E-VALUATION OF COMMUNICATION AND CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE INDIAN CORPORATE PLATEAU

A Thesis Submitted to
University of Hyderabad
In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Communication

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DECLARATION

I, Prasheel Anand Banpur, hereby declare that this doctoral thesis, titled “An E-valuation of Communication and Consciousness of the Indian Corporate Plateau” submitted by me to the Department of Communication, University of Hyderabad, India, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree *Doctor of Philosophy in Communication*, is a record of research done by me under the supervision of Dr. E. Sathya Prakash and co-supervision of Dr. Usha Raman and Dr. Deepa Sreenivas. This is a bona-fide research work and has not been submitted in part or in full for the award of any degree or diploma at this or any other University or institution.

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This is to certify that the thesis titled “An E-evaluation of Communication and Consciousness of the Indian Corporate Plateau” submitted by Prasheel Anand Banpur, bearing registration number 11SNPC02, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Communication, to the Department of Communication, University of Hyderabad, India is a bona-fide work carried out by him under by supervision and guidance. This thesis is free from plagiarism and has not been submitted previously to this or any other university or institution for the award of any degree or diploma.

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In addition, the student has the following publication(s) and conference presentation(s)

1. Exploring Communication and Consciousness in Indian Corporations, *phalanx.in*, ISSN 2320-7698
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Further, the student has passed the following courses towards fulfilment of the coursework requirement for Ph.D.:

CC – 801 – Advanced Research Theory – Pass

CC – 802 – Advanced Research Methodology – Pass

CC – 803 – Topic-Based Readings with Supervisor – Pass

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1. **Introduction**

1.1 Communication and/or Consciousness

The terms communication and consciousness have received a lot of attention and scholarly pursuit from persons attached to academic disciplines such as theology, philosophy, literature, medicine, biology, anthropology, psychology, sociology, linguistics, communication, engineering and manufacturing, information technology, and other sub, allied and merged disciplines. While the two words seem to be enmeshed, and emerge as a particular set resembling the inconclusiveness of discussions related to concepts such as subject-object, content-form, signifier-signified, the current study aims at employing an understanding of communication and consciousness by drawing from disciplines rooted in philosophy, social psychology, social sciences, historical and human sciences, fiction, and not so much from neural or biological sciences as the effort is not to disciplinize and anchor these two terms, but to treat them as concepts and argue, for the point of research, from a location which aims to reflect the objectives of the study. The study can be called as one belonging to the broad area of Human Sciences – where-in the methods used, the analysis made, and the conclusions reached thereafter are an attempt at understanding a socio-political phenomenon from humanities’ methods of hermeneutics, semiotics, and metaphor analysis, while using referential material from religion, history, management, biographies, commentaries and academic analyses. Hence, one attempt through this doctoral study is to ground the two concepts, communication and consciousness, in relation to themselves, in relation to the context of the research, in relation to the position of the researcher, and in relation to a particular socio-political phenomenon i.e. cultural nationalism.

Thomas Nagel defines consciousness as “what it is like to be something” (Velmans, 2009). ‘Substance Dualists’ such as Plato, Descartes among others have identified consciousness as

that which is opposed to material stuff and have said that the *stuff of consciousness* is to be associated with the soul or spirit. Velmans adds that ‘Property Dualists’ such as Sperry and Libet identify consciousness as a nonphysical property which emerges out of the complex physical brain, and that Dennett and Crick are reductionists who propound that consciousness is nothing more than a state or function of the brain (Velmans, 2009). From a social-psychology perspective, George Herbert Mead says that, “Inner consciousness is socially organized by the importation of the social organization of the outer world” (Carreira da Silva, 2011). Extending his position, Mead says that, “There is much to support this view in the early history of the race as we catch glimpses of it in the remains of cult and myth, and in the growth of child consciousness, much that supports the idea that the earliest form of reflective consciousness was social and that our consciousness of physical objects is an abstraction from an experience that is primarily social” (Carreira da Silva, 2011). It can be noticed that Mead positions the experience of the social as one that determines the mental make-up of an individual and the resultant of this continual process is what give rise to the conscious mind or the state of consciousness. However, it should also be noted isolating the social from the historical, political, cultural or economic realms will add little to the analysis and negate the anchorage the theoretical approaches borrowed from interdisciplinary methods, articulations and advances.

German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey while talking about the importance of experience in shaping the mind-constructed world says that the smallest units of memory pictures of various forms, shapes, interactions, relationships, hopes, fears form *Erlebnis*, the lived-experience (Mueller-Vollmer, 1985). The concept *Erlebnis* propounded by Dilthey can be seen as an equivalent to the conscious mind, a mind which has been constructed based on the surroundings it gets exposed to, engages with, understands it and then reconstructs it based on

those engagements and explications. Dilthey here is talking about the consciousness rooted in experience - an experience which includes the human's engagement with the natural and the social at diverse points of interaction and with one realm generating the understanding of other and vice versa. Within these negotiations are produced *life-expressions*, an epistemological production of analysis based on the lived-experience. Each individual, Dilthey says, produces these life-expressions which intend something or seek to signify something. Dilthey's equation positions life-expressions with communication and lived-experience with consciousness. An army person wearing a particular uniform not only communicates to himself/herself about the nation-state's behavioural and disciplinary consciousness through that uniform but also communicates about himself to the people he/she comes across regarding this behavioural and disciplinary consciousness while attempting to induce the same consciousness to the subjects of the nation-state. If the army uniform is the communication arising out of a certain lived-experience of living in a nation-state which produces a socio-political regime by using an armed force to disciplinize the people, the understanding of the army, for the witnessing publics, as agents of discipline arises out of the life-expression of the use of the uniform. Consciousness and communication can be seen in a symbiotic relationship which varies with, and also produces the variations taking place in the socio-political, cultural, or economic realms. This is, however, unlike the classical Marxist point of view which looks at the base as reeling under the tutelage of the hierarchical other, is not to submit that the army or the people are devoid of any capacity to reject the nation-state's status quo and that therefore are at the mercy of decisions taken at the super-structural level. The capacity to accept or resist also comes from this particular complementary relationship between communication and consciousness and that diversity of identities is the evidence of the negotiations which emerge continually between the various lived-experiences of the populace, uniformed or civilian, conscious or delirious. For Dilthey, there is a

fundamental relationship between expression and mental content (ibid.). It can then be said that there exists a fundamental relationship between communication (the expression) and consciousness (the mental content). It is consciousness that gives rise to communication and that consciousness also emerges from communication. This then becomes the platform on which communication can also be interpreted – by studying, examining, and analysing the expression in relation to its mental content. A person with disabilities uses particular methods of communicating the life that he/she experiences and it is that particular expression of ideas and thoughts of the disabled person which form the root of analysis by a disabled or an able person. The forms of understanding of this life-expression will then vary based on the lived-experiences of the person(s) who is/are in the process of understanding. Consciousness, its construction and production, then, have to be determined by the existing social, historical, political, and cultural conditions at a given point of time in a given space.

Max Weber in his work *'The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism'* (1992) suggests that it was Benjamin Franklin's adherence to religious ideals of Calvinism that were the trigger for his writings on money and the virtues associated with men who earn, spend and save money wisely. Weber says, "Economic acquisition is no longer subordinated to man as the means for the satisfaction of his material needs. The reversal of what we should call the natural relationship, so irrational from a naive point of view, is evidently as definitely a leading principle of capitalism as it is foreign to all peoples not under capitalistic influence. At the same time it expresses a type of feeling which is closely connected with certain religious ideals. If we thus ask, why should "money be made out of men", Benjamin Franklin himself, although he was a colourless deist, answers in his autobiography with a quotation from the Bible, which his strict Calvinistic father drummed into him again and again in his youth: "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings" (Prov. xxii.

29). The earning of money as it is done legally, the result and the expression of virtue and proficiency in a calling; and this virtue and proficiency are, as it is no difficult to see, the real Alpha and Omega of Franklin's ethic, as expressed in the passages we have quoted, as well as in all his works without exception" (Weber, 1992). It can be noticed that Weber's method of studying Franklin's autobiography, a life-expression, to arrive at a certain understanding of a capitalistic ethos residing in Franklin's mind, lived-experience, in relation with studying Franklin's mental development in his youth (consciousness) which later produced his writings (communication), a process of analysis and examination emerges which combines both these concepts, communication and consciousness into a symbiotic whole where one cannot exist independent of the other. It can be said cautiously, that these two concepts are the non-identical twins of the parent called life. Born to a parent undulating between parthenogenesis and intercourse, the other parent will then be the existing conditions that aid in producing an understanding – of and for the parents as well as the twins - of life through the process of evolution of the twins. These twins are attached to each other through an emotional bond but in their course of evolution develop separate identities and assertions. The question of what causes this parthenogenesis or intercourse between the life and the conditions that produce it in order to produce the twins to inturn produce an understanding of that particular life and its conditions is out of the context of this research but the reason for its non-mention is definitely not to point towards divine intervention or the presence of an unfathomable, omnipresent, benevolent, unseeable, all-forgiving, all-knowing, universal, supernatural spirit as the cause. This question has been taken up by many scholars since centuries through various approaches. Thus, it is purely a matter of lived-experience of individuals to ascertain the cause of the reproduction and evolution of various life forms.

French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas writes that, “The meaning of a philosophical journey varies, for the traveller, according to the moment or the place from which he or she tries to give an account of it. It is only from outside that such an unfolding process can be encompassed and judged. All that the investigator himself can do is to describe the themes that are uppermost when he pauses to give his account” (Levinas, 2007). Giving an account, in any symbolic form, is an instance of expression, symbolic action, and hence, it is an instance of communication. It is also to be noted that Levinas is mentioning two factors such as time and place which are pre-requisites for producing that occurrence in communication. Time and place occupy a central role in influencing the mental content or the consciousness of the person as they are the factors representing the historical, social, political, economic, cultural and religious conditions. It is, thus, this particular connection and negotiative relationship between the atmospheric surroundings - including all the human and non-human elements – and the construction of an experience with the expressiveness of that particular conscious mind.

Proposing their idea of collective assemblages of enunciation, Deleuze and Guattari say, “There is no individual enunciation. There is not even a subject of enunciation. Yet relatively few linguists have analyzed the necessarily social character of enunciation. The problem is that it is not enough to establish that enunciation has this social character, since it could be extrinsic; therefore too much or too little is said about it. The social character of enunciation is intrinsically founded only if one succeeds in demonstrating how enunciation in itself implies *collective assemblages*. It then becomes clear that the statement is individuated, and enunciation subjectified, only to the extent that an impersonal collective assemblage requires it and determines it to be so. It is for this reason that indirect discourse, *especially “free” indirect discourse*, is of exemplary value: there are no clear, distinctive contours; what comes

first is not an insertion of variously individuated statements, or an interlocking of different subjects of enunciation, but a collective assemblage resulting in the determination of relative subjectification proceedings, or assignations of individuality and their shifting distributions within discourse. Indirect discourse is not explained by the distinction between subjects; rather, it is the assemblage, as it freely appears in the discourse, that explains all the voices present within a single voice, the glimmer of girls in a monologue by Charlus, the languages in a language, the order-words in a word. The American murderer “Son of Sam” killed on the prompting of an ancestral voice, itself transmitted through the voice of a dog. The notion of collective assemblage of enunciation takes on primary importance since it is what must amount for the social character” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004). It can be read from the statements of Deleuze & Guattari that enunciation in itself is not an act that occurs in isolation. The fabric of enunciation has a social character to it which in turn is made up of multiple social dimensions. The task then, is to investigate, dissect, and exhibit these social dimensions to formulate the form and content of enunciative manifestations. Only through this process of arriving at the socio-historical foundations of collective assemblages or consciousness, will we be able to arrive at enunciation or communication.

Building his critique on Freud’s proposition that consciousness is not given but a task, Paul Ricoeur says that, “Since Freud, it has become necessary to speak of consciousness only in terms of epigenesis. That is, the question of consciousness seems to me to be bound to the other question of how a man leaves his childhood behind and becomes an adult. While strictly reciprocal, this other question reverses the question asked by the analyst, who shows man as subject to his childhood. The bleak vision which he proposes of consciousness as subject to the three masters of the Id, the Superego, and Reality defines the task of consciousness in an obverse sense and the route of epigenesis as negative. Yet we run the risk

of falling back into an introspective psychology by simply uttering the phrase “consciousness as epigenesis.” Thus I think that we should at this point reject entirely any psychology of consciousness whatsoever” (Ricoeur, 2004). Ricoeur’s rejection of any psychology of consciousness stems from the idea that it is impossible to equate consciousness with knowledge of the self and thereby ignore or reject the processes of the unconscious. While this may hold ground the idea that is emergent and is relevant for the current research is Ricoeur’s mention of the biological phrase epigenesis and its relation to consciousness. Continuing from his position that consciousness is not a given but a task, it is the process of epigenesis that requires the processes of communication for the child to become an adult. Communication thereby involves all the affiliated processes which enable this process of psychical evolution of the human. Communication then takes the place of the Superego or the symbolic reality regulating psychical processes and attitudes between the Id and the Ego. The processes of communication which become the new key signifiers for the child to emerge as an adult, transforming an Id-led life to one whose consciousness is situated in congruence to the social establishment. Any incongruence would lead to psychical processes which will be eventually judged by the same social establishment as that which is delirious, neurotic, terrorizing, sick, and antagonistic to the existence of the ‘conscious’ being and the functioning of the establishment. Though not explicitly mentioned either by Freud or Ricoeur, it does seem that the processes of consciousness are closely related to processes of communication and through the negotiations of these two concepts with each other and the processes of the socio-historical establishment lies the processes of epigenesis, the psychical train of a human.

Describing the pattern of jokes and the inherent mechanism involved in producing or receiving a joke, Mary Douglas says that, “First, let me bracket aside the whole subject of

laughter. It would be wrong to suppose that the acid test of a joke is whether it provokes laughter or not. It is not necessary to go into the physiology or psychology of laughter since it is generally recognized that one can appreciate a joke without actually laughing, and one can laugh for other reasons than from having perceived a joke. As the two experiences are not completely congruent, I shall only touch on laughter incidentally. Here I am following Bergson, whose essay on laughter was first published in 1899 in *Revue de Paris*, and Freud (1916), whose analysis of wit, first published in 1905, says very little about laughter. Both Bergson and Freud assume that it is possible to identify a structure of ideas characteristic of humour. If this were a valid assumption, all that would be necessary here would be to identify this joke form in the African joke rite. But in practice, it is a very elusive form to nail down. We face the dilemma either of finding that all utterances are capable of being jokes, or that many of those which pass for jokes in Africa do not conform to the laid-down requirements. My argument will be that the joke form rarely lies in the utterance alone, but that it can be identified in the total social situation” (Douglas, 1975). The mention of ‘African rite’ by Douglas is indicative of not just a spatial or geographical frame but also a cultural one. Citing Bergson and Freud who in their own way arrived at a certain character of jokes by identifying a ‘structure of ideas’ behind the production of humour, Douglas is also producing a framework by saying that jokes can only be produced and received in a ‘total’ social situation. This totality that Douglas mentions necessarily has to include spatial and cultural constructs of identities including gender, tribe, and totemic affiliation to situate an utterance of humour. These are the contextual identities giving rise to contextual consciousness and contextual communication, manifested here in the form of an expression i.e. laughter. Hence, the anthropologist Douglas drawing from philosopher Henri Bergson and psychologist/psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud constructs her ideas on the relationship between a particular humanistic context, its social implications in a given society, and the forms of

expressions that are produced. If the humanistic context and the social implications which are stored and produced from the mind of an individual, it would then be clear that it is the work of these two factors that produce consciousness thereby entering into a communicative relationship. In India, it has been/is a common attitude of the members belonging to Savarna classes such as Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vyshyas, to condition their 'wayward' children into observing their own caste-based practices and attitudes by admonishing them with terms such as 'Chamar', 'Madiga', 'Pariah' or 'Junglee' – these four terms among others refer to members of Dalit and tribal communities in India who were historically not part of the Hindu-fold but brought in as lower-castes and untouchables when faced with confrontation from Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity. Any behaviour by the children or young adults from the 'upper' castes which is deemed unbecoming by their elders is followed by the mention of these words used a humorous instance to insult and then indoctrinate the recalcitrant children youth within the practices of their own Caste-community fold. It is the evolution and existence of a certain caste-consciousness which is reflected through the use of these utterances.

Indian historian Romila Thapar writes, "Despite the stereotypes of 'unchanging India' and her 'unhistorical religions' and peoples, the historical writing on ancient India goes back for more than two centuries and exhibits an instructive series of changes in interpretation. The historical writings produced by European scholars, beginning in the eighteenth century, were formulated in terms of ideological attitudes then dominant in Europe, and naturally these were significantly different from the indigenous tradition of ancient India. European ideologies entailed a set of attitudes towards India which were for the most part highly critical, though there also some sympathetic historians. These ideologies continued to be influential even after Indian scholars began to write, since they often wrote in reply to earlier

interpretations and were therefore still moulded by them. It has been only in recent years that the influence of ideologies on the interpretation of Indian history has been recognized; perhaps now for the first time a history of the changing interpretations of ancient India can be written” (Thapar, 1979). While Thapar’s commentary can be read as one depicting that a particular European spatial orientation inclusive of its political and social ideologies produce certain communication in writing about/on India, and that the Indian variants were not completely uninfluenced by those ‘European ideologies’ in the process of producing written communication, it can be seen that Thapar sees a particular cultural continuity in Europe and its peoples and in India and its peoples. This particular notion that it was ‘Indian’ scholars who were trying to produce an indigenous history is untenable as the question of who is indigenous in India has been subject to dense debates and no clear conclusion has been arrived at yet. Similarly, Europe also is a diverse region with different histories of different peoples inhabiting it and it would be amateur to suppose that all of Europe and its peoples were imperial by ideology and conduct. The intention is not to negate Thapar’s epistemological connections through her commentary on Indian history but to demonstrate the genealogical connection of hers and what she is writing. The Thapar surname comes from a Punjabi Hindu Khatri community, a trading and business caste where some members later also served at various positions in the Indian army. Considered a nationalist segment of people, the Khatri community also claims Kshatriya status – the martial class which is placed second in the hierarchy of the Hindu social fold. The trading and martial communities have been known for their allegiance to the land and claims of being the ‘sons of the soil’, and their cultural ethos comes from Hindu religious traditions largely opposing British and Islamic conquests and extension of the Indian region from the north. It is from this particular social base that Thapar is attacking the historical versions of ancient India and giving cushion to what she terms ‘indigenous histories’. Especially, the writers of popular Indian history

before, during, and after British and Islamic conquests were all members from the upper-castes comprising of mostly Brahmins, the ones on the top of the Hindu social order. It is this particular consciousness of caste and region that is being exhibited by Thapar in her communication.

Born in a Kashmiri Pandit family who went on to become a nationalist leading a group of people against the ruling British Empire in India during the early and mid twentieth century was Jawaharlal Nehru, the country's first prime minister. In his book *The Discovery of India* Nehru mentions his roots and family, India's glorious past termed Hinduism, his entry into the nationalist struggle, and few contemporary problems as chapters of the book. He mentions, "This book was written by me in Ahmadnagar Fort prison during the five months, April to September 1944. Some of my colleagues in prison were good enough to read the manuscript and make a number of valuable suggestions. On revising the book in prison I took advantage of these suggestions and made some additions. No one, I need hardly add, is responsible for what I have written or necessarily agrees with it. But I must express my deep gratitude to my fellow-prisoners in Ahmadnagar Fort for the innumerable talks and discussion we had, which helped me greatly to clear my own mind about various aspects of Indian history and culture. Prison is not a pleasant place to live in even for a short period, much less for long years. But it was a privilege for me to live in close contact with men of outstanding ability and culture and wide human outlook which even the passions of the moment did not obscure. My eleven companions in Ahmadnagar Fort were an interesting cross-section of India and represented in their several ways not only politics but also Indian scholarship, old and new, and various aspects of present-day India. Nearly all the principal living Indian languages, as well as the classical languages which have powerfully influenced India in the past and present, were represented and the standard was often that of high

scholarship. Among the classical languages were Sanskrit and Pali, Arabic and Persian; the modern languages were Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Telugu, Sindhi and Oriya. I had all this wealth to draw upon and the only limitation was my own capacity to profit by it. Though I am grateful to all my companions, I should like to mention especially Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, whose vast erudition invariably delighted me but sometimes also rather overwhelmed me, Govind Ballabh Pant, Narendra Deva and M. Asaf Ali. It is a year and quarter since I finished writing this book and some parts of it are already somewhat out of date, and much has happened since I wrote it. I have felt tempted to add and revise, but I have resisted the temptation. Indeed I could not have done otherwise for life outside prison is of a different texture and there is no leisure for thought or writing. It has been difficult enough for me to read again what I have written. I wrote originally in long-hand; this was typed after my release. I was unable to find time to read the typescript and the publication of the book was being delayed when my daughter, Indira, came to my rescue and took this burden off my shoulders. The book remains as written in prison with no additions or changes, except for the postscript at the end. I do not know how other authors feel about their writings, but always I have a strange sensation when I read something that I had written sometime previously. That sensation is heightened when the writing had been done in the close and abnormal atmosphere of prison and the subsequent reading has taken place outside. I recognize it of course, but not wholly; it seems almost that I was reading some familiar piece written by another, who was near to me and yet who was different. Perhaps that is the measure of the change that is taken place in me. So I have felt about this book also. It is mine and not wholly mine, as I am constituted today; it represents rather some past self of mine which has already joined that long succession of other selves that existed for a while and faded away, leaving only a memory behind” (Nehru, 1992). What Nehru observed and termed as a ‘strange feeling’ and ‘change taken place in me’ was a shift in consciousness. A shift in consciousness

based on particular social, political, cultural factors that conditioned Nehru's consciousness and in effect, aided in producing the work that was eventually published by his daughter. His communication through this book and through the introduction is indicative of the idea that it was not just Nehru producing and penning down thoughts in writing but, as he himself says, 'as I am constituted today' – referring to that particular constructs of time and space which engendered his idea of India as well his idea of his position in the context of India as well his writing. Knowingly or unknowingly Nehru mentions the conditions which resulted in this book. Would it be the same book if he was at leisure and not in a prison? Would he then use the term in title of the book as Discovery or Invention or Manufacture or Engineer or Country or People?

Writing about the influence of the socio-historic conditions on the writing of Rabindranath Tagore, Sumit Sarkar, citing one particular reference to a fictional work of Tagore's says that, "The social critique developed in Tagore's 1907-8 essays and *Ghare-Baire* had its limits, however. It did not go beyond the nexus of a dangerous kind of nationalism – unscrupulous politicians as typified by Sandip, their deluded student followers, and oppressive landlords and their agents. The alternative – ineffective, as the novel ends in unrelieved tragedy – is presumably paternalist zamindari, embodied in Nikhilesh (in large part Rabindranath himself), riding out alone and unarmed into the sunset to fight communal violence. A sense of failure and isolation pervades the novel. And here there may have been reasons deeper than those the author himself perceived" (Sarkar, 2002). Upon observation it can be discerned that it was a particular socio-political consciousness in Tagore which motivated him to write the story called *Ghare-Baire* which when translated means *Inside Home-Outside World*. Sarkar (ibid.) also says that the character of the protagonist in the novel is close to the real life Tagore himself who was born to a wealthy, upper-caste *zamindari* or land-owning family.

The point, however, is to demonstrate that the world that Tagore perceived was the world he was communicating through the characters and the plot of the novel - a certain consciousness espoused in his communication.

Explaining the relevance of Social Constructionist approach for researching organizational communication studies, Brenda Allen writes, “Social Constructionism seems tailor-made for responding to issues, given the fundamental principle that knowledge construction is specific to historical and cultural contexts... A fitting topic for social constructionist research on organizational communication is identity. Applying a social constructionist approach enlarge the growing body of studies on identity that concentrate on a range of social constructions. This will allow us to concentrate on “how specific organizations appropriate, reproduce, and/or transform social discourses in and through everyday communicative processes that enable and/or constrain how members enact identities” (Tretheway, 2000)” (Allen, 2005). In the context of organizational communication research what Allen is proposing is also an approach which is very close to and runs parallel to the idea of the synchronicity of consciousness and communication. It is evident in her writing above that social process give rise to knowledge construction of not only the self, which is the identity, but also the society, which is the organization. Cumulatively, it is the present categories of knowledge, awareness, experience and identity in the conscious minds which give impetus to communicative processes manifested in writing, talking, and gestures among others. The emphasis of Allen is, however, on historical and cultural contexts only. Thereby rendering that the political and economic realms do not contribute to the formation of a particular consciousness in a given time and space. Hence, Allen’s proposition needs extension to make it a more potent formulation to understand the technicalities and the larger context of the organization’s presence.

For these reasons, in the present context of research, it becomes essential to extend the ideas as mentioned in the preceding paragraphs that it is imperative to formulate the idea of consciousness of the social or psychological to include religious, historical, cultural, political, and economic realms while ensuring the subject of analysis lies within the scheme of the current context of research, which is, exploring the idea of cultural nationalism in the Indian region as propounded by Gnana Aloysius. The relevance of communication, then, needs to be understood as a process which is in conjunction with consciousness and that it is these conceptual twins which will aid in the formulation of the analysis in the succeeding chapters. This particular idea of cultural nationalism, a sociological phenomenon, is positioned in the forefront while employing methodologies from a human sciences perspective to study an economic entity – the Indian corporate plateau. The three entities positioned here – the idea of cultural nationalism, the humanities methods, and the Indian corporation – not necessarily in hierarchical order will be explained in the subsequent chapters. The research is also trying to arrive at an understanding of Caste-community in a diverse social reality like India and articulate if there also exists a particular caste-consciousness which emerges in the way each caste-community communicates. There is scope of this constructed caste-consciousness to include concepts of ethnicity, regionalism, and nationalism. This is the site of inquiry for the research where an economic entity such as a corporation is subject to analytical methods to arrive an understanding as to whether the Indian corporation is only an economic entity or do certain socio-cultural aspects of the organization also emerge.

1.2 Context of the Study on the Indian Corporate Plateau

What do the corporations which have originated in India signify? Are they only trade and business organizations or do they also reflect certain cultural ethos? If they are organizations conducting a particular business only, then why the need to elaborate on their existence by invoking certain traditions, certain cultural notions and certain characteristic features which resemble and posit a particular ethos of the land they have emerged from and currently work out of? If they represent and signify certain cultural productions, can they be then subject to a philosophical inquiry to examine their nature, scope and an inherent cultural-ideological basis? Can there be an approach to study them from a non-economic, non-positivist methodological framework? In an Indian context, can there be scope for developing theoretical frameworks to better understand the role of these organizations in relation to the social, political, and cultural realms that they are part of and engage with? Also, what role does a particular Caste-community consciousness play in the communicative practices of these corporations?

This sub-chapter attempts to approach the context of the present study by, one, outlining the theoretical and methodological approaches to the discipline of organizational communication by mentioning its recorded ‘historical beginnings’ from the United States region, two, mentioning work done in India under the rubric of organizational/business communication, and three, narrow down on why a study on the Indian corporate realm deserves attention from perspectives and methodologies that can contribute to a wider understanding. The approach from these three positions lies not so much in the theoretical patterns followed by researchers from both regions but more so in the attempts at studying organizations either from the government or the private sectors only. Hence, the object of the study for existing researchers has become a business organization from the any of the two mentioned realms – private or

public corporation. By including studies on communication patterns in other organizations as well, the attempt here is also to cite researchers who have taken the labour to study and have thereby produced data and subsequent findings to elaborate on the overall business strategy of the management of these particular organizations - which are aimed at enhancing the productivity of their employees at one level, and to gain support from its various publics at another level. Hence, the point of research on organizational communication when subjected to canonical theory may not yield relevant results unless aspects of cultural-ideological elements are considered.

In the United States of America, Organizational Communication, like the Communication discipline, emerged, rather ‘accidentally and erratically’ (Redding, 1985), from an interdisciplinary context – first, as a discipline shaping the industrial workforce’s communication patterns and proliferating skills for ‘effective’ communication in corporate businesses on one hand, while training graduate students in gearing up for the industry on the other. This phase until 1940s, in the US, witnessed academicians from personnel administration, industrial psychology, business and speech communication who catered to the industry needs of having a ‘disciplined’ workforce which understood the way management of a company communicated to them and in turn reciprocated favourably in accordance with the management’s policies and practices. Secondly, the theories and research practices that now shape the discipline of organizational communication, since 1940s, have also been borrowed from sociology, psychology, political science, linguistic theory, speech communication and communication. Though it was in the late 1960s that the label ‘organizational communication’ was first accepted officially, the field from there on has constituted theories and research practices by scholars dedicated to this discipline at a brisk pace. However, it is to be noted that this documented history of approaches to the field organizational

communication and its growth into a discipline is situated in the North American region, primarily in the North American industries and Universities. Linda Putnam and Kathleen Krone have documented this evolution in their compilation *Organizational Communication Volumes 1-5* published in 2006 comprising of essays and articles that have led to a grouping of researches and researchers from this particular area of study which eventually led to the birth of the academic discipline.

Current research has, however, shifted in an undulant from the mode of studying organization's communication from an information processing perspective to rhetorical, cultural, and political perspectives and the focus has been on an interpretive mode of research where-in researchers have posed questions to the existing order of human relations within organizations from interdisciplinary theoretical platforms.

However, researchers in India working under the disciplinary lineage of Organizational Communication seem to hold-on to the information processing perspective while approaching organizations for study. Udai Pareek's (2006) contribution in the broad area of Organizational Behaviour and Communication in India suggests, based on approaches borrowed from theories originating from scholars in the United States, that for effective managing of an organization it is vital for members of the management to understand the culture of its employees and thereby devise a strategy of communication for inducing a climate which is favourable for establishing a uniform and pervasive work ethic across the organization. In short, the effort of the organization's management is to create a guidebook for practicing human resource managers and also management students as well to benefit their own business practices. Though the study by Pareek is extensive theoretically, the formulation lacks material by not articulating, within the research context, the persistent complexities of 'Indian' culture such as physical attributes, caste, gender, regionalism, and

nepotism - all these biases which essentially have an inhuman and anti-social character, though sometimes legitimized by organizations themselves, and may work as factors in deciding the selection of the workforce. This workforce will be required initially to understand and imbibe the organizational ethos, and eventually assist in building the organization, economically or socio-politically. The phenomenon of family-run businesses, political parties, educational institutions, media houses, and autonomous bodies working for the 'upkeep and welfare of Indian' society recognize (Thorat & Newman, 2010) the above mentioned conditions in different formulations and consider them as the parameters based on which the administration and planning of these particular organizations is then strategized. In this context, Pareek's work can be regarded as one which helps strengthen the status quo than pose a challenge, even a weak one, to the existing order and proliferation of organizations' beliefs, value systems, and overall work ethic. In another research work Pavan Kumar and Vijay Giri (2009) studied the link between organizational communication and job satisfaction from an effects approach. Their study was based on a questionnaire administered to employees of organizations and data was collected and presented as to how more organizational communication – communication from management to employees - helped employees gain more gratification from the job which thereby improved their performance. Clearly, Kumar & Giri seem to have assumed that communication processes within organizations involve the following: members of management talking to employees, sending them regular circulars and notices, organizing employee-oriented events, extensive branding to remind employees of the organization's goals, predominant display of vision and mission statements, one on one meetings, and reiterating the importance of working for that organization when compared to any other organization in that field of work. Alarming, Kumar & Giri do not recognize that the production of these communication practices – content and form – is also essential data when it comes to understanding the organization and

its culture & ideology. A more recent work by Rajhans (2012) also tends to tread similar path but eschews previously employed methodologies. Rajhans' work on studying the effectiveness of communication practices in an engineering corporation used interviews of the firm's personnel based on random selection. The result of this study indicates that the 'art of persuasion and effective downward communication' helps in increasing the productivity of its employees and takes the corporation 'forward'. The focus of these studies, as can be gathered from a reading of them, seems to be from the corporation management's point of view only. Contesting these 'positivist' and information-processing perspectives of organizational communication, Stanley Deetz (1992) mentions that, "the corporation itself is often treated as a simple existing relational form. On reflection most know that modern organizations are particular historical constructions, constructed towards certain ends". Deetz' argument serves two purposes if applied, cautiously, in an Indian context – firstly it will help researchers to look at organizations from an ethnographic, archaeological, and genealogical point of view and study them based on methods from social sciences or humanities disciplines, thereby borrowing from critical-cultural theoretical foundations, and secondly, allow researchers to be able to link the historical data with current findings generated from an organization's communication practices, hence revealing newer understandings of that organization itself which may be totally different from what it chooses to communicate to its publics.

A study by Gopinath and Prasad (2012) reveals the complexities and flawed presentation of data involved in international business textbooks about the case study of Coca-Cola's exit from India in the 1970s. These researchers used a hermeneutic approach to arrive at findings that brought to light new knowledge regarding the Indian government's policies and the stand-off that lasted before the exit of Coca-Cola, unlike what was described in the textbooks.

The study also found the nexus between the state machinery and the management of Coca-Cola. Though not a comprehensive study, it suggests that organizations can be studied from perspectives other than the ones embodied by the researchers cited in the preceding paragraphs. Though this is just one citation and that too of a company not originating in India, the attempt is to present that both public and private corporations in India which claim to be building the 'new nation' can come under the lens of research and can be looked at closely to understand their claims by studying their communication(s) – what is the India that is being visualized? How different or similar is it to the ideas of India presented since recorded versions of history? What is it that is being presented to the various segments of the populace? Who are the ones benefiting from the rise of not only the communication of these organizations but also the growth of the organization itself? Shiv Ganesh (2003) in his study 'Organizational Narcissism: Technology, Legitimacy, and Identity in an Indian NGO' asserts that "... the development of ICT at DV serves as evidence of a narcissistic organizational identity, and that such organizational narcissism is especially evident in the organization's privileging its own legitimacy over a sense of accountability". Ganesh used discourse analysis and interview methods to arrive at his findings about this particular NGO located in India.

Can organizational communication studies in India emerge out the disciplinary realm and elicit data that can look at the production of organizations itself? Can the hierarchy existing in these organizations be studied? Who are the members of the management, where do they come from, what ethics do they carry into the organization, and where are these values, ethics, norms inspired from? Who are the publics of an organization? Can an understanding be arrived at as to why certain people become employees of a certain organization and not any other? Does the communication of the organization symbolize a certain ideological

schema which is drawn from historical, socio-political conditions? If yes, can the study of communication within these organizations help generate data that could unearth the ideology of these organizations? Can studies also generate data to primarily understand the communication process as a production of knowledges, behaviours, and attitudes? More than organizational communication emerging into a discipline, a realm of study only, can organizational communication research in India aid in explaining the realm of organizations and their claims?

In the last few centuries, India witnessed regime changes politically from 15th century onwards – having been ruled by Islamic kings partially, the colonial British Empire from mid 1800s, Nehruvian ‘Socialist’ paradigm post 1947, and the post liberalized regime after the economic reforms of 1991/92. In this context, how have these ideologies of Indian origin traversed through various junctures of socio-political regimes? Can it be said that these notions are of the past and the present day India is completely out of these systems of thought? Have organizations adopted the new mode of capitalist development completely? Or, can these organizations be studied to examine the presence and perpetuation of any ideological continuities from a particular past?

Commentaries on the favourable economic policies supported by the Indian government resulting in the ‘evolving’ and ‘promising’ economy supported by corporations in India have been the recent best sellers in the book publishing and sales industry (Das, 2000; Piramal & Ghoshal, 2002). It will be interesting to study the ideology of new emerging business in India and what they portray about themselves. Mainstream reports in the media have also celebrated a ‘Baniya’ ethic in the practice of businesses in India. The diversity of cultures within the geographical boundaries of India has been even diversely historicized and the emerging understandings of these cultures - political, economic, social, and cultural - have

been seasoned with grand narratives based on religious discourse at one level which later on evolved into patriotism and nationalism (Nehru, 1992), and recent evaluations (Mani, 2005) that tend to theorize and challenge the dominant narrative at a different level. Complexities such as caste, gender, region, and religion have been instrumental in shaping, modifying, and sometimes obliterating the lives of people in various fields of social life within the geographical realm of India. These notions have also contributed in the production of human relations in the country. It can be said that not even a single area from the socio-political, cultural, and economic realms has been unscathed by the consciousness of caste, gender, region, and religion.

In the context of management disciplines, researchers and academics have enthusiastically propagated ethical business management practices based on tenets from the Hindu religion. Saraswat (2005) in his essay ‘Reflections on Spiritual Foundations of Human Values for Global Business Management’ argues for the indoctrination of various Vedic principles for the ‘efficient’ conduct of business and advocates a ‘new spirituality’ for the 21st century. He says “The architecture of Hindu spirituality proposed in this paper can be easily presented to students of management in a non-religious and non-sectarian manner. All esoteric terms from Sanskrit, the sacred language of Hindu scriptures, have been avoided in this formulation but the essential doctrines emanating from the Rig-Veda into the Upanishads and thence to Bhagavad-Gita, the most popular of Hindu sacred books, have been captured.” There are also other works by academicians and researchers who advocate the use of Hindu religious techniques and tools for the conduct of not only business corporations but also organizations which have their geographic and cultural ‘roots’ in India. The tenets and ethos pronounced by the Hindu religion, the dominant religious force in India, however, has been examined and valued (Phule, 1991; Ambedkar, 1949 & 2002; Ilaiah, 2004 & 2007; Omvedt, 1995) as being

inimical to the social fabric and which has burgeoned into an oppressive structure inhibiting a large section of the populace from realizing their personal and social capacities in areas of human conduct and thereby their very being. The segregation of people into castes produced a certain economy for individuals to conduct business and thereby establish a code, a doctrine of business ethos based on sanctions moderated by another set of individuals responsible for the creation and propagation of the code. This code, though introduced thousands of years ago, symbolizing a set of beliefs and practices, has emerged into an ideology or many attendant ideologies that may or may not be different from it where the ideas of this particular code originated. The effort of this study would be to explore these tendencies of the Indian corporate plateau.

Organizational Communication research, in this regard, can offer that multidisciplinary platform to ascertain the ideological bearings of the Indian corporate plateau which constitutes the geographical, political, social, historical, economic and cultural realms.

1.3 Gnana Aloysius on Cultural Nationalism

As outlined in the above sub-chapter about the need to study the emergence and growth of corporations in India from not only economic and historical perspectives but to also focus on their cultural appropriations and productions, the present study borrows from Gnana Aloysius' explication on the phenomenon of cultural nationalism in an Indian regional context. In his description of competing ideologies working in tandem and in contrast, Aloysius outlines a broad theory to describe the elements of the 'nationalist' assertion that led to the events of India gaining political independence from the British government in 1947. While Aloysius' argument aims at studying the various *Savarna* discourses surrounding the idea of a nation and nationalism that the ruling elites have appropriated for the majority of the populace to follow, before and after 1947, the aim has been to sift through his theoretical arguments on the contours of cultural nationalism and its working in an Indian corporations' context only. Corporations which have emerged in India are situated as units of analysis to arrive at an understanding of their ideological-cultural construction. The range of corporations selected, the communicated texts, the context and method of analysis have been covered in the preceding and succeeding chapters.

Aloysius (1998: p. 131-132) says that "The articulation of cultural nationalism revolves around first, the beliefs concerning the distinctness, integrity, uniqueness and superiority of one's culture and second, the claim that such a culture is the proper and legitimate repository of collective and determinative power. The culture is named and identified, its contours delineated and lineage traced, its rise and fall in history noted and potential threats to it identified. Then this sanctified culture, with its internal power-configuration, is projected as the normative model for the present and future nation. Finally, the demand is raised that

collective power congrue with this ‘national’ culture. Cultural-nationalist articulation is thus a process that sets forth the nation as an ideological-cultural construct. The complex process of selection, rejection, modification and codification of a normative national culture from amorphous pre-modern traditions does not take place in a vacuum. Nations and nationalisms, not only as forms of transition from one of kind of society to another, but also as ideological-cultural constructs, need to be situated within one and the same socio-historical context and understood as a continuity and break in history”.

Aloysius’ articulation allows for situating the corporate as an entity for analysis in a particular socio-historical context that is peculiar to the Indian region. While caste, gender, and religion form the most potent categories of cultural constructs emerging from this socio-historical context, the Indian corporation represents a break as well as continuity within this ideological-cultural sphere. Damodaran (2009) in his documentation notes that apart from the ‘traditional’ merchant communities there were also other castes & communities who ‘left’ their caste-based profession and took up vocations of commerce and trading, and in a more ‘modern’ sense, were the cogs producing what we today known as the business corporations signifying the giant wheel of capitalism. Though this phenomenon denotes a break in historically produced reality where duties based on the caste they were born into was considered normative for the populace, it is to be noted, however, that the continuity lies in the phenomenon where it was predominantly men from *Savarna* castes who had the privilege of transgressing caste-bound duties and exploring newer grounds for livelihood. Within this dynamic of the emergence of entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds creating platforms for themselves in the process of organizing and managing a particular business corporation, what is the ideological-cultural construct that is being shaped? Does cultural consciousness subsume the economic relations and its consequences? If it does subsume, then how does this

diversity of community values and ethos reflect in the way they run their corporation? Does the corporate itself represent a construct such as a nation? If it does, then can communication be studied to arrive at a potent analysis and thereby qualify the corporation's existence? As the succeeding chapters demonstrate, the analysis of communication does reveal a tendency of the corporation towards producing a patriarchal, brahmanized, nationalist consciousness.

On what constitutes cultural nationalism in an Indian context, Aloysius (ibid.) says, "These three dimensions of cultural nationalist ideology; Vedic Brahmanism as the cultural core, a pan-Indian territorial context, and antagonistic polarity with the West/modernity- became the sacred tenets of the new civil religion and informed all further elaborations and controversies. Together they formed a single perspective for the middle-class, nationalist movement to view the past, present, and future of the nation in the making". It is in this broad theoretical context of Aloysius' idea that the Indian corporate plateau is situated for analysis. Vedic Brahmanism in itself constitutes notions of identity based on genetic and anatomical categories leading to the socio-political construction and consumption of identities based on ethnicity, nativity, Caste-community, gender and ability. As Ambedkar () points out, mentioning mythical Vedic god-incarnate Manu's social scheme as, "... a permanent social relationship among all classes to be observed – to be enforced – at all times in all places and purposes". When faced with resistance, opposition or threat, this social scheme, the *Varnavyavastha* also reproduced itself to co-opt, reform and reshape, but eventually uphold the power equation as tabled by the power elite - the Brahmanical classes. The unit of the endogamous patriarchal family becomes the descendant, progenitor, and carrier of the Caste-community consciousness. As mentioned by Ambedkar (2010) in his work *Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis, and Development*, that "endogamy is the only characteristic that is peculiar to caste" and "with exogamy as the rule there could be no caste, for exogamy means fusion" and "the

superimposition of endogamy on exogamy means the creation of caste”. This reading of the caste system provides a theoretical framework on the genesis of this social model peculiar to the Indian region.

The generic Indian corporation is one such entity which has transformed itself from a feudal-trade beginning to an institution with a caste-corporate outlook, from a religious-ritual institution to one of ideological-cultural, thereby extending Aloysius’ theoretical argument that within the ethos of cultural nationalism there is not just an antagonistic polarity with the West/modernity but a selective appropriation of modernity. This particular phenomenon emerges from the idea of Brahmanism to the ideas and manifestation of neo-Brahmanism, thereby forming categories of the neo-Brahmanical. The Indian business classes before 1947 and the contemporary business corporations were and have been cautiously collaborating with middle-eastern, European, and eastern populaces for trade and commercial purposes. Mentioning the commercial relations in the early nineteenth century, Roy (2012: pp. 198-199) says. “In all three cities, the agency houses developed close ties with Indian merchants and entrepreneurs. In Bombay, Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy formed a partnership with Charles Forbes, and was the chief agent of Jardine-Matheson, the agency house of Canton. In Calcutta, between 1833 and 1846 Dwarkanath Tagore, the most prominent Bengali entrepreneur of his times, was a partner of William Carr and William Prinsep. A number of lesser known Indian firms and individuals partnered with European enterprise in indigo and opium. It was not only merchants who came to India after 1813, many artisan-entrepreneurs did too. Tanneries, glass works, iron smelting and carpentry workshops were established. In Calcutta, Madras and Bombay could be found ‘British artisans and manufacturers of almost every description of trade that is exercised in [Britain]’. The area within these cities, which were to develop factories after 1850, began to grow as hubs of artisan enterprise. A good

example would be the river bank across Calcutta, in Howrah where shipyards and warehouses had begun to develop long before the jute mills and engineering factories of the late nineteenth century”.

One ardent Brahmanical nationalist and a leader of the Indian National Congress Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya represented the Indian compradors and was very hopeful of establishing sound economic relations with the ‘Empire’ and said that, “The hope of Indians for the industrial development of their country has been further strengthened by the knowledge that, like their noble predecessors in office, the present Viceroy and the Secretary of State are also convinced of the necessity of a liberal policy being adopted in respect of Indian industrial development” (Ghosh, 1985). Ghosh also mentions that this change in government policy “was reflected mainly in the setting up of the Indian Industrial Commission 1916-18 and its Report recommending a positive policy of industrialization, the appointment of the Indian Fiscal Commission in 1921 and of Tariff Boards for selected industries in subsequent years and in the grant of subsidies or protection to certain industries such as iron and steel, cotton, paper, matches, heavy chemicals and sugar. This led to the expansion of the cotton and iron and steel industries, the involvement of Indian big capital in paper, cement, jute, sugar and a few other industries, and the emergence of new groups of the Indian big bourgeoisie - the Birlas, Singhanias, Sri Rams, Goenkas, Dalmia Jains, Surajmull-Nagarmulls, Ruia, Poddars, Thapars, Walchands, Chettiars, Naidus, etc.” (1985: pp. 194). This Report itself mentions (pp. 64) within the chapter titled ‘The Indian in Industries’ that, “The castes which exhibit the highest degree of intelligence are, with few exceptions, those whose functional characteristics have in the past been religious leadership, government service, or trade, and it is from these that the leading industrialists, financiers and merchants have hitherto been mostly drawn. Though the representatives of these classes have attained a

high degree of success in Bombay and Gujarat, and though there are numerous instances of successful Indian industrial enterprise in other parts of the country, Indian capitalists have generally followed their ancestral tradition of rural trade, and have confined themselves to the finance of agriculture and of such industries as already existed. When communications were improved and India was brought into effective touch with the outside world, traders took advantage of the changed position merely to extend the scale of their previous operations. Like the landlords, they lent money to the cultivators and found a profitable investment in landed property.”

Traders and businessmen from religions other than Hinduism were regarded as quite ‘meritorious’ in their business acumen. The Report also mentions (pp. 65) how, “The Parsees and Hindus from northern Bombay coast districts are recorded, at the beginning of the British occupation, as taking, with the Mahomedan sects of Khojas, Memons and Bohras, a most important share in the trade of the port as contractors, merchants, financiers and shipbuilders, and have throughout shown themselves little, if at all, inferiors to the Europeans in enterprise, and usually in command of more capital”. However, during these economic negotiations the cultural core of the negotiating elite emerges as one which carries a semblance of ‘Indianness’ and hence, ethos of the Vedic-Brahmanic accord becomes protected, preserved, and when untenable, co-opted. Thus, the business organizations produce themselves gradually leading to an ideological-cultural construct of the neo-Brahmanical. Jodhka (2015) mentions how the British colonial rule introduced changes in the social and economic life on India which transformed social relations quite drastically. It then becomes safe to infer that the institution of Caste, which is central to socio-economic life in India, also underwent changes in its skeletal structure. However, towards the late 20th century the growth of pan-India business organizations also had to continually engage with other business organizations

based out of different parts of the globe. In this process of engagement, appropriation, and consumption of a global dynamic, the Indian corporation has itself been located in the amazement of having to negotiate with global events in order to uphold its regional specifics inscribed in its body-politic. In the global-western-modern context the corporation presents itself as a meritorious, fair, customer-centric, labour-friendly, socially responsible organization whereas the gradual infusion of regional-cultural material - embedded with notions of social hierarchy - in its viscera opens up scope for dissecting it to gain a clearer reading of its cross-section i.e. patriarchal family-owned businesses, business ethics drawn from their Caste-community consciousness, use of caste-based social networks for securing and shifting jobs or careers, observance and propagation of religious and nationalist events as a unifying practice, and covert emphasis on surnames, community, and gender for identification & assimilation practices.

Jaffrelot (2007, pp. 354) presents that in the socio-political history of India the concepts of *Swadeshi* and nationalism which were integral to the *Savarna* assertion during the early 20th century are now making a comeback towards the late 20th and early 21st centuries. In his work is mentioned that, “Ultimately, Indian society’s unwillingness to disown its age-old values and traditions is manifest in the realisation that globalisation cannot be the core thought of India; it is India which will be the core of India, with the world as a marginal influence” (ibid). The emergence of traditional businesses into pan-Indian and ‘global’ business corporations from the late 20th century has further necessitated urgency for these organizations to establish an identity which veers around negating diverse socio-political equations to posit a unitary *Savarna* discourse as the pan-Indian discourse. This construction and presentation borrows its social framework from an imagination of an ethnicity and historical identity based on a Vedic-Brahmanic core, a pan-Indian extent, and a selective

cultural opposition to its influences from the middle-eastern, European, or eastern corporations. It also becomes vital to understand in the Indian corporation's context that despite borrowing certain cultural, economic and commercial-transactional practices from different regions of the globe, the presentation of its ethos signify embedded notions of 'Indianness' as mentioned above. This notion of 'Indianness' or an Indian consciousness is presented by analysing the metaphors which are embedded in the corporations' communication. In the context of nuclear semiotic systems creating a communication and asserting it as a cultural norm, Lotman mentions (1990, pp. 128), "Whether we have in mind language, politics or culture, the mechanism is the same: one part of the semiosphere (as a rule one which is part of its nuclear structure) in the process of self description creates its own grammar; this self-description may be real or ideal depending on whether its orientation is towards the present or towards the future. Then it strives to extend these norms over the whole semiosphere. A partial grammar of one cultural dialect becomes the metalanguage of description of culture as such". However, Lotman's hypothesis of 'a' grammar becoming 'the' grammar in the process of self description needs to be located in the institutional structure of ethnicity and its dynamic within the ideological-cultural context of the corporation. As Caste-community is a product of historical relations, a generator of the present status-quo, and a fluidic social signifier for the immediate future, it becomes necessary to appropriate Lotman's articulation within the web of meta-structural institutions such as gender, religion, region, governance and trade, among others, which form the predominant socio-semiotic relations in India.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Interdisciplinary Approaches

As mentioned in the preceding chapter, Indian economic, trade, and industrial histories have been in the process of study and their documentation by historians and social scientists has revealed discursivities, which were earlier unknown, on organized commercial practices that were prevalent from medieval times to recent socio-political regimes. Based on these works it can be said that business communities in India primarily organized themselves around Caste-community based rationale and acquired wealth through conformatory negotiations with the ruling administration during the Mughal rule, the entry of the East India Company, the imperial British government, and the Indian government post 1947. Over hundreds of years the contours of this network of filiations was largely shaped by inherited wealth and community linkages spread across the length and breadth of the country, with meagre exceptions. This socio-historical trajectory has been pointed out by a few historians with SK Ghosh emerging as a rigorous documenter amongst them through his work ‘The Indian Big Bourgeoisie’ (1985). In contemporary times spanning the last fifty to sixty years, the Indian business classes comprising of traditional and neo-mercantile communities have emerged as corporations with varied commercial and business interests. Apart from traditional business communities, families and individuals from other Castes and communities have also forayed into entrepreneurship and have established themselves as forerunners in trade, commerce, and industry thus forming an Indian corporate plateau. However, it cannot be said with certainty that the current Indian corporate plateau has surpassed traditional notions of Caste-community based ritual duties in order to become entrepreneurs and vie for a share in India’s economic scheme. It can be observed that traditional business communities still have a majority stake in India’s business realm and other *Savarnas* form a paltry component of this

contingent. The ethnic, genealogical and regional conditions leading to the expansion and formalization of traditional businesses are vital in situating the contemporary Indian corporation. It becomes imperative to understand the network of filiations and observe its support to the development of the post-90s phenomenon of corporatization of the Indian business communities and the formation of the Indian corporate plateau. The birth of an entrepreneurial consciousness cannot be isolated from the conditions which produce it, the conditions themselves arising out of the necessitated social order in relation to its geopolitics. How could one study the working of such a consciousness? Can relying on economic data alone help one arrive at a close understanding of this phenomenon? Does the negotiation for administrative or political power process present enough material to observe, examine, and verify this socially fraught process? What are the possible approaches to enlighten oneself with answers to these questions?

Stanley Deetz (1992) mentions that, “the corporation itself is often treated as a simple existing relational form. On reflection most know that modern organizations are particular historical constructions, constructed towards certain ends”. In the context of this research study, extending Deetz’ argument of understanding the historical conditions leading to the emergence of a particular organization/corporation, the philosophy it embodies through the owners and management, it can be hypothesized that the contemporary communication literature follows a certain syntax, a value system that concretizes the organization’s existence. Deetz’ argument serves two purposes if applied, cautiously, in an Indian context – firstly, it will help researchers to look at organizations from a genealogical point of view and study them based on methods from social sciences or humanities disciplines, and secondly, allow researchers to be able to link the historical data with current findings generated from the organization’s communication practices, hence revealing newer understandings of that

organization itself which may be totally different from what it chooses to communicate to its publics.

The attempt of the research has been to bring to fore certain communicational aspects of these corporations that have been naturalized over time and have been regarded as being historically legitimate; being representative of the organization's embodiment of certain metaphors signifying the invocation of certain cultural aspects embedded in the cultural and the national body-politic. As indicated earlier in section 1.1, studying forms of communication can help in bringing together diverse epistemological designs to aid in the process of analysing this entrepreneurial consciousness prevalent among the Indian corporate plateau.

The current research aims at approaching these questions by engaging with the literature available in the public domain i.e. data on the websites of the selected corporate houses. Using the hermeneutic theory of Wilhelm Dilthey, and borrowing from Semiotics in general and metaphor analysis in particular, the hypothesis is that the communication used by the corporation is derived from a certain Caste-community consciousness which emerge from the religious beliefs of its owners and the region they come from within India.

2.2 Dilthey's Approach

This study attempts at bringing together research methods from hermeneutics, linguistics, and semiotics while approaching the corporate literature using metaphor analysis as a tool. Jensen (2002) notes that twentieth century philosopher Paul Ricoeur was pivotal in contributing to the modern hermeneutic philosophical tradition by identifying a transition in the 19th century between earlier hermeneutic practices of interpreting meanings by engaging with religious texts and the practices where the engagement expanded to secular texts as well. Ricoeur (1981) says this shift from a regional to general hermeneutics was advanced by theologian and philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher. Mueller-Vollmer (1985) explains Schleiermacher's *General Theory of Hermeneutics* (1819) as the founding work on modern hermeneutics. Schleiermacher in his theory (1819) says hermeneutics deals only with the art of understanding and not the presentation of what has been understood and that presentation of a written word or text is only a special part of the whole process of the art of speaking or writing which can be understood based on a few general principles (Schleiermacher, 1819). Here, Schleiermacher points to the idea that interpretation within the hermeneutics tradition is done by people with a sound artistic capability as both difficult and simple passages need to be understood fully within the context to interpret a text critically. He says difficulties with certain passages in a text arise only because the easier ones have not yet been understood. Also, hermeneutics should not, however, concern itself with the specific body of rules found in the hermeneutic treatises of the theologians or jurists. Nor it should include the presentation of what one has understood to others. However, Wilhelm Dilthey extended the linguistically centred idea of Schleiermacher and focused on examining gestures and symbols as well to arrive at an understanding of an individual, an organization, or texts (Mueller-Vollmer, 1985). Language, for Dilthey, did not only constitute the start of the hermeneutic

process (Makkreel and Rodi, 2010).

“Because our mental life finds itself its fullest and most complete expression only through language, explication finds completion and fullness only in the interpretation of the written testimonies of human life” – Wilhelm Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. VII, p.21.

For the research work to be undertaken, of trying to understand and interpret the literature of Indian corporations - within historical, social, genealogical & ethinc contexts - which acts as testimonies for the corporation and its organizing functions – from a hermeneutics perspective based on the work *Critique of Historical Reason* by Wilhelm Dilthey, the 19th – 20th century philosopher has been identified.

According to Dilthey, the formal methods of interpretation in the human and social sciences are derived from those ordinary forms of understanding that are characteristic of human life and social interaction. He says, "Understanding arises, first of all, in the interests of practical life where people are dependent on dealing with each other. They must communicate with each other. The one must know what the other wants. So first the elementary forms of understanding arise. They are like letters of the alphabet which, when joined make higher forms of understanding possible... the relation between life-expressions and the world of mind which governs all understanding, obtains here in its most elementary form; according to this, understanding tends to spell out mental content which becomes its goal". Dilthey summarizes that engaging with the activity of understanding a text yields meanings expressed in the work and that understanding need not necessarily reconstruct the mind of the author. On the relation between an objective mind and elementary understanding, Dilthey says, "In this objective mind the past is a permanently enduring present for us. Its realm extends from style of life and the forms of social intercourse to the system of purposes which society has

created for itself and to custom, law, state, religion, art, science and philosophy... thus the individual orientates himself/herself in the world of the objective mind".

This background of knowledge that Dilthey propounds, which places individual life-expressions into a common context, is facilitated by the articulated or conditioned order of the objective mind which gradually embraces particular homogenous systems like religion, state, law, family, etc. In the study's context, engaging with texts which come from sources such as the government, religious bodies, corporations, etc. and interpreting them based on the principles outlined by Dilthey becomes a methodology in itself and also an effective tool for interpreting not only the authorial intentions but also the historical and social contexts of the emergence and existence of such texts and the ideas within them that are propagated, in this context, to the employees of a corporation by the management, reiterated to the management themselves, and proposed to the public outside the organization's physical ambit. However, language, for Dilthey, did not only constitute the start of a hermeneutic process. On the need to move from elementary forms, such as the written text, to higher forms of understanding, such as the signs and symbols – in this research context the colors used, the logo design of the corporation, the management group and their historicity - are essential to arrive at understanding of an individual or an organization and the patterns of communication which emerge from it.

The methodology that the research aims at applying is at two levels not independent of each other. Primarily, applying Dilthey's hermeneutics philosophy as a method in approaching and studying the production of texts through the meanings generated, as cited above. Secondly, while applying a hermeneutics approach simultaneously using Metaphor Analysis as a tool at two levels – one, at the level of the approach of the research work's pattern which is to study the historical, social, genealogical & ethnic contexts in the production of the corporations'

literature, which is being introduced here as the 'Production' metaphor - and two, to study and seek information regarding the usage of textual and visual metaphors by the management of the selected corporations and arrive at their cultural, symbolic meanings mentioned on their official websites.

2.3 Metaphor Analysis – Ricoeur's Schema

Metaphors are words/phrases or symbols of expression used as figurative elements of communication which supplant one experience in terms of another. Metaphor analysis as a research approach was prescribed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in their essay 'The Metaphorical Structure of the Human Conceptual System' (1980). The authors, from a Cognitive Sciences discipline, propound the view that patterns of individual and collective thought and action can be understood based on everyday cognitive structures which are in turn based on linguistic models. However, Lakoff & Johnson tend to overlook that metaphors are human constructions when they say that there are natural occurring metaphors. For instance, they use the example of 'Time is Money'. For Lakoff & Johnson, this particular expression is natural and the derivation of its meaning is what is embedded in a particular culture. As a departure from their position it can be arrived at that the use of this metaphor in itself signifies a particular cultural production of cognitive structures and meanings within these structures. Why is time important? For whom is it important? What is the relation between time, the individual who can make or spend money and, and the category of money as a functional unit itself?

Rudolf Schmitt (2005) reviews the ideas of Lakoff & Johnson (1980) mentioned in their essay and proposes that though their method bridged the gap between disciplines it needs to be extended further, as Schmitt terms Systematic Metaphor Analysis as a method for qualitative research. He says that metaphors as described by Lakoff & Johnson are not isolated but appear in the form of metaphorical concepts. However, Ricoeur's schema on the metaphor creates a thorough understanding of how certain metaphors can be linked to texts and that an understanding of the metaphors can help in understanding the whole work itself. Ricoeur says, "From one point of view, the understanding of the metaphor can serve as a

guide to the understanding of longer texts, such as a literary work. This point of view is that of explanation; it concerns only with that aspect of meaning which we have called ‘sense’, that is, the immanent pattern of discourse” (Ricoeur, 1981). Ricoeur suggests that one particular method to arrive at an understanding of a particular text, or a work, is to interpret the parts and explicate them. However, he also suggests another method wherein he says, “From another point of view, the understanding of a work taken as a whole gives the key to the metaphor. This other point of view is that of interpretation proper; it develops the aspect of meaning which we have called ‘reference’, that is, the intentional orientation towards a self. So if we apply explanation to ‘sense’, as the immanent pattern of the work, then we can reserve interpretation for the sort of inquiry concerned with the *power of the work* to project a world of its own and to set in motion the hermeneutical circle... Our working hypothesis thus invites us to proceed from metaphor to text at the level of ‘sense’, then from text to metaphor at the level of reference of a work to a world and to a self, that is, at the level of interpretation proper” (Ricoeur, 1981). Using Ricoeur’s hypothesis for testing the canvas of a particular corporation’s literature will help in gaining an entry point by synthesizing the theoretical ground discussed in Chapter 1 and laying open the ‘work’. It can also be seen from Ricoeur’s hypothetical suggestion that the ‘sense’ and ‘reference’ he is proposing can be replaced for basic semiotic terminologies of signifier and signified. It is at this juncture that the use of semiotic theory becomes necessary methodologically to present a dense analysis of the said subject.

Hence, the use of Metaphor Analysis as a tool within the larger method of hermeneutics to situate the analysis from specific metaphors to a generic consciousness, and extending it to bring in notions of the cultural production of these metaphors, can be a signifier(s) of not just the owners’ management philosophy but the corporation’s business ethic as well.

It can be noticed that a preferential synthesis of a metaphor analysis method within hermeneutics and semiotics approaches can help in arriving at a conceptual understanding on the nature of communication in relation to the consciousness of these corporations.

2.4 Eco's S-code

Eco's theoretical framework marginally distinguishes a code from an s-code. He postulates that any communication or informational system consists of a set of signals or the syntactic system, a set of contents or the semantic system, a set of possible behavioural responses or meaning making by the destination, and a rule that combines the syntactic system with either the semantic system or the behavioural responses. This complex rule is what Eco terms as code and the former three sets as an S-code. For Eco, code covers not just the rules but also the notions regarding the syntactic, semantic and behavioural responses sets (Eco, 1979).

A Corporation's website embeds elements of an S-code. The use of a website, the design of web pages within it, the colours used for these web pages, the arrangement of text, pictures, graphics, or any other animation on the web page, the placement of links which provide information about the corporation, etc are the syntactic system. While the entire content i.e. the language used, the type of pictures and graphics used, the owner's testimonials, the management profiles, etc. become the semantic system, and finally the behavioural responses that emerge when both the syntactic and semantic are combined in various configurations, the S-code can be used for study and analysis. The corporation in itself can be appropriated as the code as it is the primary entity which brings together the elements of the s-code in a meaning making process. The semiotic whole comprising the corporation and its communication cannot be studied independently and an analysis has to rely on placing the corporation as a code i.e. as the monolith which produces the rules of engagement and its communication as the S-code which produces the meanings within the confines of the said rules.

Eco says, "S-codes are systems or 'structures' that can also subsist independently of any sort of significant or communicative purpose, and as such may be studied by information theory or by various types of generative grammar. They are made of finite sets of elements

oppositionally structured and governed by combinational rules that can generate both finite and infinite strings or chains of these elements”. Eco adds that, “Taken independently of other systems with which it can be correlated, an *s-code* is a structure; that is, a system (i) in which every value is established by positions and differences and (ii) which appears only when different phenomenon are mutually compared with reference to the same set of relations” (1979). Hence, the corporations’ literature cannot be sidelined as something that holds value as grammar alone. The literature embeds within it a consciousness which can be traced using the above mentioned methods. In this research’s scheme, one corporation will be identified as one S-code while the complete gamut of corporations taken up for the study will be identified as the code. The web of analysis being articulated here will be an attempt at revisioning organizational communication studies in India and suggest methodologies and methodological tools while understanding the cerebral viscera of the Indian corporate plateau and its functioning through its network of filiations.

3. The Existential Proposition

3.1 Invoking the Traditional

Corporations originating in India, whether owned by people from the Marwari, Kshatriya, Brahmin, or Shudra communities, invoke certain notions of the traditional when they describe the purpose of their business. This sub-chapter examines how different communities invoke their Caste-Community ideals in their communication, and thereby justify their existence and their operations.

The process of territorialisation of individuals and communities comprises of extending professional capabilities of their kindred within the cultural, socio-political, and geographical territorial contexts they come from. As extension of Caste-community networks and its manifestations nests in the rationale of being and having to be ‘traditional’ i.e. coming from a certain justification and proliferation of a certain event which occurred at a certain historic-mythical juncture(s), this process of territorialisation, in a neo-liberal framework of corporate existence, becomes a process of re-territorialisation for the ones identifying with the idea of the traditional which the corporate is invoking. The production of certain metaphors invoke a scheme of tradition resonating with ideas of nationalism, cultural nationalism, masculine egocentrism, cultural fraternity, and an ambiguous relationship oscillating between antagonism and sociability with ideas and materializations of modernity. Does communication play a role in this process of re-territorialisation and identification with a certain tradition? What kind of effort goes into coding communication with metaphors pregnant with ideas raising certain notions of the past? If it does, then would writing reveal these codes, these metaphors, these notions coming from a certain historization of tradition, intended at a certain manifestation of that tradition to realize a particular future? And then can this writing be studied to arrive at a certain understanding of not only the rampant ideas of tradition but also the design for the future? Wilhelm Dilthey in his work *Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol, VII, p.21 says, “Because our mental life finds itself its fullest and most complete expression only through language, explication finds completion and fullness only in the interpretation of the written testimonies of human life”. (Makkreel & Rodi, 2010). While the process of explication involves scrutiny of the

socio-political and historical context of the explicator to arrive at a certain understanding of not just the text but also its reader, the larger concern is, however, with identifying the written produce as a testimony of the producer. A close reading of the corporations' literature reveals an explication which rests on the notion that the very presence of literature which inclines towards producing an identity for the business corporate by iterating its origin, its emergence as what it is, its 'journey' towards being a 'legitimate' corporate entity, and its 'vision' and 'mission' towards contributing to the geographical space it thrives on, is itself a signification that commits itself as a testimony - a written sermon serving as an existential testimony, and an existential testimony serving as an existential proposition to the ones seeking to work with the corporate as employees.

The Aditya Birla Group is a family-run business organisation which has been operating from the Indian region for over a hundred and fifty years. The family owning and predominantly managing the business from its initial days to its current form are the Birlas – a Baniya community placed third in the hierarchy of the Hindu caste system, originating mainly from Rajasthan and Gujarat. Also known as Vyshyas, the individuals and communities belonging to this stratum of the Hindu social order have traditionally been subjected to pursue professions involving commerce, trade, banking and money lending, pawn brokerage, commodity trading, accumulation of capital, and entrepreneurship. The Birlas have followed this religious scheme rigorously. In their About Us page on their official website, there is a link called Heritage. This particular link mentions, “The roots of the Aditya Birla Group date back to the 19th century in the picturesque town of Pilani set amidst the Rajasthan desert. It was here that Seth Shiv Narayan Birla started trading in cotton, laying the foundation for the House of Birla. Through India's arduous times of the 1850s, the Birla business expanded rapidly. In the early part of the 20th century, the Group's founding father, Mr. Ghanshyamdas Birla, set up industries in critical sectors such as textiles and fibre, aluminium, cement, and chemicals. As a close confidant of Mahatma Gandhi, he played an active role in the Indian freedom struggle. He represented India at the first and second round-table conferences in London, along with Gandhiji. It was at Birla House in Delhi that the luminaries of the Indian freedom struggle often met to plot

the downfall of the British Raj. Mr. Ghanshyamdas Birla found no contradiction in pursuing business goals with the dedication of a saint, emerging as one of the foremost industrialists of pre-independence India. The principles by which he lived were soaked up by his grandson, Mr. Aditya Vikram Birla, the Group's legendary leader”.

The prominent metaphors which emerge from what the business group is saying about itself, are these – an adherence to a sense of belonging to the Indian region which emerges from the usage of the word roots; the notion of invoking the patriarchal idea of the family in mentioning the male members of the family as the flag bearers of their ‘successful’ run in the business; the ownership and claim of association with a complex nationalist social movement; and the tracing of the tradition to the idea of Dharma by mentioning the genealogical continuity of the ownership pattern of the company. The use of the word heritage itself raises the metaphor of belonging to a particular space, a particular time and a particular community, thereby exhibiting their ‘traditional’ identity. In the same element, other big business corporations in terms of revenue generated and people employed such as the Bajaj Group, the Reliance Group, the Essar Group, the Piramal Group, the Hinduja Group, and the Bharti Group amongst others are family-run organizations which come from a Baniya community background (the Hinduja Group owner’s are Lohanas who also trace their origin to a mythical Kshatriya claim to ancestry as well). In the respective corporations’ web pages the focus of their About Us page is clearly indicative of their commercial and familial genealogies.

The Bajaj groups mention their family patriarch Jamnalal Bajaj, and harps on the business corporation’s history from the colonial times. The web page mentions, “Founded in 1926, at the height of India's movement for independence from the British, the group has an illustrious history. The integrity, dedication, resourcefulness and determination to succeed which are

characteristic of the group today, are often traced back to its birth during those days of relentless devotion to a common cause. Jammnalal Bajaj, founder of the group, was a close confidant and disciple of Mahatma Gandhi. In fact, Gandhiji had adopted him as his son. This close relationship and his deep involvement in the independence movement did not leave Jammnalal Bajaj with much time to spend on his newly launched business venture. His son, Kamalnayan Bajaj, then 27, took over the reins of business in 1942. He too was close to Gandhiji and it was only after Independence in 1947, that he was able to give his full attention to the business. Kamalnayan Bajaj not only consolidated the group, but also diversified into various manufacturing activities. The present Chairman of the group, Rahul Bajaj, took charge of the business in 1965. Under his leadership, the turnover of the Bajaj Auto the flagship company has gone up from INR.72 million to INR. 120 billion, its product portfolio has expanded and the brand has found a global market. He is one of India's most distinguished business leaders and internationally respected for his business acumen and entrepreneurial spirit.”

To be noted is the emergence of metaphor to do with geographical territory of India, an adherence to a nationalist social movement against the colonial rule, and the focus on the patriarchal genealogy of the company. And most importantly, the drawing of attention to the pursuit of a profession based on Caste-community calling i.e. entrepreneurship as the Baniya's religiously driven dharmic quest which is significant in the mention of monetary acquisitions.

The Reliance groups belonging to brothers Mukesh and Anil Ambani also hinge on the notions of nationality and a celebrated patriarchal tradition. While the web page of Reliance Industries Limited belonging to Mukesh Ambani mentions, “The Reliance Group founded by Dhurubhai H Ambani (1932-2002), in India's largest private sector enterprise, with

businesses in the energy and materials value chain. Group's annual revenues are in excess of US\$ 66 billion. The Flagship Company, Reliance Industries Limited, is a Fortune Global 500 company and is the largest private sector company in India", Anil Ambani's Reliance ADA group's web page mentions, "Few men in history have made as dramatic a contribution to their country's economic fortunes as did the founder of Reliance, Sh. Dhirubhai H Ambani. Fewer still have left behind a legacy that is more enduring and timeless. As with all great pioneers, there is more than one unique way of describing the true genius of Dhirubhai: The corporate visionary, the unmatched strategist, the proud patriot, the leader of men, the architect of India's capital markets, and the champion of shareholder interest. But the role Dhirubhai cherished most was perhaps that of India's greatest wealth creator. In one lifetime, he built, starting from the proverbial scratch, India's largest private sector enterprise. When Dhirubhai embarked on his first business venture, he had a seed capital of barely US\$ 300 (around Rs 14,000). Over the next three and a half decades, he converted this fledgling enterprise into an Rs 60,000 crore colossus—an achievement which earned Reliance a place on the global Fortune 500 list, the first ever Indian private company to do so."

In the preceding eulogy about the corporate, the mentioning of the father figure and its implication in the profile of the corporate, the emphasis on revenue and wealth creation, the featuring of terms such as legacy and economic fortune draw attention to the metaphors used by the earlier mentioned corporate except for the nationalistic sentiment shared about the nationalistic social movement leading to the end of British political rule in 1947. This is probably because the founder of the Reliance group the late Mr. Dhirubhai Ambani was in his teens during the events that led to 1947 and probably could not contribute to it as much as the earlier mentioned patriarchs of Baniya businessmen. However, the mention of him being a

‘proud patriot’ illustrates the Ambanis’ urgency and desperation to align themselves with the ideas of being the sons of the soil in the Indian regional context.

The Etymology of the Essar Group’s name comes from its Chairman’s name Shashi Ruia and Vice Chairman Ravi Ruia. By joining the S from Shashi and the R from Ravi, the name Essar was coined. A family run business with interests in shipping, telecom, realty and outsourcing, the Essar Group on its web page says, “Essar was founded in 1969. The 21st century, for the company, has been all about consolidating and growing the businesses”. Though this corporate does not necessarily mention its roots and build on a traditional foundation, its emphasis of using a separate web page, points to the obligation of drawing significance to what it calls its entrepreneurial spirit. The page says, “Essar has been foraying into new international markets, and exploring new business areas in a bid to keep its entrepreneurial spirit alive, and to keep growing”. Further, on the same web page the ‘Vision’ statement says, “We will be a respected global entrepreneur, through the power of positive action”. This emphasis of being an organization on order to primarily realize entrepreneurial and business achievements only is draws significance to its traditional roots of being a business entity answering traditional calls of duty that a Vyshya is supposed to do as per the Hindu religious code.

Another family owned and driven corporate proud of its tradition in the business sector, is the Piramal Group. The web page mentioning its profile in the Who We Are page and Our Journey page outlines a cursive story of how its chief architect built the company from scratches to its current standing of being a world-renowned conglomeration. This particular ‘entrepreneurial spirit’ and business outlook of the owners being mentioned abundantly signifies their commitment to ally with their traditional calling of profession of commerce, trade, and industry. The transfer of business from father to son is an exemplar - Gopikrishna

Piramal starts Morarjee Mills in Mumbai but passes away shortly, after which his elder son Ashok Piramal takes charge. Unfortunately, he too passes away after a few years leaving the business to the next male in the family Ajay Piramal. Currently, Ajay Piramal is the Chairman of the Piramal Group with his wife, son, and daughter holding key positions in the various subsidiaries and units of this business corporation. Ajay's son Anand is already holding the position of the Executive Director, Piramal Group. The values, core ideas, and the logo of the group will be taken up for analysis in the next chapter.

Though it began its operations as a registered business organization in India, the Hinduja Group shifted its headquarters to Iran first and then to London, its current location. However, this business organization continues its commercial operations in India apart from other countries in the world. On its home page is a picture of the Group's founder late Parmanand Deepchand Hinduja occupying at least forty percent of the entire page's space. Its page titled *Our Group* mentions a history or the growth and draws parallels of its emergence with the Indus Valley civilization. The page says, "The saga of the Hinduja Group started in Sind, the cradle of the Indus Valley Civilisation, where more than 5,000 years ago, the human race learnt its first lessons in organised business and banking. Parmanand Deepchand Hinduja, a young entrepreneur from the fabled town of Shikarpur, realised early in life that business was all about spotting opportunities, and seizing them wherever they surfaced. He travelled to Mumbai in 1914, and quickly learnt the ropes of business. The business journey, which began in Sind, entered the international arena with an office in Iran (the first outside India) in 1919. Merchant Banking and Trade were the twin pillars of the business and the Group remained headquartered in Iran, until 1979 when it moved to Europe. The Group has expanded and diversified its businesses, with significant social and charitable contributions, under the present leadership of Chairman, Srichand, ably supported by his brothers, Gopichand, Prakash and Ashok. Today, the Hinduja Group has become one of the largest diversified

groups in the world spanning all the continents. The Group employs over 70,000 people and has offices in many key cities of the world and all the major cities in India. The Hinduja Family has always adapted to free-market reforms moving quickly in new markets that have opened, and capitalising on new economy opportunities. As a result, the Hinduja Group has now strategically positioned itself to contribute to old economy sectors such as Banking & Finance, Transport, Energy (Oil & Power) as well as the new economy of Technology, Media and Telecom”. Regarding its business philosophy prominently placed on the same web page as above, the Group writes, ‘Firm believers in traditional family values, the Hinduja have all along striven to inculcate the family concept in their business enterprises. Every member of the Group is encouraged to practice the Vedic principles of work: ‘Service with devotion’ and ‘willingness to see fulfilment of one’s self-interest in the active promotion of the interest of the collective’. This family-driven economic assertion, deriving its identity and sense of purpose from the mythological history of the India region, invokes metaphors of land, fraternity between the male family members, adherence to a Vedic discipline, and aligning with the community’s ancestral calling of living up to the old, traditional structure.

“Founded in 1976, by Sunil Bharti Mittal, Bharti has grown from being a manufacturer of bicycle parts to one of the largest and most respected business groups in India. With its entrepreneurial spirit and passion to undertake business projects that are transformational in nature, Bharti has created world-class businesses in telecom, insurance, retail, and foods”, mentions its website. Incidentally, the Bharti group’s web page describing its existence and mentioning its purpose, like other Baniya-Marwari corporations mentioned earlier, emphasizes on its entrepreneurial spirit as its being and becoming. This particular entrepreneurial spirit that the Bharti group and the business groups mentioned above talk about, can be seen as a product of its Caste lineage before colonial occupation and as the

consolidation of a particular attitude replete with community assertions during and post the colonial rule. Suniti Kumar Ghosh (1985) says that the Baniya-Marwari businessmen acted as conduits for the inflow and exit of money and thus rose as the comprador class with dealings in many industries and trades. The colonial phase gave a lot of impetus to the Baniya-Marwari communities to fortify their Caste-bound duty of engaging with a particular entrepreneurial spirit, an attitude that was legitimized in the land in which Caste-based professions originated. Hence, even if the Baniya-Marwari community businessmen were favourable to the British rule in the commerce and trade areas, they were also anxious to prove themselves as being sons of the Indian soil by partly sponsoring and aiding few nationalists that were negotiating with the socio-political rule of the British. The manifestation of this particular neo-bourgeois entrepreneurial spirit was manifest during the mid and late 19th century itself when the Baniya-Marwari communities under the aegis of the British rulers were conducting trade with countries abroad and making huge amounts of money paving way for a somewhat neo-liberal economic atmosphere.

The prevalent metaphors arising out of the communication of these family-run, Baniya-Marwari owned corporations writing about themselves, and in effect articulating their testimonies display a conscious affiliation to their Caste-community based profession, a devotion to the land of origin and operation, a celebration of patriarchal transfer of power, and a claim towards tradition rooted in religion-centric beliefs and practices.

TV Sundaram Iyengar founded the TVS (named after the founder's initials) business company in 1911 in Tamilnadu, Southern India. The TVS group is currently a Brahmin family-owned business corporation with interests in automobiles, electronics, finance, information technology, and automobile components and parts. The Group's website has the About Us link which is sub-divided into three parts called *The Founder*, *The Beginning*, and

The Profile. On The Founder page can be found a picture of Mr. TV Sundaram Iyengar looking at the camera, wearing a white top with his forehead smeared with the traditional powder in a V shape - a mark characteristic of the Vaishnavaites Brahmins. Adjacent to his picture, is a quote from the Brahmanic patriarchal religious text Bhagavad Gita says, “That man sees indeed the truth who sees that vision and creation are one”. The connection between Vaishnavaites Brahmins and the religious book Bhagavad Gita is quite evident as it is believed that the male God Vishnu is the creator of the universe and the Brahmin males are his progeny. On The Beginning S-code the text reads out, “The TVS Group traces its origins to a rural transport service, founded in 1911 in Tamil Nadu, India. Today this renowned business conglomerate remains faithful to its core ideals of trust, values, service and ethics”. What are the ethics that TVS is talking about? Where are the values that TVS is mentioning borrowed from? By mentioning the terms faithful, trust, service, and ethics, this particular page demonstrates that the corporate is built on certain features which justify its existence and are representative of its being. On The Profile S-code, the corporate mentions that it is the common ethos of quality, customer service and social responsibility which unites its various businesses. Being a Brahmin-owned corporation the metaphors it is calling upon are those that are significant of an ethos that is based upon certain Vaishnavaites notions of tradition which focus on conducting business as a devotional activity. The ethos is centred on its community affiliation of belonging to a certain tradition of Hinduism which places responsibility on the Brahmin to mediate a society’s functioning based on religious ideals of Dharma. The Brahmanic text Bhagavad Gita also talks pursuing one’s Caste-Community based actions to attain oneness with God and be liberated. Hence, TVS’ mention of values and ethics are significant of the Hindu-Brahmanic religious ethics and its usage of trust, service, quality, and social responsibility are significant of its existential purpose based on duties of religious calling. While the focus on customer service as its priority can be seen as a

western capitalistic ideal, it is to be noted that in a neo-liberal context where-in the corporate is not only working out of other countries in the world but also selling its products across geographies, it becomes imperative to predominantly co-opt and selectively adapt to the demands of a global capitalistic ethos.

Maganlal Buch (1919) writing about Zoroastrian ethics says that, “The qualities of thrift, temperance, industry, moderation are deemed essential for a true Zoroastrian. So far Parsi ethics appear as ethics of utility. The best spirit of the Zoroastrian moral attitude will be missed if it is supposed that the calculations of worldly profit and loss were what chiefly dreamt of by the Iranian mind. A vivid appreciation of the higher and finer possibilities of the human soul grew up. A conspicuous place was assigned to altruistic virtues. Charity or goodwill, active philanthropy in all its shapes and forms, large-mindedness are a part and parcel of a virtuous organization”. Further, citing the need for the Parsis, the followers of the Zoroastrian religion, to follow a practical, work-a-day philosophy detached from metaphysical conceptions of the world thereby focusing on industry and extending the family to pursue goals related to industry and conduct of a work ethic as prescribed in the Parsi religious doctrine Avesta and purported by the Parsi Lord Ahura Mazda, the holy one, Buch (ibid.) says, “Man therefore must not only enhance his own physical and mental vigour, but also equip himself with all the necessary means and qualities instrumental in this struggle for more fulness of existence, both individual and communal. For this end marriage is recommended and children and wealth are recommended”.

Ardeshir Burorji Sorabji Godrej, a Parsi businessman from India, co-founded the Godrej Brothers Company along with his brother Pirojsha Burorji Sorabji Godrej in 1897. The *About Us* link on the company’s website has the page The Godrej Group which says, “Established

in 1897, the Godrej group has grown in India from the days of the charkha to nights at the call centers. Our founder, Ardeshir Godrej, lawyer-turned-locksmith, was a persistent inventor and a strong visionary who could see the spark in the future. His inventions, manufactured by his brother Pirojsha Godrej, were the foundation of today's Godrej empire. One of India's most trusted brand, Godrej enjoys the patronage and trust of around 500 million Indians every single day. Our customers mean the world to us. We are happy only when we see a delighted customer smile. With 7 major companies with interests in real estate, FMCG, industrial engineering, appliances, furniture, security and agri care – to name a few – our turnover crosses 4.1 billion dollars. You think of Godrej as such an integral part of India – like the bhangara or the kurta – that you may be surprised to know that 26% of our business is done overseas. Our presence in more than 60 countries ensures that our customers are at home with Godrej no matter where they go. With brands you can believe in, service excellence you can count on and the promise of brighter living for every customer, Godrej knows what makes India tick today. Today, we are at a point in Godrej's history when our amazing past is meeting up with its spectacular future head on. Godrej is learning and relishing being young again”.

The emphasis on the founder(s) of the corporation, the nuanced usage of terms referring to their belongingness to the Indian region (as Parsis have been known to have migrated to the sub-continent from the Middle-Eastern region Iran), and the reference to its ‘amazing’ past are significant of invoking a certain tradition that the Parsis belong to. Though it is inappropriate to mention that Parsis have been following their religious ethics in the exact same way as it had been over the last few centuries, a broad understanding of their adherence to their religious roots can be arrived at by mapping the metaphors they use and the ideals

which have been enshrined in their religious texts. Further evidence to their specific adaptation to the dominant Indian religion of Hinduism can be found from Mary Boyce's (1979) work on the religious beliefs and practices of the Zoroastrians. With particular focus on the twentieth century life and times of Zoroastrians in Asia, and India in particular, she says, "Meantime the end of British rule in India in 1947 had brought great changes for the Parsis, threatening the ties which bound their community together. The 5000 or so Parsis of Karachi, Lahore and Quetta found themselves living in the Muslim state of Pakistan, and obliged to learn Urdu in preference to Gujarati. A number emigrated from there and from India, mostly to England, Canada and the USA; but the majority remained, whether as Indians or Pakistanis, and played a valuable part in the life of the two states, contributing (in proportion to the size of the community) a striking number of public figures - soldiers, airmen, scientists, industrialists, newspaper editors. (Public service had long been regarded by Parsis as a religious obligation, a part of their duty, each according to his ability, to care for their fellow-men.) India being a secular state, there was no planned discrimination there against Parsis, and that they suffered at all as a religious community was incidental. Thus measures begun for economy during the 1939-45 war, and continued after independence, included a ban on all public banquets, and so virtually put an end to the age-old observance of communal gahambars. It also became difficult to import wool for weaving kustis (by now the task of priests' wives in India, and laywomen in Iran), and the Parsi Panchayat had to make urgent representations to obtain a special quota. Religious schools were obliged to open their doors to all corners, and so it was no longer possible to maintain a truly Zoroastrian atmosphere in the Parsi ones. Apart from such government actions, material progress continued its remorseless erosion, and as the hearth fires went out in Zoroastrian homes in Bombay as in Tehran (replaced by electricity, oil or gas) a centre for family devotions vanished with them, while the enticements of new interests and diversions encouraged

increasing neglect of religion, an indifference more deadly than all the clash of controversy”. Boyce’s exegesis points to the fact that the Parsis engaged with the colonial government and the post-1947 Indian government differently. Damodaran (2008) says, “... the community which made the most out of colonial circumstances were the Parsis. Right from the late seventeenth century – when a majority of Parsis inhabited the Surat-Navsari stretch of southern-Gujarat as agriculturalists, artisans, small-time coastal traders and shipbuilders – they evolved a collaborative working relationship with the British, in which cultural factors played a considerable role. Being part of neither the Hindu nor Muslim mainstream, nursing no political ambition, and exposed to commercial influences because their proximity to the ports of Bharuch, Surat, and Daman, the Parsis seemed ideal for recruitment as native brokers, agents, and shippers.” The need for the Parsi businessmen to adapt to the demands of products with ‘Indianness’ and for Indians arose primarily during the early 20th century and was even more post 1947 than during colonial times.

Another Parsi owned business corporation which has existed in India for over 150 years and has ventured into areas such as engineering, materials, communication and information technology, services, energy, consumer products and chemicals. The Group operates in over a hundred countries with exports of products and services to over a hundred and fifty countries on the globe. On its About Us link, the page says, “Founded by Jamsetji Tata in 1868, Tata’s early years were inspired by the spirit of nationalism. It pioneered several industries of national importance in India: steel, power, hospitality and airlines. In more recent times, its pioneering spirit has been showcased by companies such as TCS, India’s first software company, and Tata Motors, which made India’s first indigenously developed car, the Indica, in 1998 and recently unveiled the world’s most affordable car, the Tata Nano. Tata

companies have always believed in returning wealth to the society they serve. Two-thirds of the equity of Tata Sons, the Tata promoter holding company, is held by philanthropic trusts that have created national institutions for science and technology, medical research, social studies and the performing arts. The trusts also provide aid and assistance to non-government organisations working in the areas of education, healthcare and livelihoods. Tata companies also extend social welfare activities to communities around their industrial units.”

From what the corporation says about itself, the significant emergence of three metaphors is prominent - nationalism, patriarchal reference to the male founder of the business, and a mention of its social responsibility and charity in a pan-Indian territorial context. The patriarchal transfer of chairmanship in the TATA group since its inception elucidates the earlier raised understanding from the metaphorical analysis. On another page within the About Us link is mentioned, “Jamsetji Tata was more than merely an entrepreneur who helped India take her place in the league of industrialised nations. He was a patriot and a humanist whose ideals and vision shaped an exceptional business conglomerate.” Being a Parsi from a priestly family tradition, it can be said that Jamsetji Tata was setting a preliminary foundation for what has currently emerged in the Neo-liberal Indian business context as corporate social responsibility, a wing of the corporate aiming to ‘empower’ ‘disadvantaged’ individuals and communities that they work in and work with. Also mentioned within the About Us link is the page on *Purpose* which says, “At the Tata group we are committed to improving the quality of life of the communities we serve. We do this by striving for leadership and global competitiveness in the business sectors in which we operate. Our practice of returning to society what we earn evokes trust among consumers, employees, shareholders and the community. We are committed to protecting this heritage of leadership with trust through the manner in which we conduct our business”. In the context of

its founding claim of coming into existence based on the spirit of nationalism, a change can be observed where-in this particular spirit of entrepreneurial assertion is tagged along with a scheme of giving back to society and gain the trust of people in the areas the corporate operates. The idea of the national and national are diluted slightly, however, the usage of the terms ‘heritage of leadership with trust’ seeks alignment with a certain traditional aspect of its functional history. The notion of trust that TATA and a few other corporations mentioned above are invoking will be taken up for analysis in the succeeding chapters where-in trust is seen more as a cultural positing of the organization’s identity.

It can be noticed from the above mentioned couple of Parsi business corporations that the usage of their surnames as the names of their respective companies is indicative of an effort to bring to cognisance their familial roots in religion and genealogical occupations - similar to the Baniya-Marwari corporations which have also used their surnames as the names of their corporations. The use of the surname in itself works as a metaphor for their Caste-Community affiliations and presents an unambiguous communication of who they are and where they come from.

Traditionally toddy tappers, the Nadars of Tamil Nadu, southern-India, have emerged into a highly entrepreneurial business community over a substantive number of decades and have also established themselves politically. According to the Tamil Nadu government and Government of India reports they belong to the Other Backward Classes categorization. Hardgrave (1969) says that the colonial rule helped the Nadars adapt to professions based on trade and commerce. During this phase the Nadars followed a pattern like the Marwari *hundi* system and created caste associations known as *urvinmuraish* and built fortified compounds to secure their goods and prevent damage or theft (ibid.). Mendelbaum (1970) says during this upwardly mobile Nadars were also trying to imitate the Kshatriyas and claim an ancestry that

wanted to get rid of their Nadar identity. However, majority of the Nadars were also working towards a caste-less society and gaining political mileage as is indicated from their associations with the non-Brahmin movement and specifically with EV Ramaswamy Periyar and the Justice Party. In contemporary times, the Nadars are a close-knit and powerful community and their pursuits range from education, entrepreneurship, and philanthropy. One such Nadar who has created a business empire over the past few decades and forayed into the information technology and healthcare sectors is Shiv Nadar, the founder and Chariman of the Hindustan Computers Limited (HCL). On its About Us page is a sub-link called Overview which says, “HCL is a business enterprise with presence in the fields of technology and healthcare. Founded in 1976 as one of India's original IT garage startups, the HCL enterprise currently comprises of three companies in India - HCL Technologies, HCL Infosystems and HCL Healthcare with annual revenues of US\$ 6.5 billion and over 95,000 professionals from diverse nationalities operating across 31 countries including over 500 points of presence in India. In the technology space, HCL’s offerings span a wide range of software and hardware services and solutions including R&D, technology services, enterprise and applications consulting, Remote Infrastructure Management, IT hardware, systems integration, distribution of technology and telecom products. A new entrant in healthcare, HCL aims to provide innovative medical services, products and training to meet the growing demand for quality healthcare in India”.

This particular testimony of HCL explaining its existence as a business corporate focuses on its areas of operation, its range of operations across the globe and within India, and its commitment of providing services in a particular area which is the Indian nation. Two prominent metaphors arise based on the text’s reading – an adherence to showcase its business acumen and a commitment to the Indian nation displaying strains of nationalism.

Corroborating HCL's claim of being nationalist, further evidence can be found within the *About Us* page with the presence of another link called Leadership with a picture of the founder dressed in a three-piece western suit accompanied with a tie. On this page is mentioned his journey from a rural place to his current position of a business tycoon, a technological innovator, a philanthropist, and a big dreaming Indian based out of the capital city New Delhi. The page says, "Shiv Nadar was born and raised in mofussil Tamil Nadu, in an India awakening to its first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru's "Tryst with Destiny". Studying his way through the Indian schooling and graduate system, a scholastically-gifted Nadar confronted both the harsh realities and the opportunities of a struggling Indian state before he saw his first big town, Chennai, at the age of 21. His story is both a reflection of the times he lived in as well as the future that he always dreamt of shaping. Nadar was part of the elite DCM management trainee system where he met several of the people with whom he was soon to impact an entire industry as a pioneer of modern computing. In 1976, eight young men left DCM to create HCL in a Delhi Barsati "akin to a garage start-up" with a compelling vision – that the microprocessor would change the world. A visionary, Nadar made HCL an engine of invention turning dreams into reality. HCL, under Nadar's leadership, revolutionized Indian technology and product innovation with many world firsts to its credit – the first 8-bit microprocessor-based computer in 1978, the first Relational Database Management System in 1983 before some of its global peers, client- server architecture in 1984, world's first fine-grained multi-processor UNIX installation in 1989, among others. A pioneer in Remote Infrastructure Management, HCL was instrumental in implementing and managing the infrastructure backbone of one of India's tallest financial institutions – the National Stock Exchange. HCL played a key role in supporting India's telecom revolution through the creation of the largest mobile distribution network with Nokia. HCL Technologies, which spun out of HCL's R&D unit, is currently a top IT services company in

India and a global leader in Engineering & R&D Services with a game changing business Nadar has made daring forays based on his conviction of the future. HCL created several valuable Joint Ventures and alliances with marquee partners such as Hewlett Packard, Cisco, Perot Systems, Deutsche Bank and Toshiba among others, to emerge as a global technology enterprise. In the last three decades, HCL has evolved into a \$6.5-billion global enterprise with over 95,000 professionals from 102 diverse nationalities, and addresses customers in 70 countries, including over 505 points of presence in India. In 1994, Nadar established what he believed was closest to his heart - the philanthropic Shiv Nadar Foundation and created its first initiative in Chennai, the SSN Institutions, that is a top ranked engineering college. Today the Foundation is a significant driver of social change and transformational education through its landmark institutions spanning the entire education spectrum from schools to universities. VidyaGyan, an innovation in school education, reaches out to the 'top of the bottom of the pyramid' and creates leaders from across the cross-section of the society. A young and a unique research-led interdisciplinary university, the Shiv Nadar University has been identified as India's first Ivy League institution. In recognition of his pioneering role in business and philanthropy in India and across the globe, Nadar has received several honors and accolades, notable being the Padma Bhushan from the President of India. Shiv Nadar often says that he is a product of education. He is restless, passionate and a creative institution builder who also likes to quote Andy Grove by stating "Only the Paranoid Survive". Nadar stays in Delhi with his wife Kiran. Kiran Nadar, an internationally renowned bridge player and an avid art collector, has established the iconic Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, India's largest private philanthropic art museum. The mention of Jawaharlal Nehru, the receipt of the state institutionalized award the Padma Bhushan, establishment of an educational foundation and philanthropy are significant of the corporation's emphasis on its founder and in effect its commitment to the nation, the mention of his wife indicating a

familial bond, and him quoting the Hungarian-born American businessman, engineer, and author Andrew Grove.

In the context of majority of the Nadar community transforming itself professionally from a religious tradition based occupation of toddy tapping to a neo-liberal work ethos of entrepreneurship in various areas, it is quite significant from HCL's communication of proposing a traditional break and invoking ideals that have been borrowed from the Community's recent past i.e. the colonial times. The picture of Shiv Nadar dressed in a suit on the *Leadership* page is indicative of a particular colonial ethos that has been imbibed over the years.

Headquartered in Bengaluru, Southern India, the Infosys corporation was started in the early 1980s by a bunch of seven first time entrepreneurs with Nagawara Rao Narayana Murthy as its chairman. Though the firm was started by a group of people, Murthy has been credited as its pioneer and visionary (Ghoshal et. al., 2001). The corporation is in the business of software development and technology services for various industries including Aerospace and Defense, Financial services, Media and Entertainment, Pharmaceuticals and Healthcare, Energy, Education, Communication Services, and Publishing, among others. The corporation currently has its software development and consulting centres in over thirty countries spread over Asia, Europe, Middle-East, North and South American geographies with most offices in European countries. The corporation now employs over a hundred thousand people with annual revenues of over \$7.4 billion. It has been identified as 'India's most admired company' by Wall Street Journal Asia 200 survey since 2000. The website says one of the 'defining' moments amongst others in the corporation's three decades of history has been setting up of the Infosys foundation in the year 1996 to extend their 'responsibility' beyond

business and provide assistance to ‘some’ of the most socially and economically depressed sectors of the communities they work in.

On the corporations’ website is the page which mentions its story. It says, “Infosys is a global leader in consulting, technology, and outsourcing solutions. As a proven partner focused on building tomorrow’s enterprise, Infosys enables clients in more than 30 countries to outperform the competition and stay ahead of the innovation curve... In 1981, seven engineers started Infosys Limited with just US\$ 250. From the beginning, the company was founded on the principle of building and implementing great ideas that drive progress for clients and enhance lives through enterprise solutions. For over three decades, we have been a company focused on bringing to life great ideas and enterprise solutions that drive progress for our clients.” Prominently, this writing from Infosys focuses on their capability of leading, generating and providing ideas. Secondly, and quite importantly, the corporation mentions that it started with a certain amount of money, implying that the sum was not inherited and neither the company. But it was the ‘intellect’ of a group of people which set-up the business. Also interesting is the non-mention of any terminology to do with an entrepreneurial spirit or business expansion.

To understand why Infosys, despite being a business corporation, invokes tradition in a manner different from that of the Baniya-Marwari businessmen we need to enquire into the Caste-Community genealogies of its founders. Murthy, coming from a Madhva Brahmin community in Mysore, a ‘died-hard socialist’ with strong leanings to the Left during his University years, he eventually passed as an electrical engineer and post-graduate from IIT Kanpur. Along with the rest of the founding members he worked at Patni Computers before starting the Infosys venture with a group of ‘like-minded’, ‘middle-class’ men who aimed at

creating a hundred ‘Rupee Billionaires’ (Ghoshal et. al. 2001). The remaining six founder members were also caste-Hindus, mainly South-Indian Brahmins from the Karnataka, Tamilnadu and Kerala regions – SD Shibulal, NS Raghavan, S Gopalakrishnan, Nandan Nilekani, K Dinesh and Ashok Arora. Arora, who is from a trading community originating in the northern part of India in parts of Punjab and around (Ibbetson, 1916) left Infosys in 1989. The male members of the Brahmin community have been mythically associated as those with intellectual capability and with the decree of the Hindu Gods have the sole authority on engaging with worldly knowledge systems pertaining to the religious, social, and political spheres. The tagline which Infosys had been using since a long time is *Powered by Intellect, Driven by Values*. A metaphorical reading of the statement in a particular cultural context of Hinduism, the ownership of the company, the business it is into and the products it generates, leads us to an understanding which signifies that intellect and values are the pioneering elements that encompass the dynamic of Infosys the corporation. At no point in their communication does Infosys speak about maximizing profits, increasing revenue generation, and multiplying returns – again, motives traditionally associated with the Vyshyas community as being and greedy and rapacious. The tagline that Infosys has been using over the recent few years is *Building Tomorrow's Enterprise*. The transition of taglines from the former to the latter represents the transition that the corporate itself is growing through in terms of its geographical and economic spread across the globe. Though Infosys' foundational values remain what were enshrined over the decades, the new tagline reveals its commitment to business as its most guiding ideal unlike the usage of metaphorical concepts such as intellect and values. This change from a conservative socio-historical metaphor for Caste and community to one that communicates its essence on a global scale can be attributed to its position as a global capitalistic industry interested in building or leading the way for building tomorrow's enterprise which, while living up to its values and business ethics is also

one that is socially responsible – Infosys’ commitment to working for the community neighbouring their business operations.

Writing on the ethnicity, religious roots, values and beliefs of the Khoja Muslims, Nanji (2003) says, “Derived from the Persian *khwajah*, a term of honour, the word *Khoja* referred to those converted to Nizari Ismaili Islam in the Indian sub-continent from about the thirteenth century onward. More particularly, it included certain groups, predominantly from Gujarat and Kutch, who retained strong Indian ethnic roots and caste customs while sustaining their Muslim religious identity under continual threats of persecution. In the nineteenth century, the Ismaili *imamat* (office of the imam) became established in India and a programme of consolidation and reorganisation of the community and its institutions began.” Nanji (ibid.) adds, “The Khojas live today in East Africa, the Indian sub-continent, Europe and North America, and show a strong commitment to values of Muslim philanthropy in their entrepreneurship and contribution to societies in which they live.” One such prominent Khoja Muslim from India who has emerged as one of the leading businessmen is Azim Premji – who famously announced that he had given away twenty five percent of his wealth in charity. He is the Chairman of the Wipro Group which operates in the production and sale of information technology software and hardware, hair care products, baby toiletries, lightning products, and, hydraulic cylinders. Predominantly, the Wipro corporation is known for its work in the information technology sector. The *About Wipro* page has the S-code Overview which says, “Wipro Ltd (NYSE:WIT) is a global information technology, consulting and outsourcing company with 145,000 employees serving over 900 clients in 60 countries. The company posted revenues of \$6.9 billion for the financial year ended Mar 31, 2013. Wipro helps customers to do business better leveraging our industry-wide experience, deep technology expertise, comprehensive portfolio of services and a vertically aligned business

model. Our 55+ dedicated emerging technologies ‘Centers of Excellence’ enable us to harness the latest technology for delivering business capability to our clients. Wipro is globally recognized for its innovative approach towards delivering business value and its commitment to sustainability. Wipro champions optimized utilization of natural resources, capital and talent. Today we are a trusted partner of choice for global businesses looking to ‘differentiate at the front’ and ‘standardize at the core’ through technology interventions. In today’s world, organizations will have to rapidly reengineer themselves and be more responsive to changing customer needs. Wipro is well positioned to be a partner and co-innovator to businesses in their transformation journey, identify new growth opportunities and facilitate their foray into new sectors and markets.”

It can be noticed from what Wipro is saying about itself is that the metaphor of entrepreneurship is emerging predominantly being displayed. Apart from this, the only historical tradition that Wipro is invoking is its chronological transformation of its business operations from being a vegetable products company in 1945 to a technology products-based corporation which it is currently. The showcase is replete with its partnerships, alliances, forays into newer markets for operating and proliferating its brand. Being a corporation founded and run by a person from an Ismaili Shiite background, it is interesting to note that no mention of the country, or its founders is exhibited – an Islamic tradition where emphasis is on the adherence to the religious value systems based on the development of the community and not to a particular nation or land. The *Spirit of Wipro* S-code which is prominent on its website will be taken up for analysis in the succeeding chapters.

One of India's largest two-wheeler manufacturing companies, the Hero Motor Corp, on its *About Us* link on its official webpage says, "Hero MotoCorp Ltd. (Formerly Hero Honda Motors Ltd.) is the world's largest manufacturer of two - wheelers, based in India. In 2001, the company achieved the coveted position of being the largest two-wheeler manufacturing company in India and also, the 'World No.1' two-wheeler company in terms of unit volume sales in a calendar year. Hero MotoCorp Ltd. continues to maintain this position till date." A business owned by a family of Khattris, trading castes from north-India, the corporation is headed by its chairman Dr. Brijmohan Lall Munjal. On his profile page on the website is mentioned, 'The founder and patriarch of the \$3.2 billion Hero Group is your classic first generation entrepreneur. He is a man who started small, dreamt big and used a combination of grit and perseverance to create one of the country's largest corporate groups and the World's No.1 Two Wheeler Company. Instinctive from a young age, Brijmohan Lall made a rather unusual start in life. Around the time when the freedom movement in India was taking shape in the late 1920s, he walked into a newly opened Gurukul (Indian heritage school) near his home in Kamalia (now in Pakistan). He was only six years old then. Thus began an extraordinary tale of courage and perseverance. Brijmohan began his business story after partition in 1947, when he and his brothers relocated to Ludhiana. The family set up a company that provided poor people with basic transport (cycles). Three decades later, as India evolved, he added a second crucial chapter - which visualized affordable and technologically superior transport to millions of middle class Indians. The rest is history. When Brijmohan and his brothers started out, there was no concept of organized dealer networks. Companies just produced, and most dealers functioned like traders. Brijmohan changed the rules of the business by trusting his gut instincts; introducing business norms that

were ahead of their time, and by investing in strategic relationships... Brijmohan built a series of bonds and networks with hundreds of family members, vendors, dealers and employees. Much like the Japanese keiretsu system, these networks are now the glue that holds the Hero Group together.” It can be read that the Hero corporation by displaying its story of the patriarch and briefly mentioning his development of value system being developed in a *Gurukul*, a Hindu traditional school, is also displaying its capacity to trade and reach certain critical points in its business history. As the page mentions, it was the help of family, kin, and community links which ‘hold the Group together.’ The spirit of entrepreneurship, the land of origin and operation, and a focus on the patriarchal kinship system is metaphorically significant from its webpage’s writing.

The ITC group, founded in 1910 as the Imperial Tobacco Company and later rechristened as the Indian Tobacco Company, has its businesses in various sectors including food, hospitality, information technology, tobacco, paper & packaging, and agri business. It is headquartered in Kolkata, east-India. The company was founded by British tobacco businessmen under the name W.D. & H.O. Wills. It was in 1970 that the corporation changed its name to the Indian Tobacco Company. On its *About ITC* page, is the S-code Our Profile which says, “ITC is one of India's foremost private sector companies with a market capitalisation of US \$ 45 billion and a turnover of US \$ 7 billion. ITC is rated among the World's Best Big Companies, Asia's 'Fab 50' and the World's Most Reputable Companies by Forbes magazine and among India's Most Valuable Companies by Business Today. ITC ranks among India's '10 Most Valuable (Company) Brands', in a study conducted by Brand Finance and published by the Economic Times. ITC also ranks among Asia's 50 best performing companies compiled by Business Week... As one of India's most valuable and respected corporations, **ITC is widely perceived to be dedicatedly nation-**

oriented. Chairman Y C Deveshwar calls this source of inspiration "a commitment beyond the market". In his own words: **"ITC believes that its aspiration to create enduring value for the nation provides the motive force to sustain growing shareholder value.** ITC practices this philosophy by not only driving each of its businesses towards international competitiveness but by also consciously contributing to enhancing the competitiveness of the larger value chain of which it is a part." ITC group directly employs more than 31,000 people and the Company's Businesses and their value-chains generate over 5 million sustainable livelihoods many of whom live at the margin in rural India." The use of the idea of committing itself to the nation and creating value for the land they are working in is a metaphor that is emergent, apart from the idea of a pan-Indian entrepreneurial presence, from what the corporation says about itself. ITC says its core value is to work on the Trusteeship model. A close examination of its values, vision, mission statements will further provide evidence to its cultural core. This examination will be taken up in the succeeding chapters.

With businesses in sectors such as finance, FMCG, real estate, media & entertainment, hospitality, manufacturing, sugar and distillery industries, the Sahara Group owned and promoted by Subroto Roy, a Bengali Kayastha, is significant of a cultural-national ethos. This particular corporation employs metaphors in its communication which produce a the corporate identity as one which is an exemplar of what an Indian should be. On its *About Us* page are few links which provide the following communication of the corporate. A *Quick Facts* page is mentioned the Group's net worth in rupees which is over fifty thousand crores, its land bank of over thirty thousand acres, its work force of over eleven lakh salaried and field workers and assets of over three lakh crore rupees. This mention of figures symbolizing the Group's financial competency can also be seen as an assertion of the corporation as it is

currently involved in an alleged investment scam involving thousands of crores of rupees. The Securities Board of India (SEBI) under the direction of the Government of India is investigating into this matter. Secondly, the Sahara Group invokes the notion of *Bharatiyataa* or 'Indianness' on its *Heritage* page. The idea of producing and promoting *Bharatiyataa* can itself be seen as a religious assertion as Hindu nationalists have earlier used and continue using this concept to invoke a sense of religious nationalism. This page also mentions the Group's philosophy which it calls 'Collective Materialism' – when this idea is tied with the Group's notion of invoking a particular sense of Indianness, the signification emerging from these two ideas is that all Indians are one and belong to a region and that the reverence to that region is foremost before any adherence to an individual's faith however diverse he or she maybe. Thus point is evident when the page mentioned above says, "In any human relationship, it becomes imperative to take into consideration the materialistic aspect of life - we do so but by giving it second priority. The first priority is given to emotional aspect and with perfect blending of materialism with emotionalism results in continuous collective growth for collective sharing and caring, that gives an impetus to our philosophy - *"COLLECTIVE MATERIALISM "... There is a religion higher than religion itself - it is the INDIAN NATIONALITY. The swirl of the Tricolour never fails to move a Sahara Worker. For we believe, it is the great feeling that transcends all castes, creed and sects. Bharat Parva is Celebrated on every 26th of January and 15th of August with a spirit and gaiety rarely seen. It comes from our heart."* The remaining links within the About Us page of the Sahara Group will be taken up for analysis in the succeeding chapters as the affinity is more towards a particular production of an cultural ethos impregnated with a particular understanding of the Hindu religion.

The Amrutanjan Group is a Brahmin owned corporation which was set up by the nationalist Kasinathuni Nageswara Rao Pantulu in 1893. Within its About Us page is the text which says,

“Started in the year 1893 by the social reformer, journalist and freedom fighter, “Desodharaka” Sri.Nageswara Rao Pantulu Garu, today Amrutanjan is one of the household names in India. The 118-year-old Amrutanjan brand has been repositioned with ‘Pure Healthy Essence’ as its corporate promise to consumers. This magnifies Amrutanjan’s inherent association with naturalness, science and trust. Amrutanjan is now taking action to focus on the competency of each product and its application. The company’s current offerings have been segregated to 3 sub brands: Kick Out Pain for pain management, Relief for congestion management and Purity for hygiene products. From R&D to branding, retail activation to advertising communication, Amrutanjan is positioning itself as a specialist in the competitive scenario.” The mention of the founder’s adherence to the nation’s calling, and the mention of the word purity are both characteristic metaphors coming from a Brahmanic ethos which is based on a particular understanding of the geographical region i.e. India and a general understanding of this region’s people. The mantle of ownership that has been passed on from one male member, the founder, to another, S Sambhu Prasad, from the same community is indicative of its patriarchal genealogy with roots in the patriarchal Hindu religious order. Amrutanjan’s logo, tagline, vision and mission will be taken up for analysis in the succeeding chapters as the contextual significance needs examination from a cultural context of the religious essence of the Hindu semiotic code.

The S-code About Us page, the Chettinad group says, “The House of Chettinad began its journey in a humble way in the year 1912 by its founder Dr. Raja Sir Annamalai Chettiar,

who was a Visionary, Idealist, Entrepreneur, Educationist and Philanthropist of 19th century, who envisioned that the future of his group is to improve the society economically by providing industrial and business development. The core values of the House of Chettinad Strive, Save & Serve continue to remain the same since 1912 with its dynamic vision changing according to times. The group continued the legacy, made the dreams of our beloved founder into reality and reached further heights by another Visionary, Idealist, Entrepreneur, Educationist and Philanthropist by Dr. Raja Sir Muthiah Chettiar, the son of the founder. The growth of Chettinad Group was taken forward with the untiring efforts by the grandson of the founder, Dr. M.A.M. Ramaswamy, a multi-faceted personality an Entrepreneur, Educationist, Philanthropist, Sportsman and his love towards protecting the arts, culture and values of Tamil, is the present Chairman of the group. The House of Chettinad is successfully marching towards a centennial year with the hard work and dedication of three generations of the family which stand for its Quality, Integrity and Reliability of the Products, Services and Trading that are being dealt by the group. In 2000, the present Managing Director, Mr M.A.M.R. Muthiah took over the management of the group, has further expanded the nature and scope of the group's activities. The group is professionally guided and managed by its ambidextrous and dynamic Managing Director Mr M.A.M.R. Muthiah, a professionally qualified individual, having work experience in the United States by having professionals with rich experience. Visioning for the new millennium, the present Managing Director envisaged Industrial, Infrastructural Development, Education and Health Services are the need of this century in which he wanted his group to participate and contribute. Accordingly, planned and increased the production capacity of the existing cement plant in Puliur at Karur. The two new green site cement plants were commissioned in Ariyalur and Karikali near Dindigul. A new cement plant is being set up at Kallur in Karnataka. For developing infrastructure, the Ennore Coal Terminal

was commissioned under Public Private Partnership with Ennore Port Limited. The group is also in the process of putting up coal power generation plant near Tharangambadi in Tamil Nadu, which will produce 1320 MW of power per annum. The vision of our Managing Director is to take the business forward across India within next 5 years and become an all India player. Our Managing Director has been elected unanimously as a president of the cement Manufacturers Association - India in January 2012 and he will continue to hold this position for a term of 2 years. Our Managing Director is the youngest person to be elected to hold this position at the age of 40 years. Considering the need for quality education, the group established Chettinad College of Engineering and Technology at Puliur in Karur District and also an institution for higher learning in medical and paramedical sciences under the name of Chettinad Academy and Research Institute (CARE). Hospital attached to the academy is providing world class health care services in the multi-speciality hospital managed by the group. Besides these, the group is also managing schools for children and a special school for differently abled children. Thus the group will accelerate industrial and economic growth, providing quality education, health care especially to Tamilnadu and this country. Our Managing Director is also very much interested in extending the Corporate Social Responsibility to the community around which it operate and better environment management to ensure sustainable development. The Group's turnover is Rs. 4, 000 Crores (approx.) the group has provided employment opportunity for more than 5,000 individuals and indirectly for more than 25,000 individuals, thereby lighting lamp in their families. The future of the House of Chettinad as a corporate is marching towards providing total customer satisfaction providing quality Education, Health and infrastructure facilities to uplift the society, which will continue in the future too.”

As is evident from what it says, the Chettinad Group owned and promoted by members from the Chettiar community, traditionally a trading caste-community from the Tamilnadu region of southern-India, draws its existence from a historical position and presents it as a legacy with a spirit of entrepreneurship, education, and philanthropy. The presentation of and establishment of the patriarchal order through the mention of its founding members and current office bearers also finds mention on this particular page.

Kamani Tubes Limited (KTL), was a sick company before Kalpana Saroj, an entrepreneur from the Dalit community revived it and is currently its Chairman. The About Us page says, “KTL, set up in 1960 by the Kamani Group of Industries belonging to Shri N.R. Kamani had facilities at Kurla, Mumbai for manufacture of 3000 tpa of copper alloy tubes and 3200 tpa of copper alloy rods/sections. The unit, closed since September 1985 was reopened in 1988 when, at the behest of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, a workers' co-operative society took over the company after the sanction of rehabilitation scheme by BIFR in September 1988. To implement the scheme IDBI Bank was appointed the MA (Monitoring Agency). However, as the company could not implement the sanctioned scheme, BIFR at a hearing held on May 26, 1995 declared the scheme as failed. Subsequent attempts to revive the Company failed to materialise and a scheme agreeable to all parties to generate funds & settle dues could not be formulated.

KTL was a sick company that was taken over by Mrs. Kalpana Saroj in 2006. The new management has paid off existing debt & liabilities and has installed state-of-the-art technology at the plant in Wada. The new management Of KTL led by Mrs. Kalpana Saroj has shown serious intent in reviving the company and turning its fortunes around. KTL has Started its operations in its new premises at Wada and now is no longer a sick company.” It

can be noticed that the corporate is invoking metaphors which do not adhere to a certain tradition of entrepreneurship or a call to serving the nation or a genealogical legacy. The prominent metaphors emerging from this page is the will of a entrepreneur and her story of engagement with that particular entrepreneurial as well as managerial spirit. The values, vision & Mission statements of the company will be taken up for analysis in the succeeding chapters.

3.2 Positing the Cultural

While the enumeration of differences between what can be posited as traditional and what can be posited as cultural may be a broad exploratory task involving theorizing at multiple levels, the forthcoming analysis on what is posited a cultural restricts itself to situating those communication elements of the corporation which aim at homogenising and imagining a whole, based on processes which contribute to the larger framework of cultural nationalism as explained in chapter 1.3. This section will focus on mentioning the cultural signifiers of a corporation's communication while articulating their metaphorical code of operation. The cultural metaphors include references to the land of operation, to the religious beliefs in general and hereditary, gene-linked, DNA-conscious Caste-community beliefs in particular (and sometimes in the reverse order), to the men as agents of creation of a particular organization and its infrastructure, its ethos, its assets, its relation to the workers and the relations between workers themselves. The cultural metaphors are those which are derived from the envisioned fabric of the organization's existence which is then strategized, schematized, constructed, and displayed in its communication for diverse but governmental subjects to get exposed to, negotiate with, and conform to the 'call' arising from the proposed order of the organization. Hence, this phenomenon from the being to the becoming of an organization is supplied with overt but meandering cultural significations produced from the cultural consciousness of the producers who in turn are supplied with significations from their own *significant* experiences when exposed to the cultural paradigm of communication as consciousness and consciousness as communication. in order to produce the now negotiated significations. These cultural markers need to be seen as those signifiers which adhere to, celebrate, and regenerate the ideas of patriarchy, cultural homogeneity and religious nationalism in India.

The use of the sun and its rays as the visual manifestation of the Aditya Birla group's logo, the mention of the birth and emergence of the daily publication The Hindu and the Bajaj Group during India's 'freedom' struggle, the picture of tens of seemingly Mahindra employees standing in line facing the camera while the focus is on one young Mahindra employee standing with his eyes closed, hands folded in a *Namaste*, forehead smeared with a *tilak* accompanied by the text mentioning its corporate values, the metaphor of the *Gurukul* schooling of Hero Group's 'founder and patriarch' Mr. Brijmohan Lall Munjal which instilled in him courage and perseverance, Balaji Telefilm's visual metaphor of the *Vishnu Tilak* logo, the entrepreneurial spirit of the *Baniya* owned corporation Essar, the tagline 'pure healthy essence' reflecting Amrutanjan's tagline, invoking the religious principle of 'service with devotion' by the Hinduja Group, the celebration of its entrepreneurial journey by Reliance, the Sanskritic metaphor of *kartavyayogi karyakartas* by Sahara Group, invoking a pan-territorial context in mentioning '... in 1988, Indian turned on its TV to...' by the NDTV corporate, the use of the *gyan mudra* in its logo with colors of orange and charcoal grey being exhibited as... 'The uppercase letter 'P' in the word 'Piramal' is solid and the word itself shaded charcoal grey, contrasting with the deep orange of the visual emblem that denotes tradition and spirituality.', the invocation of metaphors such as 'understanding', unity, responsibility by the Tata Group, quoting the Hindu religious text the *Bhagavad Gita* by the TVS Group, the focus on 'trusteeship' and 'nation orientation' as one of its core values by the ITC Group, the spirit of Wipro announcing "... realizing that I win when my team wins." and "... seeing each of us is inextricably embedded in the same social fabric."

4.1 The Constitution of the Cultural Nationalist

For MK Gandhi, economic pursuits needed to be aligned with moral pursuits that have been enshrined in the broad-Indian region. In a sermon delivered in 1916 to a meeting of the Muir Central College Economic Society, Allahabad, he says, “Under the British aegis, we have learnt much, but it is my firm belief that there is little to gain from Britain in intrinsic morality, that if we are not careful, we shall introduce all the vices that she has been a prey to, owing to the disease of materialism” (Parel, 1997). For Gandhi, the Britishers’ business acumen was acceptable to live with but not the attitude with which they approach business – evident in his use of the term materialism instead of capitalism. Added to this, Gandhi suggests quite explicitly of having a bipolar ‘character’ constituting a capitalist exterior and a moral interior. He adds, “We can profit by that connection only if we keep our civilization, and our morals, straight, i.e., if instead of boasting of the glorious past, we express the ancient moral glory in our own lives and let our lives bear witness to our past. Then we shall benefit her and ourselves. If we copy her because she provides us with rulers, both they and we shall suffer degradation... Let us seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and the irrevocable promise is that everything will be added unto us. These are real economics. May you and I treasure them and enforce them in our daily life” (Parel, 1997). This was also the phase when many big Indian Caste-community based business houses were commercially in a relationship with the British in various capacities and earned substantial revenue which in turn fuelled the nationalist struggle for political independence. However, the focus on morality, imbibing and showcasing values, the building of a character, are potent metaphorical units for analysis than the core commercial aspects comprising of trade negotiations (the political economy approach). The constitution of the cultural nationalist thus becomes an essential element in situating this composition (the metaphor analysis approach). MK Gandhi was a thorough cultural nationalist. He embedded in him a consciousness which

comprised of an antagonistic idea towards western morals and value systems; he believed completely in the Vedic-Brahmanic *varna* system and saw India as one seamless whole which has to stand as one homogenous group in order to wrest socio-political control from the British while keeping the Dalit-Bahujan and Muslim population on the fringes of the social order.

Hero Motor Corp's *Code of Conduct* document reads, "This Code of Conduct document outlines the values behind these standards of conduct. Each of us must read and understand this document, and incorporate it in day-to-day behaviour... In our company we have always espoused that performance and values are two sides of the same coin. The principles outlined in the Code of Conduct, will guide us in building a culture that is synonymous with our values... As an employee of Hero MotoCorp Ltd., you are obliged to comply with the principles prescribed by the Company's Code of Conduct". The above mentioned excerpts are from the letter written by its Chairman Brijmohan Lal Munjal to his employees dated 1st November 2010. The letter also has the name of Pawan Munjal, the Chairman's brother and MD & CEO of the company. The metaphor of the coin having two sides with performance on one and values on the other is significant of the management's decree on the conscious bearing of the corporate employee. In this same letter, which introduces the Code of Conduct document, is used an image as a background depicting a flock of birds flying in a direction, with one ahead and the rest following, forming a side-ways pointing triangle in the sky with the flock 'leader' at its tip, and the rest trailing behind. The personality of the employee is analogous to that of the flock member in one way at least – that of consciously following the chain of command, the one ahead of it during the flight. The flock member's vision may not be same as that of the leader, but the directional signs are the ones guiding the flock member during flight. As with the corporate employee at the entry level who has probably never met

anyone in the upper hierarchy, the directions for institutionalizing values of the corporation are introduced through the immediate management and media such as the application form, the joining letter, the company booklet, and letters such as the one mentioned above. The constitution of the corporate individual has been approached in larger detail as part of the subsequent chapter.

Extending Aloysius' ideas on the tripod of cultural nationalism, it can be reiterated that the Vedic-Brahmanic cultural core, the pan-Indian territorial context, and an antagonistic polarity with the West/modernity can be observed significantly in the constitution of popular figures from the 18th to 20th centuries.

One can observe various cultural nationalists from the demography emerging from diverse *Savarna* communities, attending to calls of the religion, of a culture, presenting an interwoven account of the region and its history, and the course-correction that is required. The constitution of the cultural nationalist is not singular, but made up of multiple associative identities giving rise to the said consciousness.

A few of their overarching constitutional signifiers can be listed as:

- Invoking a labyrinthine account of the nation's history to signify endurance, piety, lawfulness, virtuosity, ingenuity, genealogy, - the *dharmic* and the *satkarman*!
- Referring to the Indian region as one homogenous unit with 'minor' differences in customs
- Voicing a clarion call to unite & reinstate the nation's past glory
- Advocating principles of *dharma* as stated in the religious texts
- Displaying regional-cultural affinity through sartorial choices

- Espousing dominance of schools of thoughts such as yoga & ayurveda over western and far-eastern systems of thought concerning the condition of the human body
- Using metaphors of bravery, sacrifice, righteousness & morality to call for an end to western occupation of the Indian region
- Apotheosizing duty towards the motherland as the ultimate end of Indian livelihood
- Signifying a meta narrative of cultural-social-individual identities based on selective appropriation of the region's history
- Establishing 'Swadeshi' business ventures aimed at making profits

The constitution of the cultural nationalist is made up of multiple units, each coming to the surface or tapering down depending on the spatial & temporal milieu.

"Whosoever comes to me, through whatsoever form, I reach him; all men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to me", said Vivekananda, quoting the Gita, at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago, in 1893.

In his 'Paper on Hinduism', Vivekananda also says, "At the very outset, I may tell you that there is no polytheism in India. In every temple, if one stands by and listens, one will find the worshippers applying all the attributes of God, including omnipresence, to the images. It is not polytheism, nor would the name henotheism explain the situation. 'The rose, called by any other name, would smell as sweet.' Names are not explanations."

The above two mentions by one of the most prolific cultural nationalists of his time, Vivekananda's rendition of the Hindu *dharma* focussed on oneness, homogeneity and uniformity, leading to a meta theory of the dominant Indian religion. The Vedic-Brahmanic core is signified through the mention of references to Vedic texts and the invocation of a

nationalistic ideal to be achieved through a prescribed moral sobriety. This is evident in the speeches and writings of both Vivekananda and Gandhi. It is to be noted that both these figures were not born in a Brahmin family. While Gandhi was born to *Baniya* parents, Vivekananda was born into a *Kayasth* family. A key figure in the ‘Bengali Renaissance’ of the 19th & 20th century, Ramakrishna Chattopadhyay (popularly known as Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa), was said to have deeply influenced Vivekananda’s outlook of Hindu religious doctrines and his disposition towards the British occupation. Chattopadhyay was born into a Brahmin family and has been considered one of the cultural revivalists in the Indian national movement.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak, a Brahmin from the Maharashtra region, can also be considered a cultural nationalist. He espoused *karma yoga*, called for unification of the Indian masses to rally against the British, and advocated justification for his views and actions based on *Ramayana* and *Bhagavad Gita*. Through eulogies published in his newspaper *Kesari*, correspondences with Vivekananda, (Varma, 1978) and assembling people to mark festivity, Tilak also pioneered the *Sarvajanik Ganeshotsav* as a grand public celebration in the late 19th century. The organization and celebration of this event was also seen as a means to circumvent post-1870 British ordinances which banned large public assemblies (Courtright, 1985). Stating his pan-Indian outlook on the socio-political dynamic of his times, Tilak had said, “Religion and practical life are not different. The real spirit is to make the country your family instead of working only for your own...” (Brown, 1970). Tilak’s vernacular publication *Kesari* had a wide circulation among the caste-community elite from the region and was run as a successful business unit as well, to the extent that its profits were used to cover the losses made by *Mahratta*, an English language newspaper also established by Tilak (Israel, 1994).

A close aide of Tilak was Vallinayagan Ulaganathan Chidambaram Pillai. Popularly known as ‘The Tamil Helmsman’ for his role in the *Swadeshi* movement, Pillai was born into a family of *Vellalars* from Tuticorin district of Tamilnadu. He was well known for setting-up the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company in the early 20th century – a shipping service between Tuticorin and Colombo in competition to the British India Steam Navigation Company. Pillai’s association with Tilak was quite staunch, to the extent that Pillai said, “Lokmanya Bala Gangadhar Tilak is my political guru. From my twenty-first year, i.e. from 1893, I was closely following his writings and speeches on politics. They made me feel that India was my country, that the British were wrongfully retaining it and that it must be got back from them”, (Sampath and Mani, 1992). That Pillai’s shipping enterprise emerged as a cultural-economical assertion in antagonism to the British enterprise is evident.

Dwarkanath Tagore founded the financial company Oriental Life Assurance Society in 1822. His entrepreneurial spirit, close networking with British financial firms, and adherence to his genealogical roots made him a popular business figure among the ruling elite as well as certain Indian counterparts. In partnership with British traders, he set up companies in the banking, insurance, shipping, coal, opium, and newspapers among other sectors. Dwarkanath, one could say, espoused values of internationalism to the extent that some Britishers took him as one of their own. He used his connections to bring about an entrepreneurial spirit within the *Jorasanko* branch of the Tagore family and to the Bengal region at large, in the process being seen as hero who did away with notions of ‘natural idleness and lethargy...’ that the British had endorsed on Indians (Jnānāneshan, 1834).

Chanakya, credited to be ‘the first to visualize the concept of a ‘nation’ for the first time in human history’ (Pillai, 2010), displays rudimentary facets of the cultural nationalist as well. In his work *Chanakya Neeti*, he says, “A Brahmin’s strength is in his learning, a king’s

strength in his army, a Vaishya's strength in his wealth and a Shudra's strength in his attitude of service."

The website also mentions that Chanakya "went on to single-handedly unify the country with the sheer power of his character. He lived his life working to his capacity in pursuit of his vision of a happy, strong and prosperous India."

The consciousness of the cultural nationalist is constituted on a terrain which has emerged through wavy engagements with genealogical intensities, occupational pursuits, social fields, and regional determinants. The cultural nationalist is also a regional chieftain; by exploiting existing social structures and regulating the status quo, the chieftain emerges as prime communicator. The prime communicator can not only draw crowds to public meetings and councils in order to render discourses on cultural nationalism (the oral tradition, after all, was/has been the primary means of mass communication), reaching out to a wider group through mediums such as newspapers, books, and pamphlets is a possibility as well. Another signifier of ethnic-regional-cultural consciousness of the cultural nationalist is the sartorial choice exhibited by each one of them, which in itself is a vivid constitutional attribute of the person adorning the attire. As Infosys co-founder NR Narayana Murthy remarked, 'I think India has several advantages in the knowledge sector, in the software sector.'

This constitution of the cultural nationalist is a network of filiations forging from ethnicity, caste-community, gender, region, familial endowments, and affiliate micro-networks such as business associates and vendor parties.

The Bajaj group's website says, "*Founded by the freedom fighter, philanthropist and close confidante of Mahatma Gandhi Jamanalal Bajaj, the Bajaj Group is one of the most respected and renowned business houses of India*". Here, we can notice that the organization

invokes metaphors of nationalism through the mention of India's freedom movement. Gandhi himself said that *Jamnalalji* was a fisher of men and had the knack of gathering people around and inspiring them with his idealism.

4.2 Constitution of the Corporate Individual

ICICI group's use of metaphors related to "meritocracy" and "high standards" on its website (when accessed in 2016) was substantial. In more than two videos present on the company's website, the constitution of its employees is equalled to meritocracy, that the organization believes in and expects its employees to be imbibed with. Meritocracy on its own is a qualitative feature of a human being as ascribed to that human being by the social realm surrounding that individual. When compared to other employable qualitative features such as educational qualifications, health, and place of origin among others, meritocracy becomes an abstract entity which can only be judged by someone who is already in employment and thereby generates sufficient data to quantify the candidate's merit. There is no way the interviewer representing ICICI can generate a merit sheet of the interviewee(s) based solely on the interview; a thorough scan of the educational qualifications, health conditions, and place of origin among others are done in order to finally select a particular interviewee for employment at this particular organization. However, what is of significant quality is the overall content placed on the Careers page of the company's website. What emerges, however, is the dedication of a substantial amount of space to testimonials of women ICICI employees speaking about the bank, detailing their professional and personal experiences during their employment. Most women from this video belong to *Savarna* castes as indicated by their surnames. There are no Christian or Muslim women sharing their experience. The idea of meritocracy which is foregrounded by ICICI is simultaneously pushing inclusivity to the background. Given India's diverse caste and community-wise demographic, it becomes imperative for using meritocracy as a signifier to mean traditional caste-Hindus are synonymous with merit. The Savarna consciousness celebrates the traditional, upholds the

divine meritocracy and communicates the presumed nationalist ethos through seemingly democratic strategies and policies.

Kamani Tubes, manufacturer of copper alloy tubes and rods, based in Mumbai, is promoted by Dalit entrepreneur Kalpana Saroj. For this organization Integrity of business, working for the communities they serve through Trust, Responsibility towards the environment, and ensuring Safety at the workplace are discussed as their values. There is no mention of meritocracy, growth of business acumen, and work-life balance among others. What is mentioned is a more congenial business ethic taking into consideration the diversity in social and environmental realms. The communication brings forth and uses certain metaphors which cannot be seen in other corporate organizations in India. The Savarna organizations' metaphors are those which tend to associate qualities of tradition to the organization and its employees while those organizations from a Dalit-Bahujan consciousness use metaphorical concepts which signify an intentional break from traditional markers. Unlike the Piramal Group, which says, "In our logo, the *Gyan Mudra* represents our core values of Knowledge, Action, Care, & Impact." The website also says, "The Piramal brand is represented by the ancient, universal symbol of the *Gyan Mudra*, as its icon. The *Gyan Mudra* is an aesthetic hand posture practiced in yoga, meditation and dance, for more than 3,000 years. Each finger represents one of the five elements (Air, Water, Earth, Fire and Sky). Harmonising with each other, they aspire to form a circle of perfection, peace and happiness, important elements in Zen and in ancient Indian disciplines."

The Careers page states that the Group has its "business rooted in values", accompanied by "Hone Your Craft

Our emphasis lies in nurturing a sense of entrepreneurship and ownership that empowers you to excel while leaving your unique imprint on your craft. Our core values keep us grounded even while riding the waves of success, helping you focus on the task at hand.

Our Purpose of ‘Doing Well and Doing Good’ is deeply embedded in our DNA – it’s not just our success that defines us, but the drive to ensure that our business and our people create a positive impact on society.

An environment of collaborative learning helps you grow as a leader every single day, while our exponential growth plans give you a platform for a truly exciting career.”

It had been observed earlier (2015-2016) during the data analysis exercise that the Piramal Group had mentioned, “At Piramal, it is our constant endeavour to encourage people and enable them to put their best foot forward. Considering favourable culture and a conducive learning environment as foundations of the organization, we stress on values on a daily basis.” This particular organization’s expressions on combining business and work ethics with certain traditions are located within a consciousness that has been forged through close association of individuals and their network of filiations. The emphasis and stress on values which need to be imbibed by the working staff calls for exploration of the categories which constitute the Piramal employee. The employee’s allegiance to the values of ‘Knowledge, Action and Care’ and sub-values of ‘Integrity and Trusteeship’, ‘Entrepreneurship and Expertise,’ and ‘Humility’ becomes the core formation and transformation of the individual’s consciousness, a move from an existing consciousness to the organization’s conscious of existing, thereby producing the individual at the service of the organization; An organization similar to the family, military, or the nation in general, where-in strict allegiance to the observed and practiced code is needed to ensure association with it. HCL Technologies, a

software company based out of India and operating in over thirty countries across the globe, on its Careers page says, “At HCL, innovation is not just another word, it’s part of our organizational heritage and DNA - a journey that began in 1976 and continues to power us ahead even today. The culture at HCL Technologies – ideapreneurship™ as we call it - makes the license to ideate a distinctive organizational capability. We see a grassroots movement that has rallied the entire organization behind this innovation agenda, in a manner that leads to relationships that deliver value beyond the contract to our customers. ideapreneurship™ - is based on the fundamental belief of inverting the organizational pyramid and engaging, enabling and empowering the front line. This is because we understand that they are best placed to appreciate and understand the customers’ business and shape the roadmap to enhance the ‘value zone’ created in every interaction they have.”

It was observed during 2015-2016 that within the Careers page was another webpage mentioning HCL’s work culture HCL also says, “Ideapreneurship is the self-sustaining, self-inspired innovation engine that drives HCL, a 21st century enterprise, forward. It is a unique innovation culture in which every 1st century employee gets the opportunity to ideate, collaborate & create everyday ideas that set a new business paradigm.” It can be clearly seen that HCL is departing from any usage of metaphors related to tradition, region, custom, or convention and is in fact signifying new vistas for expression and work through metaphors such as the post-modern technological era, innovation, and change. No recourse is taken to prescribe the personality makeup of a prospective employee or current employees. The only personality qualification that is mentioned is the capacity to ideate. The site also adds, “Ideapreneurship puts employees at the forefront of innovation where they innovate and collaborate with each other and with customers to seed, nurture and harvest ideas. This

innovation and collaboration culture has given rise to a number of key enablers and tools to bring about a business impact.”

Sahara India Pariwar’s enunciation of its values enmeshes the characteristic prerequisites of individuals willing to be employed with the organization. On the Careers page are mentioned the Family’s values which are ‘Give Respect’, ‘Self-Respect’, ‘Collective Materialism’, ‘Religion’, and ‘Absolute Honesty’. The Family puts forth the proposition that, “If you also strongly believe in Our values and have the determination, commitment and zeal to work in a progressive organization, kindly apply in our “Careers” section.” Also mentioned on its webpage is its Philosophy combining concepts of ‘Collective Materialism’ and ‘*Bharatiyata*’ or Indianness. The Family requires the employees to understand and imbibe these concepts and pursue their course of work through this conceptual framework. The location of nationality above religion, blending of materialism with emotionalism and formulating an essential characteristic of the workforce becomes an essential task of the Family. The individual personality negotiates and merges with the collective ethic where the pride of the Family emerges as the pride of the Nation. An article on the Patriarch by one of the Family’s previous employees provides preliminary data of his socio-cultural consciousness. The patriarchal, family-run corporation Chettinad Group presents itself as an organization with interests in a dozen businesses covering power, manufacturing, services, trading, apart from the maintenance of a stud farm and a Chettinad Health City. On its Employment Opportunities page two paragraphs present the organization’s call to prospective employees. The metaphors of exchange and allegiance are used within these paragraphs through statements citing rewards and recognition and sharing of the organization’s vision. A vision which categorically includes uplifting the lives of Indian people through business ventures. Traditionally, the Nattukottai Chettiars of Sivagnaga district, Tamilnadu, are situated at the

Vaishya segment of the Hindu *Varna* order with professions in trade, commerce, banking and other businesses more recently. The Chettiars have traditionally been a landowning community closely associated with Hindu religious and Indian nationalist concepts. On these lines can also be located Bajaj Auto's expressions of being a 'Proud Indian MNC' with deep rooted Indian culture and values and 'Amongst Top Quartile in Industry Compensation', metaphorically bringing to the fore concepts of national allegiance and value exchange. Unlike Wipro's call to prospective employees which places the 'Spirit of Wipro' as its guiding ideal and encourages employees to inculcate a 'passion for clients' success', 'be global and responsible', 'treat each person with respect', and possess 'unyielding integrity' at all times. Another page within the Careers site on the official Wipro website says, "At every step, we have been built by individuals who have gone beyond the limits of personal goals and leaped across boundaries. It is the freedom provided to every individual at Wipro to learn, grow and create a career path that makes us an organization of opportunities beyond boundaries. Beyond boundaries of region, age, gender, ability and routine. We invite you to be a part of this experience." While on this webpage there is also mention of 'Benefits' that prospective employees can look forward to, the emphasis on individual growth and technological innovation. There is no mention of either family tradition or nationalist tones of serving the country. Firm emphasis is laid on conducting business as per the 'Code' - which the employees need to sign during joining Wipro - in day to day activities and business transactions.

Amrutanjan's commitment and strive towards accepting new ideas and embracing change is displayed on its Careers page. Metaphors of tradition and heritage get enmeshed with metaphors of diversity, modernity and innovation. Metaphor of value exchange does not find mention but the metaphor of allegiance is prominent in the statement, 'We are looking for

people who will live by values of the company and at the same time take a proactive approach in challenging the status quo with their innovative ideas and plans.’ (ibid) Kolkata based corporation the Indian Tobacco Company (ITC) places its consciousness in the expression ‘A company that puts the nation ahead of itself, ITC is inspired by the opportunity to make a big difference through the enlargement of its contribution to the Indian economy’ and its faith in the concept of Trusteeship. ITC also positions itself as one of the leading business houses in India with interests across business segments including their extended area of corporate social responsibility. Reliance Industries highlights its founder chairman Dhirubhai Ambani’s efforts of taking the company where it today stands as the biggest Indian private sector corporation. Accompanying his picture is a quote from the Hindu religious text *Bhagavad Gita*, chapter 3, verse 21. Apart from the Brahmanic metaphor, on the Careers page, metaphors of business scale, economic growth, entrepreneurial ability, national allegiance pervade the text. Statements such as ‘turnover of nearly USD 66.8 billion’ (2016) and ‘market capitalization of over USD 78 billion’(2016) to ‘from oil and gas to refining and marketing, to petrochemicals and retail and special economic zones, our products and services energize India and enhance lives.’ UK based Indian family-run business, the Hinduja Group, traces their philosophy to Vedic times and the Indus Valley civilization that existed approximately 5000 years ago in the subcontinent. *Sindhi* by origin, the Hinduja own and manage a huge conglomerate with a business philosophy ‘My Dharma is to work, so that I can give’, enshrined by the founder of the group Premanand Deepchand Hinduja. On employees and people at the Hinduja Group it is mentioned, ‘Every member of the Group is encouraged to practice the Vedic principles of work: ‘service with devotion’ and ‘seek fulfilment of one’s own interest in the active promotion of the interest of the collective.’ The metaphor that strongly comes forth is the one of tradition and one of adhering to one’s caste duties. There is no mention of diversity or innovative capacity or strive towards modernity.

What finds mention is the Group's commitment to its core principles and allegiance towards them. The Tata group, one of India's oldest corporation and business houses uses metaphors of diversity and inclusion and affirmative action. Tata's core values which include 'Integrity', 'Understanding', 'Excellence', 'Unity', and 'Responsibility' are benchmarks for the employees to follow. What is conspicuous by absence is the use of metaphors focusing on the nation, Caste-community ethos, or entrepreneurial capacity. The call is for employees to carry themselves in a manner that shows compassion and humanity towards colleagues, serves the communities in which they work, and build strong relationships based on tolerance, understanding and mutual cooperation.

The metaphors of national allegiance and continuity from the past emerges from the Parsi owned and family-run Godrej Group's articulation of itself as 'Established in 1897, the Godrej Group has its roots in India's independence and Swadeshi movement. Our founder, Ardeshir Godrej, lawyer-turned-serial entrepreneur failed with a few ventures, before he struck gold with a locks business.' The write-up sums up with Godrej's current business aspirations and its focus on having a diversified workforce embedded with a 'high performance culture'. The *Komati* community, predominantly spread across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, in many ways align with the Baniyas from western and northern India. They are traditionally into professions involving trade and commerce, are landowning, and are strict adherents to Hindu religious practices as per the *Dharmic* code of the *Vyshyas*. One such *Komati* from Andhra Pradesh is Grandhi Mallikarjuna Rao, who owns and runs a conglomerate named after his initials. Amongst the Group's values and beliefs listed on its Careers page are 'entrepreneurship', 'humility', and 'respect for individual'. The value exchange metaphor is also foregrounded in the statements, 'GMR Group of companies is built around the Group's seven values and beliefs which is the embodiment the way it works.'

We welcome on board talent aligned to these values over and above an individual's domain expertise.' and 'Talent forms the backbone of our organization and keeping the employee at the centre, we have designed employee centric programs and policies...' (ibid). The Bharti Group's metaphors seemed to be aligning with those used by most corporations, mentioned earlier, owned and managed by people from the Vyshya Caste-community. On Bharti's 'Work Environment – Life at Bharti' page the metaphors of value exchange is prominently signified. It says, 'Working at Bharti means being expected to deliver your best and being well-rewarded for your skill, hard work and commitment.' The Baniya principles of entrepreneurial spirit, entrepreneurial capacity, entrepreneurial vision and entrepreneurial scope resonate in Bharti's core value of Entrepreneurship.

In the context of the corporate individual's constitution, the range of metaphors expressed by the corporations' S-code mentioned above can be listed as:

- The need to live by the company Code of Conduct, as communicated by the S-code
- The requirement to conjoin the company values with the nation's interests. National interest first.
- The call to 'enbody' i.e. to see and react through the monolith's lens when executing business requirements, on or off the corporate campus - ethnicity, nativity, traditionality based on the organization's communicative exercises.
- The opportunity to break from tradition and innovate, while engineering a new business ethos.
- The opportunity to create new micro-networks of filiations through existing codes of interaction based on ethnic, religious, genealogical & regional affiliations.

- To imbibe the becoming of the corporate individual through display of the organization's values and goals.
- To arrive at a conjugal relationship between the cultural nationalist outside the organization and the corporate individual inside the organization.
- To set individual goals in order to align with corporate goals. Corporate interest first.
- To embody teamwork as an ideal and align with the hierarchy of the team.

The S-code of Adani Group's Culture as well as Careers web pages reveals metaphors of alignment and result-oriented entrepreneurship in the context of nation building. The pages declare, "Be a part of nation building through goodness." And "From transforming India's coastlines through ports and logistics hubs to energising millions of households living without electricity to working towards food security in the most populous democracy, each of our business has evolved to play a part in empowering India."

The metaphorical enunciation of media companies The Hindu group and NDTV, as mentioned on their web pages, differs in their invocation of the nation metaphor. While The Hindu group's webpage says it started in the 1878 and is currently one of the most widely read dailies in India and abroad owing to its 'balanced' and 'independent' presentation of news, NDTV invokes the nation metaphor more than three times in the first couple of paragraphs. NDTV's claim towards a pan-Indian context is evident through their statements about being most 'respected' and 'credible' source of news for the Indian populace, while The Hindu Group's south-Indian context, especially the mention of its headquarters Chennai, is self-explanatory.

Balaji Telefilms' website on its Career Opportunities page lists a few current job openings alongside text which reads, "We offer our employees an exponential growth and a rewarding career within the system which is performance driven. We also acquire regular perception and feedback from employees on practices, culture and career growth, which is then used to set a benchmark in order to formulate our HR activities and policies. We handhold each new employee, providing them quick and valuable insights about the organisation. The aim behind this is to ensure their seamless transition within the organisation's culture and to help our employees identify their goals in a collaborative and proactive manner." (Note that the text reproduced from the site has grammatical and punctuation errors.) What marks an interesting departure is the nuanced Human Resources jargon used by the corporation regarding what prospective employees can expect from Balaji Telefilms the corporation. Unlike the 'family' content produced by this media giant, there isn't mention of any filial ties with or of the organization anywhere. There are, however, metaphors of transition to the company's culture i.e. the process of embodying, and of quantitative hierarchy through the mention of 'handholding' and 'performance'. The employee activity S-code of the site reveals two sets of pictures displaying a few employees celebrating the *Navratri* festival and participating in their Cricket league. The Nadiadwala Group's page renders text speaking about the family tree and invokes metaphors of genealogy through the mention of the patriarchal heritage. There is no Careers page anywhere on the site and neither is any mention of the workforce code of conduct.

On the Careers webpage of Biocon, arguably India's top biopharmaceutical companies with business clients spread across the global landscape, is a list of values which prospective employees need to adhere to when willing to join the organization. Biocon's values of integrity and ethical behaviour, a performance driven work culture, and collaboration & team

work with mutual respect, invoke metaphors of human capacity and their alignment to working with diverse group of people. Metaphors of nationalism, tradition, regional cultures give way to metaphors of globalism, innovation & best medical practices spanning the globe. Dr. Reddy's Laboratories is another Indian pharmaceutical major with a global customer-base for its healthcare products. Metaphors of globalism, integrity, teamwork, and respect towards colleagues resonate from its content on the Careers S-code. Cipla's 'Caring for Life' credential runs through its entire website from the About Us to the Life at Cipla to the Careers pages. Founded by Dr. Khwaja Abdul Hamied in the 1930s, Cipla's literature mentions its commitment to providing cost-effective healthcare products, a global outreach, and their emphasis on embodying the OneCipla Credo – the focus on core values of the Cipla family. Metaphors of genealogy, globalism, novelty & innovation, and workforce collaboration emerge from the S-code of this pharmaceutical corporation.

Indian finance conglomerate HDFC Group on its webpage says, "We are a closely knit family strongly rooted in our approach, yet aspirational in our purpose. While Housing Finance continues to be our core business, over the years, we have grown into a large financial conglomerate with diversified businesses. Our key associate and subsidiary companies hold leadership positions in their respective categories and our newer ventures are fast emerging. Our group companies have strong synergies with us, thus enabling HDFC to offer a wide range of financial products and services to cater to your needs across different stages of life". Its group company HDFC bank echoes the Group's ethos by mentioning its mission to be a 'world class Indian bank'. A global outreach from a pan-Indian pivot, values based out of familial bonding, and calling to attention its multiple interests within the financial business are the metaphors which can be observed. Incorporated over 25 years ago in 1995, this finance company was brought into existence with efforts from Indian financial

entrepreneur Hasmukhbhai Parekh, who had also played a key role in the foundation of ICICI Bank four decades earlier in 1955 and its expansion thereafter. The Tata Group's Careers page welcomes individuals from diverse backgrounds to join the Group, mentioning clearly that diversity is the 'core value' of Tata. The page also mentions that the Group follows a positive discrimination framework through its affirmative action policy in the pursuit to achieve social equity in the employment area, thereby empowering traditionally disadvantaged communities. The website's *About Us* S-code does reveal metaphors of genealogy and nationalism.

Vedanta Limited in its Careers page says, "In order to equip new entrants and to make them conversant with Sesa Sterlite's values and beliefs, we have structured orientation and training programmes which focus on policies, benefits, practices and a broad perspective on understanding our businesses and processes. Our mentoring initiatives help in providing emotional support to new employees as well as ensuring a smooth transition into our processes, systems and culture." In addition to this, the site also mentions that the firm is keen on recruiting meritocratic prospects and those who can collaborate to join the organization as employees. Metaphors of globalism, meritocracy, and hierarchy come through from the S-code of Vedanta's site. As gathered from the Mahindra group's website, metaphors of globalism, innovation, individual capacity, and empowerment emerge from its S-code of the above mentioned page. The About Us S-code reveals metaphors of genealogy, globalism, workforce empowerment, & innovation. The communicational flows of the Mahindra group traverse from the mention of legacy of the founders to its global expansion and focus on providing a positive work environment for its employees which is free of discrimination and upholds dignity of the individual, thus bringing to fore its commitment towards entrepreneurial pursuits.

So, what is the network of filiations which is formative in the establishment of the organization and its operations thereafter? The network of filiations is a genealogical flow of ties between members of the same Caste-community, region, gender, ethnicity, and ability.

The *Erlebnis* i.e the lived experience of the corporate individual is open to influences by various other forms of management/organizational communication in addition to what is written on the website. The application acceptance, interview process, joining letter, and code of conduct document also play a formative role in the constitution of the corporate individual during his/her stay at the organization. In addition to these, regular communication from management representatives such as the Human Resources and Team Leads through written emails or team activities plays an important role as well in the process of embodying the corporate individual into absorbing the hierarchy & ethos of the organization.

5. Conclusions

The task of the study was to examine the Indian corporate plateau and understand the metaphors in its communication. This study revealed multiple aspects of communication and consciousness of Indian business corporations. While this domain of conducting formal trade & commercial activity in India was practiced mostly by the mercantile castes and communities from across the region, few corporations set-up from the 1980s were established by people from non-mercantile castes & communities as well. There are continuities, breaks and obtuse tangents in the communication trajectory of these organizations and layers of consciousness can be witnessed of not just the owners/promoters of the organization but in the way employees are given to appropriate the communication as well in their individual consciousness. It can, however, be said that communication and consciousness are intertwined processes emitting categories of metaphors situated here for analysis.

Based on the context established through the theoretical framework, methodological approaches and the analysis thereafter, it can be posited that privately owned and managed large Indian corporations which have been functioning for at least two decades predominantly produce metaphors of ethnicity, nativity, tradition, hierarchy, meritocracy, the primary function of which, however, is to establish the organization as a network of filiations and to embody the corporatized individual in order to align with that of the organizational ethos. The categories constituting the network of filiations and the idea of embody have been enunciated in the analysis chapters.

The metaphor analysis approach, within the associated schema of synthesizing hermeneutics and semiotics, undertaken here of the ‘work and the word’ reveals a fragmented pattern of the metaphors.

This pattern can be visualized as:



While some of the metaphors from their S-codes become multiplicities and invoke notional transitions from regionalism to nationalism to globalism, other metaphors invoke concepts ranging from genealogy to familism to filial micro-networks, thus becoming a *ligne de fuite* (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004).

As was observed and analyzed during the period of this study (2012-2020), the metaphors emerging from the communicational flows and discharges of Indian corporations, whether from the same business sector or another, are not unidirectional either. As the organizational structure undergoes a transformation the communicational flows realign to profess dynamics of the traditional, the current and ones in the near future.

In the context of the study of analyzing communication practices of the Indian corporate plateau, Deetz' (1992) mention of organizations being the result of their historicities brings into notice distributive histories of social categories such as Caste-community, gender,

ability, communal capacity & referral capacity and in a few instances, socio-cultural affinity with the region. So, can cultural nationalism as theorized by Aloysius (1998) be applied to study the Indian corporate plateau?

Though the plateau metaphor brings to mind a fairly level surface, there are schisms within the corporate plateau. The study reveals that the layers of cultural nationalism are evolving from a vedic-brahmanic, pan-Indian, schism with the West/modernity to ethnic-native-traditional, genealogical-familial-filial, global-regional-local, and self-social-virtual categories.

Hence, the thesis proposes that the Indian corporate plateau is not just an economic formation but a network of filiations aimed at acquiring both commercial and social yields in the course of its operations. The network of filiations informs, renders concrete, and flows through the organizational ethos by building on signifiers such as genealogy, region, Caste-community, and the phase of rendering individual capacity to fulfil the organization's ethos, goals and business interests. Each Indian corporation within this plateau is set in operation through its social infrastructure even before the physical infrastructure is up and running, and exhibits differential metaphors while bringing with it a chronology of events leading to the establishment of the said corporation. The social infrastructure then communicates to the ones occupying the physical infrastructure about the status quo.

Based on the categories discussed earlier in the analysis chapters, it can be said that most corporations established and run by those from the *Savarna* communities principally invoke metaphors of ethnicity, tradition, meritocracy & hierarchy while those corporations initiated by backward castes, dalits or scheduled tribes, the *Bahujan* communities, categorically invoke metaphors of novelty, innovation, nationalism-globalism, and hierarchy. The study also observed over-lapping communicational flows through the metaphors of hierarchy &

individual capacity mentioned by both *Savarna* and *Bahujan* promoted and managed corporations in relation to the employee code of conduct.

Damodaran's (2008) approach to Indian business corporations traces Caste and community conditions which pivoted the establishment & revenue generation of a private organization and sets the context to view the corporation as a result of relations between the political machinery, the community the promoters belonged to, and what they intended to achieve through their capacity as entrepreneurs. However, metaphor analysis reveals that the Indian corporate plateau is a result of conscious, adaptive relations between:

- The businessmen and their ethnicity
- The businessmen and their community
- The businessmen and the region
- The businessmen and the country
- The businessmen and the global
- The businessmen and the organizational workforce
- The entrepreneur and the region
- The entrepreneur and the global
- The entrepreneur and the organizational workforce

The network of filiations informs, renders concrete, and flows through the organizational ethos by building on signifiers such as genealogy, region, Caste-community, and the phase of rendering individual capacity to fulfil the organization's ethos, goals and business interests.

It is the network of filiations which informs the production of the metaphor of globalism. As Joseph Nye (2002) mentions, “Globalism, at its core, seeks to describe and explain nothing more than a world which is characterized by networks of connections that span multi-continental distances. It attempts to understand all the inter-connections of the modern world — and to highlight patterns that underlie (and explain) them. In contrast, globalization refers to the increase or decline in the degree of globalism. It focuses on the forces, the dynamism or speed of these changes. In short, consider globalism as the underlying basic network, while globalization refers to the dynamic shrinking of distance on a large scale.” In the context of metaphors produced by the Indian corporate plateau, Nye’s concept of the underlying ‘network of connections’ needs to be looked at as a network of filiations. In the Indian landscape, the filial bonds which function as routers of genealogical information and legatine material are not bound by familial webs alone but extend beyond the immediate unit-community to the ethnic-community, the Caste-community, the region-community, the nation-community and the global-community, with tapering degrees of intensity.

Signified through its communication, the fabric of consciousness of the Indian corporate plateau is largely interwoven with formulations on patrilineal ethnicity, Caste-community driven entrepreneurial ethos, adaptive engagement with global corporate practices, aligning traditional hierarchies with the structure of teams, and heralding a mosaic enterprise for the 21st century; an enterprise which consciously seeks to merge the traditional with the modern, the historical with the current, the community with the ecosystem, the regional with the national, the national with the global, the patriarch with the CEO, and the alpha with the team lead. In addition to this, the consciousness of the cultural nationalist also emulates the global entrepreneur and the economic flows of the multi-national corporation. These synthetic flows of consciousness of the Indian corporate plateau enable the location of the plateau as that unit

in the larger Indian topography which positions itself as a mosaic enterprise, informed not just by profit and loss decisions but also by its being and becoming as a genealogical offshoot in conformity with globalism.

Further studies in this direction can seek to understand:

1. How do employees of large Indian business firms perceive corporate communication and what meanings do they make of it?
2. Do employees join an organization because of what it says about itself and prospective joiners?
3. How can the process of embodying be measured?
4. Do some employees find it easier to fit into an organization? If yes, why? And what are the layers of consciousness they grow through before joining an organization?
5. Can Dilthey's hermeneutics approach be employed to study speeches of prominent business magnates and arrive at their Erlebnis
6. Can metaphor analysis be used in organizational sectors apart from business corporations? For instance, can Cricket commentary be analyzed during the Indian Premier League to arrive at hitherto unknown aspects of this grand show?
7. With help from semiotic theory in the background, can metaphor analysis be used for visual media like Indian movies and web series?

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