

Articulating comprehensive frameworks on socio-cultural change: Perceptions of social and cultural change in contemporary Twenty-first century Anthropology from a 'Neo-centrist' perspective

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Abstract

This paper articulates new perspectives and integrates existing frameworks on cultural change from the point of view of Twenty-first century anthropology. This paper also identifies the key drivers of cultural change across epochs and investigates the mechanics of cultural change, and our proposed approaches towards cultural change (characterized by Activism which we believe is an adjunct for the globalisation of the field) are intertwined with our core philosophy of Neo-centrism which is intended to be used in a wide variety of domains. The approaches that we adumbrate, bear some resemblance to 'The Theory of Linguistic Osmosis' as propounded in an earlier paper, may be referred to as 'Cultural Osmosis', and as such are opposed to more simplistic theories of Cultural Change. We refer to this approach as the "Proactive-interactive-symbiotic approach to long-term cultural change". This eventually leads to what cultural anthropologists refer to Cultural integration in some form with different cultures retaining their own characteristics. The ethics and the pros and cons of activism are also explored, along with their role in ensuring the long-term survivability of civilization, their ability to foster cultural symbiosis, and extirpate other outmoded approaches. This paper also introduces concepts such as Manumittology and Manumittonomics as a part of the Neo-centrist framework, and the 'Theory of Mindspace' as well. These approaches are expected to integrate with Applied Anthropology and Developmental Anthropology take them to greater heights.

An overview of Anthropology

Anthropology is a subject which studies humankind or Homo sapiens, arguably the most successful species in the world till date, in all its complexity and myriad cultural forms. It is also the systematic study of humans as biological organisms, and of culture as a dynamic and an ever-changing entity, and encompasses the approaches of both the biological and social sciences. It is highly unrestricted in scope and includes topics as diverse as the evolution of primates into humans (evolutionary anthropology), ethnography, genetics, archaeology, anthropometry, paleoanthropology, cultural anthropology, economic anthropology, human ecology, political anthropology, historical linguistics, descriptive linguistics and applied anthropology. Anthropology therefore deals with all aspects of human existence (Howard and Dunaif-Hattis, 1992), and its scope is said to be so vast that it possesses the attributes and straddles the worlds of both the natural sciences and the social sciences and interlinks with a host of other sciences such as sociology, historiography, psychology, geography, social sciences and economics. However, the basic and the more important fields of Anthropology are considered to be Physical Anthropology, Cultural Anthropology, Archaeology or Archaeological Anthropology and Linguistic Anthropology.

The word anthropology is derived from the Greek word 'anthropos' which means human being and 'logos' which means science. Anthropology therefore refers to the science of human beings (Barnard, 2000; 1). However, the term anthropology did not exist in that era and came into use only in the past couple of centuries. According to Haviland, Prins, Walrath and McBride (2011; 2), anthropology is the study of humankind in all times and places. According to the University of North Texas, anthropology is the study of human diversity around the world with a view to identify commonalities and differences in social institutions, cultural beliefs and communication systems. Langness (1974; 1) defines anthropology as "The scientific study of human beings- i.e., of the human creature viewed in the abstract: male, female, all colours and shapes, prehistoric, ancient, and modern." According to Barrett (1996; 3), "Anthropology usually has been defined as the study of other cultures, employing the technique of participant observation, and collecting qualitative (not quantitative) data". Clyde Kluckhohn likened Anthropology to a great mirror which enabled man to look at his own diversity. The 1822 Encyclopaedia Britannica on the other hand, defined Anthropology as a discipline devoted to a discourse on human nature.

Anthropology is also related to sociology which may be defined as the "science of society". (L.F Ward and W.G Summer) August Comte, Herbert Spencer, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber and Karl Marx were the pioneers of sociology. Many Anthropologists also functioned as sociologists and the distinction between the two disciplines is often blurred. August Comte defined sociology as "The science of social phenomena subject to natural and invariable laws, the discovery of which is the object of investigation." According to Max Weber, "Sociology is the science which attempts the interpretive understanding of social action in order thereby to arrive at causal explanation of its course and effects." Morris Ginsberg states "In the broadest sense, sociology is the study of human interactions and inter-relations, their conditions and consequences." Sociology also forms a part of Social sciences which may be defined as "Disciplines which study social interaction, society or culture." (William P. Scott)

History of Anthropology

Anthropology is considered to be a relatively new discipline as its theoretical underpinnings developed only in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. However, an interest in studying human beings is known from the time of Herodotus in Ancient Greece in the fifth century BC, who developed a great interest in alien peoples and may well have been the world's first anthropologist. Even though

Heredotus travelled extensively, he wrote about other alien cultures from second hand information. Other early contributors to Anthropology were Aristotle, Strabo, Lucretius, Tacitus, Aquinas and Polo. Aristotle introduced a kind of a philosophical anthropology, speculating on human nature, and differentiating between man and animals. Strabo, a geographer, wrote about distant places and far off lands. Some aspects of anthropology such as linguistics also evolved independently, in Ancient Egypt, Ancient India and Ancient China through the publication of notable works such as that of Panini. The travels of early travellers and conquerors such as Hiuen Tsang, Fa Hien, Alexander the Great and Megasthenes stimulated interest in other cultures. Interest in cultural studies can also be traced to the renaissance period of the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries. In the 14th century, Ibn Battuta also wrote about his travels to distant lands.¹

The age of exploration gave a boost to interest in exotic cultures, and travellers like Vasco Da Gama, Magellan, Amerigo Vespucci and Christopher Columbus wrote about their interesting experiences and encounters with alien cultures. The birth of the Age of Enlightenment, the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution gave an indirect fillip to both anthropology and sociology. The French philosopher Montesquieu wrote about several exotic cultures in his work "The spirit of the Laws" which was published in 1748. Henry Maine and Lewis H. Morgan's works "Ancient Law" (1861) and "Ancient Society" (1877) were based on their own investigations and travels. Colonialists and missionaries also wrote about their encounters with other cultures, but their endeavours often had ulterior motives.

In France and Germany, anthropology took off in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, but often, other names such as ethnology, Volkskunde, Volkerkunde were adopted. Early attempts to establish anthropology as a science can also be traced to Giambattista Vico, Baron de Montesquieu, Denis Diderot, d'Alembert, Marquis de Condorcet and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Immanuel Kant formally identified Anthropology as a field of study which examines the cultural development and progress of mankind. In English, the word 'anthropology' can be traced to 1805 (McGee and Warm, 2012; 6).

Anthropology is also largely a by-product of revolutions in evolutionary sciences. Edward Tyson and Friedrich Blumenbach made pioneering early contributions to Biological Anthropology in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Charles Darwin's 'On the origin of species' is largely considered to be evolutionary and path-breaking, and it played a such a pivotal role in the development of Anthropology as a science, that some scholars such as R.R.Marrett (1912) even saw Anthropology as a corollary of Charles Darwin's and Herbert Spencer's ideas. Anthropology eventually gained respectability, and departments of Anthropology were established in leading universities all over the world by pioneers such as Edward B. Taylor, Franz Boas and Paul Broca. Thousands of articles, papers and dissertations have also been published in the field of anthropology and several sub-disciplines and branches have been introduced within the field of Anthropology. Several new theories have been developed within various sub-disciplines of Anthropology with a view of providing a conceptual foundation and a theoretical framework, and older theories have been modified wherever necessary in the light of new evidence. By the 1890's, Anthropology took a new turn with the advent of new methods and techniques. Anthropology became an increasingly complex and stratified subject by the 1920's with major contributions by many leading stalwarts of the day.^{2 3}

¹ Ancient India: As described by Megasthenes and Arrian, John W. Mc Crindle, 2000

² A History of Anthropology, Thomas Hylland Eriksen and Finn Sivert Nielsen, Second Edition, Pluto Press

³ A New History of Anthropology Edited by Henrika Kuklick, Blackwell publishing, 2008

Over the years, and beginning chiefly with the 1920's, different schools of thought were formulated in the field of anthropology. Some of the more prominent schools of thought are the school of evolutionism, the school of historical particularism, the diffusionist school, the structuralist school, the cultural ecology school, neo-evolutionism, the postmodern school and the culture and personality school.

Today, in the Twenty-first century, Anthropology is foraying in bold, new directions. Applied Anthropology, a term first proposed by Daniel G. Brinton, is helping solve seemingly intractable issues, and is making a difference to the lives of the downtrodden. Anthropology is also increasingly being used in Management, the Corporate World, and in Policy making and Governance.

An overview of Cultural Anthropology

Cultural anthropology is a vital sub-discipline of anthropology and covers a diverse array of fields such as art, religion, politics, economy, folklore, music, food, work culture, kinship, marriage, parenting, health etc.

Cultural Anthropology may be defined as the study of patterns in human behaviour, thought and feelings. It focuses on humans as culture-inheriting, culture-creating and culture-transmitting beings. It studies the universals in culture, and their variation across space and time. Culture may be defined as people's learned and shared behaviours and beliefs. One of the earliest definitions of the term culture in an anthropological sense was given by Edward B. Tylor who stated "Culture or civilization taken in its broad ethnographic sense is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." According to Malinowski, "Culture comprises inherited artefacts, goods, technical processes, ideas, habits and values." Marvin Harris states, "A culture is the total socially acquired life-way or a life-style of a particular group of people. It consists of the patterned repetitive ways of thinking, feeling and acting that are characteristic of the members of a particular society or segment of society." According to Ward Goodenough, "A society's culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members. Culture being what people have to learn as distinct from their biological heritage, must consist of the end-product of learning knowledge, in a most general sense of the term." According to Clifford Geertz, "Culture is the fabric of meaning in terms of which human beings interpret their experience and guide their action; social structure is the form that action takes, and is the network of social relations. Culture and Social structure are different abstractions from the same phenomena." Culture is also believed to be all-encompassing and all-pervasive. Ralph Linton states in this regard, "Culture refers to the total way of life in any society, not simply to those parts of this way which the society regards as higher or more desirable. This culture, when applied to our own way of life, has nothing to do with playing the piano or reading Browning. For the social scientist, such activities are simply elements within the totality of our culture. This totality also includes such mundane activities such as washing dishes or driving an automobile, and for the purposes of cultural studies, these stand quite on par with the finer things of life. It follows that for the social scientist there are no uncultured societies or even individuals. Every society has a culture, no matter how simple this culture may be, and every human being is cultured, in the sense of participating in some culture or the other. A culture is also the configuration of learned behaviour and the results of behaviour whose component elements are shared and transmitted by the members of the society."

It thus also logically follows that humans are the only species in the animal kingdom which are endowed with a culture, and this aspects differentiates us from other animals.

Researchers such as Franz Boas, Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown proposed a holistic approach to Anthropology which included culture as well. From an early tendency to focus on “primitive” cultures, the scope of Anthropology today, has become all-encompassing and all-pervasive and embraces humanistic concerns and values. Famous Cultural Anthropologists have included Franz Boas, Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, Claude Levi Strauss, Clark Wissler, Robert Lowie, A L Kroeber, Eric Wolf, Lewis Henry Morgan, Bronislaw Malinowski, Paul Farmer, George Marcus, Clifford Geertz, James Frazer, W J Perry, W H R Rivers, Carlos Seligman, A C Haddon and Marcel Mauss. Today, approaches employed in cultural studies include in-depth studies including fieldwork, interactive approaches and cross-cultural studies. Structured methodologies such as Participant observation, Interviewing are employed.

Areas of specialization within Cultural Anthropology include Economic Anthropology, Psychological Anthropology, Medical Anthropology, Cultural Anthropology, Political Anthropology etc. Another field of study within cultural anthropology is Ethnology. Ethnologists undertake a detailed study of cultures of specific groups of people and try to understand how culture is transmitted from generation to generation. Ethnologists also try to understand the dynamics of culture and cultural change. Ethnologists may also make cross-cultural influences with a view of arriving about more meaningful conclusions about commonalities and differences between cultures. Ethnology also employs scientific methods such as hypothesis building and empirical verification to a large extent to arrive at definitive conclusions. On the other hand, Ethnography provides a detailed account about a particular group, community, society or culture. Ethnographers devote time to a detailed study of specific cultures over a period in time with a view to understanding all aspects of that culture, often by living among the subjects of their study over protracted periods, interacting with them or observing them silently and passively, maintaining dairies and field notes, and at times even employing interpreters, mediators or informants. Ethnology and Ethnography are closely inter-related, and Ethnologists often use data provided by Ethnographers in the course of their fieldwork. ^{4 5 6}

Attributes of culture

The following are the more common attributes of culture:

Culture is learned

Beliefs and values are often relative, culture-specific and learnt by members of a group. They often provide people with yardsticks to control their behaviour and perceive the world. For example, most Hindus loathe the idea of consuming Beef, given the centrality of the Cow in the rural economy and the fact that cows are typically more useful alive than dead. Pigs are considered unclean by Muslims, its meat is forbidden in the Qu’ran, and interestingly most Hindus do not eat pork either. Americans have no qualms or inhibitions about eating pork or beef, but would be horrified at the prospect of eating dogs and horses. Another related example is that of language which is typically sub-consciously imbibed by members of a cultural group, to a very high degree of proficiency, sometimes without any formal training, but members of this cultural group may be totally ignorant of other languages or dialects that are not in use by the group.

Culture is symbolic

⁴ Anthropology Carol R.Ember, Melwin Ember, Peter N. Peregrine, 12th Edition, Pearson Education Inc. 2008

⁵ Cultural Anthropology Barbara Miller, 6th Edition, PHI Learning Private Limited 2011

⁶ Cultural Anthropology: Appreciating Cultural Diversity, Conrad Phillip Kottak, Fifteenth edition, McGraw Hill International Edition

A symbol is something verbal or nonverbal, linguistic or non-linguistic, which stands for something within that culture, and is crucial to cultural representation and learning. According to Leslie White, "Culture is dependent on symbolizing... culture consists of tools, implements, utensils, clothing, ornaments, customs, institutions, beliefs, rituals, games, works of art, language, etc." (White, 1959)

Culture is shared

If only one person in a group acts and thinks in a particular way, it represents a personal characteristic and is not symbolic of a culture as a whole. For any trait to be considered cultural, it must be shared by several members in the group. For example that child marriage is morally wrong is shared by most Western and many Oriental societies, but not necessarily by all societies across the world. Even though traits are generally common to most members of a cultural group, there is always scope for individual variation, and this is readily accepted by most Anthropologists.

Culture is an expression of human nature

Culture teaches humans how to express their innate biological urges and proclivities. For example, culture teaches people when, what and how to eat. It teaches them how to interact with their parents, elders, teachers and children. It also teaches them how to respond to specific situations and react to stimuli.

Culture is all-encompassing

Culture encapsulates every aspect of people's lives. It governs and dictates to varying measures and degrees, what people do practically every moment of their lives. This would explain why, for example, why the British play cricket and why American's don't. It would explain why Americans eat pork which the Muslims don't. It would also serve to explain why some cultures are more innovative, inventive and dynamic, and why some cultures are less innovative and inventive, inward-looking or regressive. Culture includes all aspects of material culture, technology, arts, music, literature, cuisine etc.

Culture encompasses many facets and may also be alternatively categorized into topical culture (categories such as religion, music etc.), normative culture (ideals, values), behavioural culture (shared, learned human behaviour), structural culture (set of inter-related thoughts and ideas), Historical culture (social heritage etc.).

Culture is integrated

Cultures are not unstructured sets of customs and beliefs. Cultures are integrated and patterned sets of customs and beliefs. If one aspect of a culture changes, it causes ripple effects in other aspects of culture as well. Cultures are therefore highly structured belief systems, most aspects of which are tightly integrated with one another. This may also be referred to as 'Organicism'.

Culture is instrumental and adaptive

Unlike primates and other animals which rely on instincts and reflexes, or other biological means of adaptation to help them survive and adapt to a limited extent, it is a widely known fact that humans alone possess intellect and the power of reasoning. Culture, and the ability to acquire, transmute and transmit cultural traits is one attribute which has played a key role in the success of humans.

Culture evolves

Culture evolves constantly. This is due to technological and social factors and the underlying inventive nature of man. This is often cited as one of the major causes for success of man vis-a-vis other animals which do not possess this ability. Human culture has evolved and changed greatly from the stone age

and the hunter-gatherer stage to what it is today. Various theories have been put forth to identify the rate of cultural change and the degree of inventiveness. These include unilinear models, multilinear models, cyclical models, and diffusionist approaches. Cultural change is primarily a process of adaptation akin to Natural Selection.

Culture can be inherited

Culture is usually inherited from elders in a society through a complex process of enculturation. Children usually inherit most aspects of a culture from their parents. However, this is subject to change as people are subject to other influences throughout their lives. Thus, the culture that children transmit to their children is often different from what they receive from their parents. The latter either retains some core elements intact, modifies them considerably, or adds or deletes some elements from the mix. This takes place from generation to generation and invariably and inevitably leads to cultural change. Thus, culture is transmitted both vertically (across generations), and horizontally (within a generation).

Cultures operate as cognitive system

Cultures are often seen as systems of knowledge which are designed to serve the needs to its members. According to Ward Goodenough:

A society's culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members. Culture is not a material phenomenon; it does not consist of things, people, behaviour, or emotions. It is rather an organization of these things. It is the form of things that people have in mind, their models for perceiving, relating, and otherwise interpreting them (32, p. 167).

Claude Levi Strauss, on the other hand, views culture as a structural systems which consist of shared symbols which serve the needs of members of society in some way, and are the cumulative creations of the human mind.

Definition of a society

Many leading sociologists have attempted definitions of a society. According to Maclver and Page, "Society is a system of usages and procedures, of authority and mutual aid, and many groupings and divisions, of controls of human behaviour, and of liberties. This ever-changing, complex system, we call society." According to Ian Robertson, "A society is a group of interacting individuals sharing the same territory and participating in a common culture." Thus, a society is a group of people whose members reside in an area, share common cultural bonds, and interact with one another. The following characteristics of society emerge from most definitions:

1. Society is a group of groups. People collect together to form groups. A group of groups is a society. (H.M Johnson)
2. Society is based on a pattern of social relationships. This is because humans come together to enter into relationships with one another, and interact with one another. This also automatically creates interdependencies.
3. Society depends on likeness. The 'principle of likeness' refers to widespread similarities found among members of a society. F.H Giddings refers to this as "consciousness of kind".
4. Society is also characterised by differences. The "Principle of differences" refers to the mental, physical and social differences found among people in a group.
5. Society is also characterized by co-operation and division of labour.
6. Society is dynamic, and the constituting elements of society are ever-changing.

7. Society relies on some form of formal or semi-formal structure or organization to maintain cohesion.
8. Society has institutions which are designed to serve its needs and differentiate it from other societies. Examples of institutions are family, education, marriage, religion etc.
9. Society has culture. Society and Culture go hand in hand. For example, Linton called culture the "Social heritage of man".

On the other hand, a community may be defined as "A social group with some degree of we-feeling and living in a given area". (Bogardus). A community is characterized by locality and community sentiment. A community is typically smaller than society, but can be expressed and understood in more concrete terms. Several communities taken together constitute a society. Another related concept is that of a social group. According to Ogburn and Nimkoff, "Whenever two or more individuals come together and influence one another, they may be said to constitute a social group." A social group is defined by a "we"-feeling, mutual awareness, group unity, a common purpose, common interests etc.

Definition of Change

A change may be defined as any alteration, difference or modification that takes place in a situation, or in an object, or organism, or environment through time. Social change, cultural change and sociocultural change are interrelated and sometimes used synonymously. According to Kingsley Davies: "By social change is meant only such alterations as occur in social organizations, that is, structure and functions of society." According to Maclver and page, "Social change refers to a process responsive to many types of changes; to changes in the manmade conditions of life; to changes in the attitudes and beliefs of men, and to the changes that go beyond the human control to the biological and physical nature of things." Thus, cultural and social change is universal and takes place in societies throughout the world. It is also typically continuous and temporal, and reflect human nature. According to Gillin & Gillin, "Social changes are variations from the accepted modes of life; whether due to alteration in geographical conditions, in cultural equipment, composition of the population, or ideologies and whether brought about by diffusion or inventions within the group."

A history of theories of Social and Cultural change (or Sociocultural evolution)

In many early societies, people believed that evolution and the direction a culture or a society would take depended on the will of God. This theory again took on many shapes and forms, and variants were the Biblical theory of creation and the Hindu theory of creation. Some societies also believed in fate, and that the destiny of humans was shaped by his own action and the laws of God. These ideas constitute a form of determinism. Some people in early societies also believed that the direction and progress of society primarily depended on kings, monarch and other great people, and that other factors were subservient to the writ of great men. Some scholars like Cuvier and Osbinge also believed in catastrophism i.e. that the earth was subject to periodic catastrophes. These archaic views naturally came under the scanner after the growth and development of Anthropology as a science. Different schools of thought were eventually propounded to explain the evolution of culture and cultural change, and a few of them are briefly discussed below:

Early Cultural Evolutionism or Classical Evolutionism

In the early days of Anthropology, the prevailing view as known from Anthropologists such as Edward B. Tylor and Lewis Henry Morgan was that cultural evolution was linear and progressive, taking place in sequential stages, and was usually irreversible. Anthropologists then thought that societies passed through common stages from the most primitive savagery, then barbarianism, and reached similar ends, usually culminating in complex civilizations. It was also thought that different cultures were at

different states of evolution at any given point in time, and less advanced cultures would evolve to higher states in due course. According to Herbert Spencer who is widely known as an eminent sociologist, "Evolution was change from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity through continuous differentiation and integration." Edward B Tylor wrote "The institutions of man are as distinctly stratified as the earth in which he lives. They succeed each other in series substantially uniformly all over the globe, independent of what seem the comparatively superficial differences of race and language, but shaped by the similar human nature acting through successively changing conditions in savage, barbaric and civilized life."⁷ By today's standards, this approach is considered to be over-simplistic, and is also synonymous with a priori and philosophical assumptions. It is also associated with armchair anthropology and Eurocentric bias. Evolutionary ideas can be found in the writings of David Hume in the early part of the Eighteenth century. Later, Herbert Spencer applied Charles Darwin's theories to his own ideas of cultural evolution. Spencer believed that evolution was based on several principles such as change, order, direction and progress, and that society passed from the militaristic stage to the industrial stage. Walter Bagehot, William James, Thorstein Veblen and others also argued that Darwinian principles could be applied to social and cultural changes. Durkheim and others have also attempted to classify societies into simple and complex, and have attempted to show that societies invariably passed from simple to complex. Durkheim's classification was based on the similarity of its members in simple societies (what he called Mechanical Solidarity) and diversity and specialization of its members (Organic Solidarity), Karl Marx's theories gave Cultural evolutionism another interesting twist, but many of Marx's ideas were apparently over-simplified, based on a one-size-fits-all approach and eventually falsified. Karl Marx's notions of the phases of human history were Primitive Communism, Feudalism, Capitalism, and Communism which resulted from class struggle and revolution of the proletariat, but empirical evidence has not always borne this out.

Other supporters of the evolutionary theory in some form were Henry Maine, James Frazer, W.H.R Rivers, Carlos Seligman, William Graham Summers, William Ogburn, Bachofen, McLennan, Westermarck and A.C Haddon. The era of Evolutionism came to an end with the writings of Franz Boas who severely criticized the assumptions of evolutionists and pointed out that culture was complex and variegated and that simplistic notions of cultural changes were suspect.

Other early theories of cultural or social evolution were provided by Michel de Montaigne, Adam Ferguson, John Millar and Adam Smith who proposed that societies pass through stages such as hunting and gathering, pastoralism, nomadism, agriculture and commerce. Philosophical concepts of social change and progress were provided by Hegel, Claude Adrien Helvetius and Comte de Saint Simon. According to Auguste Comte, society passed through several stages such as the 'logical stage', the 'metaphysical stage', and a 'positivistic stage'. (Law of three stages) According to J G Frazer, society passed through the magical stage, religious stage and the scientific stage. According to Robert Redfield, society transitioned from folk society to urban society.⁸ Marquis de Condorcet believed that human society passed through ten distinct stages, each leading to its betterment and perfecting the human race.

Diffusionism

Haviland, Prins, Walrath and McBride (2011; 579) defined diffusion as 'the spread of certain ideas, customs, or practices from one culture to another'. The Diffusionist school of thought evolved in the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth centuries. Diffusion is the exact opposite of invention. The three main diffusionist schools were the British diffusionist school, the German diffusionist school and the

⁷ Anthropology E. Adamson Hoebel Third Edition, Mc Graw-Hill book company, 1966

⁸ Evolutionary Theories of Cultural Change: An Empirical Perspective, Richard R. Nelson Columbia University

American diffusionist school. According to British diffusionists, most aspects of civilization emerged in Egypt, and were then diffused to other parts of the world through trade and cultural contacts, and the independent evolution of cultural traits was a rare phenomenon. Leading British diffusionists were Grafton Elliot Smith, William James Perry and W H R Rivers. German diffusionists likewise believed that people were uninventive themselves and borrowed ideas from other cultures. However, German diffusionists thought ideas were borrowed from a range of different cultures. Wilhelm Schmidt, Fritz Graebner and Fredrick Ratzel were leading German diffusionists. American diffusionists, led by Clark Wissler and Alfred Kroeber, believed that traits diffused from core centres to outlying regions.⁹

Diffusion can be of the following four types:

1. Direct contact: An example is the spread of a trait from a culture to neighbouring regions and beyond. Such contacts may be continuous or sporadic.
2. Intermediate contacts: This typically takes place through third parties such as traders.
3. Stimulus diffusion: In such a case, the knowledge of a trait is used to develop a local counterpart in another culture.
4. Diffusion without any contact: In this case, diffusion takes place without any contact. This type of diffusion is common in the age of high-technology.

Cyclical theories of Evolution

Cyclical theories of Cultural change propose that cultures pass through several stages, from an initial stage, undergoing a series of changes, and then reverting to its original state. Some Anthropologists such as Oswald Spengler even believed that decay and death were inevitable. A related theory is the theory of deterioration. This theory has some currency among Hindu nationalists who subscribe to a hoary golden age in the remote past.

Historical particularism

Franz Boas emphasized the profound variations observed in cultures throughout the world, and opined that it was futile and pointless to formulate any generalized laws. Boas felt that the focus would have to shift to the collection of data so that the laws governing culture, their diffusion, and their variation would automatically emerge.

Anthropologists then thought that some cultures are more evolved than others. But when Boas travelled to Baffinland, he was struck by the hospitality and large-heartedness of those people (Stocking, 1965; 61): "The more I see their customs, the more I realize that we have no right to look down on them. Where amongst our people would you find such true hospitality? We "highly educated people" are much worse, relatively speaking". According to Boas, the societies could not be simplistically categorized as 'savage' or 'civilized'. Rather than following a 'nomothetic' (considering several cases at a time) approach, he encouraged the anthropologists to follow an 'idiographic' (dealing with particular or a specific case) approach (Langness, 1974; 57). This eventually led to the idea of 'historical particularism'.

Various techniques in Ethno science propose looking at issues from an ethnic group's point of view and adopting techniques such as the participant observation technique to understand cultures better. Interpretive Anthropology, or interpretivism, understands aspects of culture by studying the

⁹ Social Change and Modernity, Edited By Hans Haferkamp and Neil J. Smelser, University of California Press, 1992

worldview of peoples in different cultures and their own ideas and points of view as seeks to provide a counterweight to Ethnocentrism.

Neo-evolutionism

In 1917, R H Lowie stated, "Evolution is far from dead, and our duty is merely to define it with greater precision." The idea of Evolutionism was also revived in the 1940's by Leslie A. White who strongly objected to the idea of Historical Particularism, but with significant changes. According to White's basic law of Cultural Evolution, "Other factors remaining constant, culture evolves as the amount of energy harnessed per capita per year is increased, or as the efficiency of the instrumental means of putting the energy to work is increased." However Leslie White was criticized because he did not take into account environmental, historical or psychological factors in shaping cultural change.

Julian H. Steward divided evolutionary schools of thought into three broad categories unilinear, universal and multilinear. According to this categorization, Edward B. Tylor's early theories of cultural evolution were considered unilinear, while White's approach which did not focus on the specifics of a culture and attempted to generalize principles were considered universal like Gordon Childe's. According to Gordon Childe, "all societies have lived in different historical environments and have passed through different vicissitudes, their traditions have diverged, and so ethnography reveals a multiplicity of cultures, just as does archaeology" (Childe, 1951:32). Childe believed that parallels exist because of the underlying similarities across cultures and human nature and behaviour. Julian Steward considered himself to be a multilinear evolutionist because he dealt with culture changes and its parallel effects on other cultures or other aspects of the same culture. These were termed a parallelism and causality. Ideas of General Evolution (as applicable to Mankind as a whole) and Specific Evolution (as applicable to a specific culture) were formalized by Marshall Sahlins and Elman Service who were students of both Leslie White and Julian Steward. Talcott Parsons also advocated a world systems approach towards sociocultural change. Multilinear evolution models in different forms have some currency today. However, the idea of unilinear evolution is largely discredited and widely regarded as obsolete.

There are several other theories of cultural change which are related to neo-evolutionism. According to a theory proposed by Hartmut Rosa, there are major change agents such as technological accelerators, advances in transportation, communication and production which accelerate the pace of cultural and social change and the pace of life. According to Rosa's theory of social change, change occurs at four mutually-dependant 'levels of self-interpretation' viz, (1) explicit self-interpretations in the form of law documents, literature, and theories, (2) institutions and social practices, and (3) the thoughts and beliefs people have. (4) body-practices, habits, and feelings of individuals.

Pitirim Sorokin was a Russian-born scholar who migrated to the USA in the 1920's. Sorokin's theories have some features of the cyclical approach. According to Sorokin, any socio-cultural system alters due to its own forces and properties. Sorokin identified three broad categories of change – ideational, idealistic and sensate. According to Sorokin, culture oscillates like the clock of a pendulum between two points, and that there is some kind of a recurrence or rhythm in change. This is because there are always limited possibilities of change. Etzioni introduced the concept of "active orientation". According to him, activation occurs under conditions where the power structure and organization of knowledge, norms and values appear in specific combinations. Talcott Parsons, Weber and other sociologists believed that the process of rationalization distinguishes developed societies from less developed ones, and the process of rationalization is the harbinger of all meaningful change.

According to social action theorists such as Robert Maclver, Thorstein Veblen, John R. Commons and others, individuals innovate, but they usually tend to do so in the names of the groups they operate in. According to another theory known as the sedimentation theory, the present is embedded in the past, and all the collective experiences and knowledge of a society are sedimented in a time continuum. There are a range of other theories on cultural and social change, including those provided by scholars such as Neil Smelser and Marion Levy. R L Carneiro and S F Tobias have proposed “The theory of differential evolution” which states that there are differential rates of evolution in different aspects of culture, while Hooton calls this ‘asymmetrical evolution’.^{10 11 12 13}

Neo-evolutionism also took on several other interesting forms. According to the Modernization theory proposed by Walt Rostow, Western societies were the most developed. However, modernization theorists felt that developing countries would adapt western technologies and eventually catch up with the developed world.

Though not directly related to neo-evolutionism, another interesting idea is that of Memetics which is used to represent the different units of a culture which aid in cultural transmission e.g. ways of dressing, cooking etc. This idea was popularized by Richard Dawkins in the 1970’s. Memetics proposes that ideas, skills, practices, and so on, are entities that make copies of themselves and are used to propagate cultural traits, much like genes in evolutionary biology. Memetics involves breaking down of a culture or a sub-culture into discrete and manageable units. This approach, which is similar to some of the proposals in our paper, can be even used to construct the broad framework and the superstructure of a given culture by breaking it down into logical and inter-related sub-components.

^{14 15}

Other scholars also attempted to break up cultures into traits and assign these developmental sequences, or develop generalized heuristic techniques that could be used to study other cultures. Attempts were also made by Emile Durkheim, George Peter Murdock, Claude Levi Strauss, Donald Brown and others to analyse the universals common across cultures. Murdock also set up the Human Relations Area Files or HRAF in which common categories of cultures were filed together. Murdock and Douglas R. White also introduced the concept of “Standard cross-cultural sample” by analysing sample cultures that could be used as a benchmark for other cultures. Another approach recommends breaking up a culture into trait-complexes, and further into traits. Ruth Benedict believed that culture was made of many patterns which were bound together in a harmonious whole. M.E Opler recommended summative principles in culture called themes. Claude Levi Strauss broke up words and cultural sections into phonemes, morphemes, etc. in the search for the underlying reality of the human mind.

Functionalism

The idea of functionalism emerged in the 1930’s and identifies the roles played by different elements of a culture in maintaining a cultural or a social system. According to Malinowski, all cultural traits serve the needs of individuals in society, and as such, are designed to serve some functions in society, and integrate to serve the larger needs of society as a whole. According to him, culture was an

¹⁰ The Sedimentation Theory of Cultural Time and Space: The Present is embedded in the past
Robert N. St. Clair, University of Louisville, 2007

¹¹ Sociology: A biographical approach Peter L. Berger and Brigitte Berger

¹² The Active Society Amitai Etzioni New York Freepress, 1968

¹³ Creating Social change: Edited by Gerald Zaltman, Philip Kotler, Ira Kaufman

¹⁴ Dawkins, R. (1976) The selfish gene. Oxford University Press

¹⁵ Modernization of the structure of societies, Princeton University Press, 1966

instrument which enabled man to maintain his biopsychic survival. According to Radcliffe-Brown, however, cultural traits were designed to maintain the social superstructure of a society which includes all internal and external relationships. Other Anthropologists who subscribed to functionalism in some form were August Comte, Raymond Firth, Herbert Spencer, Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons. Parsons considered societies to be complex systems of parts working together to promote social stability. According to Carol Ember, Melvin Ember and Peregrine (2011; 21) functionalism 'looks for the part (function) that some aspects of culture or social life plays in maintaining a cultural system'. According to Langness (1974; 87), "Just as an individual human being constitutes a finite system with a distinctive structure- each organ performing a particular activity, the function of which is to contribute to the maintenance of a system as a whole, so also, a human society constitutes a similar system with its distinctive structure and functions". Thus, whenever there is an internal or external change, all aspects of society undergo some form of transformation. However, the inbuilt mechanisms within a society attempt to restore normalcy and equilibrium under all circumstances.

However, functionalists were criticized for ignoring the effects of change on society and the evolution of society over a period in time. They were also criticized for ignoring the role played by historical factors in shaping society.

Culture and Personality School

The writings of Sigmund Freud were influential in establishing the culture and personality school. Other early proponents of the 'Culture and Personality' school were Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead. According to these scholars, culture and personality were tightly interlinked. Thus, culture could play a major role in formulating personality traits. Their theories were based on a prolonged study of various North American tribes and New Guinean societies. Ralph Linton, E.A Hoebel and Abram Kardiner also developed theories which suggested that basic personality types in a culture were developed by cultural values in that society, or primary institutions, which in turn gave rise to secondary institutions.

The idea of National Character as developed by Marvin Harris and others gained popularity in the Twentieth Century and referred to the idea the beliefs, attitudes and the worldview varied widely from nationality to nationality. According to the proponents of this concept, members of a society tend to think alike and act alike, and as moulded by the society's core values and norms. The idea of compartmentalizing cultural traits may however be somewhat passe in the Post-globalized Twenty-first century, and as such this approach has been widely criticized given its ability to promote stereotypes and ignore variations.

Cultural Ecology or Environmental Determinism

Cultural Ecology, Ecological Anthropology or Environmental Determinism studies the influence of environment of culture. This field was pioneered by Julian Steward who felt that cultural traits were considered adaptive. Cultural ecologists believe that the process of cultural adaptation involves the mechanism of Natural selection, or the survival of the fittest. Many aspects of culture are also believed to be interrelated. For example, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis states that language is an influencing factor in its own right, and influences how speakers of a language perceive the world. Studies have also suggested that social position impacts language, and this in turn impacts thought.

Steward believed that a social system was determined by its environmental resources (Mahmud, 2008; 83). According to Mahmud, the main idea of cultural ecology was to determine whether cultural adaptation towards the natural environment initiated social transformations and evolutionary

change. Steward emphasized the interrelation among the natural conditions in the environment i.e. rainfall, temperature, soils, technology, social organization, and attitudes within a particular sociocultural system' (Scupin and DeCorse, 2012; 286-287).

Cultural Constructionism

Cultural Constructionism maintains that human behaviour and ideas can be explained as products of culturally-shaped learning. For example, Cultural Constructionism would determine habits such as alcoholism, tobacco-use and drug-taking. A diametrically opposite viewpoint is Biological Determinism which hold that behaviour is largely shaped by genes and hormones.

Structuralism

The idea of Structuralism was propounded by Claude Levi-Strauss. According to him, elements of culture such as arts, ritual and the patterns of daily life were surface representations of the underlying structure of the human mind. Levi Strauss's work have revolved around the cognitive processes of people, and the ways in which humans perceive and classify things around them. Varying interpretations of structuralism have been provided by Edmund Leach, Rodney Needham and Mary Douglas. Structuralists believe that various elements of a culture can only be meaningfully understood in terms of the inter-relationships among them. According to Klages (2006; 31), structuralism is 'a way of thinking that works to find the fundamental basic units or elements of which anything is made'. According to Barry (1995; 39), "The essence of structuralism is the belief that things cannot be understood in isolation and they have to be seen in the larger context of the larger structures they are part of". Structuralists also look for inter-relationships between different elements of a culture, and tend to adopt more holistic approaches while looking for solutions to problems in Anthropology. For example, if anyone is studying kinship, he cannot arrive at any meaningful conclusions by studying just one family, but must interface it with a study of kinship systems in the society as a whole.

The structuralist-functionalist perspective of cultural and social change was provided by Durkheim and Weber, and later by Parsons and Merton. Structural functionalists believe that society is a balanced system consisting of several interdependent parts. When internal or external events disrupt the social order, the society's inbuilt mechanisms attempt to restore equilibrium. According to Durkheim's and Weber's model, change essentially comes from the following three sources:

i) Adjustment of the system to exogenous change (for e.g. war, conquests or annexation), ii) Growth through structural and functional differentiation (for e.g. changes in the size of population through births and deaths), iii) Innovations in the society (for e.g. inventions and discovery).

Cultural Materialism

Cultural Materialists attempt to learn about a culture by studying material aspects of life in preference to all other aspects of a culture. Cultural Materialists believe that material aspects take precedence and shape and determine all other aspects of a culture. This approach forms the bedrock of Marxist approaches to Anthropology. According to Roseberry (1997; 27): "The starting point of Marx's materialism was the social, which manifested itself in the form of material needs. Anthropological theories also duly got influenced by the thoughts of Karl Marx. Cultural Materialists use a three-level model to explain culture. The lowermost level is infrastructure which includes natural resources, the economy, population and the forces and relations of production. This may also be termed as the economic base. According to this approach, infrastructure shapes the other two domains of culture, namely structure (social organization, kinship and political organization) and superstructure (ideas, values and beliefs).

Marxists believe that cultural change is brought about by class struggle and revolution. According to Marx, class struggle was fundamental in shaping change (“The history of all hitherto existing human societies is nothing but the history of class struggles”). In this view, change was revolutionary and often brutal and violent. A similar theory was proposed by Vilfredo Pareto who believed that changes were brought about in a struggle between groups for political power, and the decadence and the eventual replacement of one group of elites by another.¹⁶

Conflict theories

Conflict theories take into account the principles of dialectics as central to understanding the causes of change. According to A.W Green, “Conflict is the deliberate attempt to oppose, resist or coerce the will of another or others.” Per Georg Simmel, there were four types of conflicts, namely, War, Feud or Factional Strife, Litigation, and Conflict of Impersonal ideas. According to this school of thought, every action, belief and interaction tend to generate an opposite reaction. For example, the oppression of ordinary workers generates a class struggle and ultimately, a revolution. According to the theory of power elites proposed by C. Wright Mills, a small group of people at the top of society known as the power elites manipulate power for their own selfish ends, thereby triggering conflicts with the society at large. According to proponents of the conflict school, change is rarely smooth, and typically takes place to correct social injustice and inequality. Several theorists other than Karl Marx and Pareto contributed to conflict theory. For example, Max Gluckman who founded the Manchester school of thought, focussed on internal and external conflicts, contradictions and inconsistencies in daily life. Other conflict theorists were Walter Bagelot, George Vold, Georg Simmel, Ralf Dahrendorf, Ludwig Gumpowicz and Gustav Ratzenhofer.

Other Modern theories of Cultural Change

There are a wide variety of alternative modern approaches to social and cultural change.

According to Geert Hofstede, people have mental programs that are typically developed during childhood and are reinforced or corroborated by the culture’s value systems. According to him, the dimensions along which the dominant patterns of culture could be ordered were power distance (The degree to which the institutional and organizational power should be distributed and the decision of the powerholders should be challenged or accepted), uncertainty avoidance (The extent to which a culture feels threatened by uncertainties), individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus feminineness, long-term versus short-term orientation, hedonism versus self-discipline etc.

Research conducted by Robert J. House listed out nine attributes viz. future focus, uncertainty circumventing, power distance, humane orientation, performance orientation, collective thinking, assertiveness and gender fairness.

Edward T Hall spoke about high context cultures and low-context cultures. These could be rated he believed, based on the type of relationships, formality of agreements, acceptance of outsiders and rate of change in cultural patterns.

According to GLOBE researchers, there were nine dimensions of culture. These were future orientation, humane orientation, uncertainty avoidance, institutional collectivism, in group collectivism, assertiveness, gender egalitarianism and power distance. According to Milton and Janet Bennett, cultural value differences were of the following types: Relational (individualism, collectivism, formality, informality, competition, cooperation), Authority (Egalitarianism, hierarchy), Temporal (Use

¹⁶ Cultural Theory: The key concepts , Andrew Edgar and Peter Sedgwick Routledge, 2008

of time, passage of time, change and adaptability, reliance on tradition and past), Activity (Action-orientation, practicality, idealism).¹⁷

According to the theory of Pluralistic Behaviourism, change rests on the actions of individuals, which in turn rest on beliefs and desires. According to Talcott Parsons and Edward Shils, all human action is determined by different alternatives which are present at the individual level, social system level, and at the cultural level. These were affectivity (need-gratification) versus restraint of impulses, self-orientation versus collective-orientation, universalism versus particularism, ascription versus achievement, and specificity versus diffuseness.^{18 19 20}

Social Movement Theories

Cultural change and social change are tightly interlinked, and social movements may be necessary to bring about cultural change. Let us now explain some social movement theories below that explain how social change is brought about:

Most sociologists adopt a scientific method in bringing about social change. This includes studying the problem, formulating hypotheses, draw conclusions, report results and propose an action plan for bringing about change.

Alternatively, Blumer and Tilly have proposed a four stage process in bringing about social change. In the preliminary stage, people become aware of an issue, and leaders emerge. This is followed by the coalescence stage when people come together to publicize the issue and raise awareness among the people. In the institutionalization stage, the movement is established. Eventually, the movement falls into the decline stage. McCarthy and Zald conceptualized the resource mobilization theory to explain success of movements in terms of the ability to acquire resources and mobilize individuals. According to Snow and Benford, successful social movements use three kinds of frames to achieve their goals. The first type, diagnostic framing, states the problem clearly. Prognostic framing, the second type, offers a solution and states how it will be implemented. The third type, motivational framing is the call to action.

Types of Cultural change

The following are the different types of cultural change, and most analyses would differentiate change on the following bases:

Long-term or permanent change versus short-term change

Long-term change may be defined as a permanent change or a near-permanent change, whose impact is felt over the long-term. Such changes usually lead to fundamental changes in a society. Examples of such changes are changes brought about by the adoption of new technologies such as the internet. Short-term changes are however, those changes which last only in the short to medium term. Examples of such changes are short-term changes to immigration policy brought about by political will

¹⁷ Some Elements of a Cultural Theory of Social Change Daróí Montero

¹⁸ The Analysis of social change: Based on observations in Central Africa: Godfrey and Monica Cambridge University Press, 1968

¹⁹ Pioneers of the Field – South Africa's women anthropologists, Andrew Bank, International African Library Cambridge University Press, 2016

²⁰

Research Methods in the Social Sciences, David Nachimas and Chava Nachimas, St Martin's press, New York, 1976

or diktat, effects of a hurricane or a tornado, or short-term devastation brought about by an earthquake.

Irreversible versus reversible change

Irreversible changes are those changes which cannot be reversed or those changes whose effects cannot be undone easily or painlessly. Many changes that we see around us today, are irreversible. For example, the changes brought about to American society by the automobile were profound, and it is highly unlikely that any reversion to the pre-automobile age will ever happen in spite of the harmful effects popularly associated with this technology.

Directed versus undirected change

Most change is undirected, and the future cannot be predicted with any degree of precision. This is the beauty and the quintessence of human civilization. Who foresaw the industrial revolution, the dawn of the automobile era or the internet age? However, change can be regulated and modulated in a manner that makes it orderly or ensures that it is compatible with the needs of the society. Unplanned or undirected change may also be referred to as free change. (Halpin) Changes may also be classified as predictable changes and unpredictable changes. Directed change and social action require different elements such as the identification of a cause or a problem that needs to be solved, the identification of a change agency, change targets (individuals and institutions may become targets of change efforts), channels or ways through which influence can be transmitted, change strategy or an action plan for change.

Major changes versus minor changes

Major changes are those changes that impact society significantly or substantively. Minor changes typically do not impact society in a major way. Changes may also be classified as core changes or peripheral changes depending on their impact on society. They may also be classified as all-pervasive changes versus non-pervasive changes. Likewise, some changes only effect elites or the privileged few, while some other impact all echelons of a society.

Positive changes versus undesirable or harmful changes

Positive changes are those changes that tend to have a positive impact on society as a whole, or most sections of society. On the other hand, negative changes tend to harm society in some way. Social Darwinism may fail us utterly here. Negative changes do propagate through what we call allure or glitz, thereby triggering the need for activism.

Gradual changes versus non-gradual changes

Another classification of changes is gradual changes versus non-gradual changes. The former are typically slow and peaceable, and may be as a result of technological innovation, economic progress, social upliftment or increase in efficiency of the utilization of the factors of production. Non-gradual changes may be sudden and abrupt, often caused by disruptions in technology or bloody social revolutions. Non-gradual changes were brought about in the 1920's with the popularization of the automobile, in the 1990's with the dawn of the internet age, and also with the French and Russian revolutions. Changes can also likewise be punctuated, and characterized by periods of rapid change and relative non-change. A well-known and a widely-cited example of punctuated change is the French Revolution. Punctuated change was also brought about on many other occasions in human history, example being the end of colonialism in the 1940's and the 1950's in Asia and Africa, the civil rights movement of the 1960's and the end of apartheid in South Africa in the 1990's.

Endogenous changes versus exogenous changes

Endogenous changes refer to those changes that are internally-induced and take place from within a society, often through innovation or revolution. Exogenous changes refer to those changes that are externally-induced and the agents of change are typically alien to the culture. Examples of exogenous changes are those which are triggered by a culture's exposure to other cultures.

Contact-driven and Non contact-driven changes

Contact-driven changes are produced by physical contact between two cultures through war, conquest, annexations, incursions, military expeditions etc. Non contact-driven changes can typically occur even without any kind of physical contact, but typically use other enablers or mediums, more often technological. In early civilizations, writing precipitated non contact-driven changes. The invention of the printing press allowed new and revolutionary ideas to spread to far-off lands and eventually brought about wide-ranging changes, both direct and indirect in many societies. In the post-globalized world, change is ubiquitous, pervasive, all-encompassing and is often a way of life.

Neo-Centrism (or Centrism) as a philosophy and Neo-Centrism as an agent of social and cultural change

We had also introduced the concept of 'Neo-Centrism' (or simply, Centrism) in an earlier paper, and we reiterate the core sections of this philosophy here.²¹ 'Neo-Centrism' may be defined as a neutral and an ideology-free approach to all issues pertaining to a study of culture, social studies, historiography, economics and various other fields, (This is almost no holds-barred approach with potential widespread applicability) and an alternative and an "in-between approach" to the approaches espoused by the left and the right in specific circumstances. It is also an approach with a long-term orientation and seeks out solutions that work across the dimensions of time and space.

Oddly enough, the term *Neo-Centrism* already exists and refers to a political ideology advocated by the Neo-Centrist International (NCI)²² and other organizations, particularly in the field of politics and foreign policy. This approach may also draw on other ontological approaches if required as other scholars extend the concepts proposed here.

From our perspective, Neo-Centrism has a slightly different albeit a much broader connotation, and in our definition, the key characteristics of Neo-Centrism are below:

Neo-Centrism proposes a rejection of right-wing, left-wing and other ideologically-driven interpretations of history to the extent they are anti-truth and anti-science. It may be noted at the very outset, that the ideas of 'left' and 'right' are wholly foreign and irrelevant to this approach, and these two concepts are used only to what would like to call 'span the pontoon', cross temporary hurdles or out-grow existing concepts and purge them immediately thereafter. Thus, solutions may potentially incorporate elements from 'left-wing' and 'right-wing' recommendations in various fields. Neo-Centrism from this perspective is primarily based on a reconciliation and elimination of paradoxes in any form, the identification of which will be at the heart of the success of this approach. Neo-Centrism can be extended and applied to Economic thought, Political philosophy, applied linguistics,

²¹ Enunciating the Core principles of Twenty-first Century Historiography: Some additional extrapolations and inferences from our studies and observations on Historiography
Sujay Rao Mandavilli ELK Asia Pacific Journal of Social Science (ISSN: 2394-9392) in Volume 2, Issue 4 July to September 2016

²² <http://www.theamericanconservative.com/larison/neocentrism-another-name-for-the-failed-bipartisan-consensus-on-foreign-policy>

religious studies, debates relating to theism vs atheism, historiography, research methodology and process improvement, even though most topics may be outside the purview of the present paper.

Neo-Centrism may well become one of the biggest and most respected movements of the Twenty-first century. While some work has already been done on Neo-Centrism or similar concepts by other scholars in some form or the other, we invite other scholars to apply Neo-Centrist approaches to their respective fields so that it may become one of the most important and influential movements of the Twenty-First Century. Neo-Centrism is primarily based on dialectical approaches, some of which have existed for aeons, but extends them in various directions and melds them with pristine and original ideas and concepts— Neo-Centrist approaches therefore actively seek and reconcile divergent viewpoints by involving or taking into account the views of as many researchers as possible from diverse backgrounds and with divergent viewpoints.

As a crude but very effective rule of thumb, Neo-Centrism if well-conceived and applied, leads to a reconciliation and a merger of viewpoints, while ideologically-driven approaches (such as Hindutva, Marxist and Dravidian nationalist views of history, for example) lead to polarization of views, are anathema from our point of view. This alone should be a fundamental and a vital metric to isolate pseudo-science from bona fide science, and well-intentioned approaches from dubious approaches characterized by deceit and calumny.

This approach will also eventually lead to, and culminate in establishment of 'Codes of conduct' for historians and scholars of various hues and colours by promoting intellectual honesty and being reproachful to ideology of any kind. In the Indian context, this is likely to be detested and virulently opposed by the right-wing and the left-wing as it would severely undermine their ideologies, but by our own analysis and assessment, truth-based and neo-centrist approaches shall prevail in the long-term by rendering ideologies wholly meaningless and irrelevant. It will also lead to genuine progress in multiple fields and areas of study and move us to a higher state of reality, thus constituting some kind of a double whammy.

Thus, these techniques can be a vast improvement over older devil's advocacy techniques, and an extension of TRIZ, and other approaches to critical thinking such as Lateral Thinking, the Six Hats technique, among others. They can also complement process improvement techniques such as the Delphi technique, Six Sigma and the Theory of Constraints.

We had proposed some newer approaches such as CRCDE or Continuous reconciliation of Contradictory data or evidence., the key principles of which were (a) contradictory data or evidence must be aggressively sought, and such data or evidence is nothing to be afraid of (b) if contradictory data or evidence exists, the model or approach is over simplified (c) Reconciliation of contradictory data will always move us to a higher state of understanding (d) if contradictory data is left out from an analysis, a justification may be required.

Contradictory viewpoints may however be left out, if not backed up by data, or if the methodology used by the other historian has been convincingly or comprehensively refuted by the historian in question. This is necessary to grab the bull by the horns, avoid inertia and lethargy, and side step what we may call 'The Inconvenient truth syndrome'.

In case of Reflective Equilibrium through role-swapping (RERS), another idea that was mooted, the scholar learns to put himself in the shoes of all other stakeholders who would benefit from the work or be impacted by it, and does this one stakeholder at a time. He then tries to look at issues from the other party's point of view, or evaluate how he would react to it using that party's known ideological

affiliations, dispensation, antecedents or other relevant information as a base. He documents his observations and then modifies his work accordingly, or generates new objectives.

A key advantage of this approach would be that it would save time, effort and energy, and works in a field such as historiography where the other party may be unavailable or dead, and could be used in conjunction with other approaches to boot. These approaches can be adopted in addition to other dialectical approaches such as those which were propounded by Hegel and reinterpreted by Marx, and other approaches such as Rawl's reflective equilibrium, standard Devil's advocacy & Brainstorming techniques etc, and dialectical approaches which have been used in some form from the days of Plato and Aristotle.

Neo-centrism also has a long-term orientation. It also seeks to formulate proposals that will work across geographies. The justification for this is that mankind is only now ready for such analyses. Were the long-term effects of Industrialization thought through during the Industrial revolution? Did Henry Ford pause to think about the ill-effects of the automobile? Or, did anyone else checkmate? There is now some collective endeavour with a long-term view which is essentially in line with our views and is welcome news.

Application to various fields of study exact and inexact disciplines

The branches of sciences can roughly be divided into two categories: Exact Sciences and Non-Exact or Inexact Sciences. Exact sciences would include physics, chemistry, biology, etc. while the Non-exact sciences would include history, sociology and most other disciplines forming a part of what may be defined as humanities. In the exact sciences, one can pinpoint solutions with a great degree of precision, whereas in the non-exact sciences one cannot insist on a similar degree of precision.

In the case of inexact sciences each approach may consist of pros and cons, and decision-making typically involves some amount of judgment. In case of inexact sciences, a solution can typically never be proven. Neo-Centrism is also integrated with Relativism. Relativism is a concept which states that points of view have no absolute truth or validity when studied in isolation, but must be evaluated and studied as a part of a much larger and a broader ecosystem. Neo-Centrism is also related to eternalism, whose definition does not tally entirely with our requirements. We therefore propose the term 'aeternitism' which is derived from the Latin term 'aeternitas' meaning permanence. The term currently exists and describes an obscure spiritual practice. (There was also a Roman God bearing the same name that was associated with timelessness). Aeternitism, by our definition is the applicability and enforcement of a certain principle or a set of principles across the vagaries of time. The term 'vagaries' cannot be stressed enough, as predictions are typically fraught with uncertainties, and one typically only progresses towards reliability gradually and in stages. We also propose the term 'Omnimodism' to be the universal applicability of a certain principle or a set of principles i.e. its applicability across space and time, and under all circumstances and situations under the sun. This is derived from the Latin term 'Omnimodous' meaning timelessness and is similar to the uncommon English word 'Omnimodous'. The following are the steps that we propose:

1. Neo-Centrism is essentially based on dialectical approaches. Dialectical approaches are effectively based on age-old techniques of the reconciliation of contradictory or seemingly incompatible ideas in a single-minded and an unwavering quest for the truth. From this perspective, if a scholar does not apply dialectical approaches, his work is likely to be flawed, incomplete and biased in all except perhaps in a specific set of conditions or the narrowest circumstances. Therefore, Neo-Centrism requires abandoning narrow and constricted thought and taking into consideration,

other people's perspectives and points of view. (We refer to this as the 'Frog in the well' analogy). Our approach therefore, recommends an aggressive pursuit of contradictory data or evidence as this would greatly facilitate scientific progress. As a matter of fact, collection of contradictory data may even become mandatory in the process of hypothesis building in the longer-term as it is only this approach that can take us closer to the truth. This is an ideal all interested parties should strive towards, but this would naturally require an overall change in mind set and attitudes from all sides, and such a scenario may only be possible if several other key requirements are met.

2. From our perspective, if there is a valid criticism of a scholar's work from the point of view of the principles herein, in addition to any other valid criticism, it means that the scholar's work is flawed or incomplete, and requires appropriate revision or modification to make it acceptable.
3. If an issue is resolved using dialectical approaches, it automatically moves us to the 'next higher state' and closer to what one may refer to as the 'Ideal state' definitions of which have been proposed from very ancient times by scholars such as Plato and Aristotle. (Kindly refer definitions 1 and 2). In our definition, an ideal state is one where there are absolutely no paradoxes of any kind. However, there can be exceptions to this rule, and resolution to paradoxes may not always lead to an ideal or an enhanced state from the long-term perspective. Some paradoxes can also never be reconciled including cultural viewpoints and differences.
4. The 'next higher state' typically, and with a few very isolated exceptions, leads to an enhancement of knowledge and scientific output in the long-term, and can potentially increase the well-being of society as well.
5. Moving to the 'next highest state' automatically enhances the visibility of the next set of issues or problems by removing bottlenecks. The next set of issues may not be typically visible until the first set of problems is removed. This is analogous to a man climbing a mountain. The next peak may not be visible until the first peak is scaled. Thus, this approach engenders and facilitates progress by proactively and sequentially surmounting problems and removing bottlenecks.
6. While adopting dialectical approaches, differing viewpoints need to be reconciled. If any exclusions are made, a proper justification needs to be provided (Template 1: 'Dialectical Approaches: Justification of exclusions'. This ideally needs to be mandatory. While adopting dialectical approaches, the other practitioner's line of defence may also need to be formally obtained and evaluated for its completeness and validity. This will naturally be a pre-requisite for the task, and must be carried out in true letter and spirit. One way to do this would be to identify stakeholders who are most negatively impacted by an approach or a method.
7. Core axioms may be embossed in a belief system, and may be defined as the building blocks of a belief system. Core axioms from our perspective are defined as principles. A belief system from our perspective is defined as an entity.
8. Thus, an entity comprises one or more principles. This is therefore a one to one or a one to many relationships.
9. This exercise can also be carried out by assuming a one to one relationship between a principle and an entity. In other words, an entity or a belief system has only one principle.
10. If there are contradictions within an entity, the entity is defined as flawed, and lacking completeness.
11. If there are contradictions within an entity, these need to be identified using a 'Table of Contradictions'. (Template 2: 'Table of Contradictions')
12. If there are any contradictions within an entity, the entity may need to be broken up into two or more parts for a more meaningful analysis. Thus, a proper identification of an entity and its attendant principles is essential for the success of this approach.

13. An entity may be flawed for many reasons. An entity may typically be said to be flawed if too many deep-rooted paradoxes or contradictions persist. This can be analysed by carrying out a Root Cause Analysis. (Template 2: 'Table of Contradictions')
14. The impact of one more contradictions on various fields of study and society as a whole will need to be assessed and will be useful for determining the triage. (Template 2: Table of Contradictions) Additional data may be sought to probe the root cause of the actions of progenitors. E.g. Ideological bias, lack of knowledge, general incompetence, lack of scientific method. This would be documented as necessary (Template 1: 'Dialectical approaches: Justification of exclusions')
15. Pseudo-scientific approaches must be rigorously analysed and a heuristic approach (Template 3: Analysis of Pseudo-scientific approaches or APSA) (Template 4: QEPIS or Quantification of the effects of poor or Ideologically-driven scholarship (i.e. Downstream and adverse effects of poor, ideologically-driven scholarship or the continued persistence of antiquated approaches)
16. Entities may be ordered into a chain of entities.
17. Relationship between entities may be categorized into the following (a) Fully nested (b) Overlapping. (c) Related- Temporally-related (d) Related- Spatially related (e) Related- Functionally related (Template 5: 'Entity-relationship diagram or static Venn diagram')
18. Principles may thus be inherited from other entities in either original or modified form.
19. In a chain of entities, if or more principles contradict each other, the principles that are tied to a more robust methodology and have a wider currency must be preferred.
20. Assessment of assumptions and implications of principles must also be carried out. (Template 6: 'In-depth assessment of Principles, assumptions and implications'). This can also be extended to all statement or utterances. For example, the statement 'a script cannot be logo-syllabic because the length of is inscriptions is short' has many serious errors, and these must be identified formally by trying to establish its founding principles, assessing the implications and assumptions of such a statement, and in most cases, this will lead to comic and hilarious end-results, often exposing the author in question, his attitudes and whims, and calling for a radical reassessment.
21. In the above table, assumptions must be assessed for their validity using Occam's Razor. If assumptions are invalid or untestable, the principles are either invalid or weak.
22. In the above table, implications must be assessed. If any of the implications are untrue, the principle is either untrue or over-generalized.
23. A 'Universality Scale' or a scale for ranking of principles can be prepared by assessing principles on the basis of their (a) Universality and relevance on a time scale (b) Geographical applicability or spatial spread (c) Overall long-term positive implications for science and benefit for society as a whole. (d) Their conformity with natural laws (e) Their conformity with human nature. (f) Conformity with principles associated disciplines. The 'Table of contradictions' can be used to document inconsistencies and contradictions. This can also be put to productive use to plan the future.
24. The 'Universality Scale' can be extended to entities also, even in the many to one model.
25. If in an entity, some principles are strong or tend to override principles associated with other entities, and some principles are weak or tend to be overridden by principles associated with other entities, consider breaking up the entity into two or more parts.
26. In a chain of entities, if principles associated with two entities contradict each other, this scenario is unsustainable in the longer term. This is called a Paradox.
27. In case of a paradox, the set of principles with the maximum allure may dominate temporality.
28. In case of a paradox, principles going against human nature will not prevail in the longer term.
29. In case of a paradox, principles going against the laws of nature will not prevail in the longer term.
30. In case of a paradox, principles associated with a more robust epistemology will prevail in the longer term

31. It is the duty of the 'aeternitist' and 'omnimodist' to identify principles which will have currency across space and time. It is also the duty of the 'aeternitist' and the 'omnimodist' to identify pre-conditions and exceptions as well.
32. Thus, elimination of a paradox may move us to the next higher state, but it may not always be the ideal solution in the longer term.
33. In case of a paradox, feedback is provided to the subservient set of principles or those lower in the 'Universality scale' such that they may be modified or destroyed or rendered wholly or partly irrelevant.
34. Latency: The feedback i.e. typically adverse, may be immediate or delayed, but the feedback will happen. In other words, the latency time can never be infinity. (Template 7: Latency Matrix)
35. The latency time may be determined by several factors, and may vary on a case to case basis.
36. The latency time can be delayed or postponed though human intervention, but consequences of a paradox can never be avoided unless the paradox itself is eliminated. This is known as the 'Theoretical result' or the expected result. The theoretical result may vary from the actual result. However, the probability that the theoretical result is the actual result is very, very high. In the longer term, the theoretical result and the actual result tend towards each other.
37. Paradoxes must be the springboard to innovative and creative thinking.
38. This approach can be used for both exact and inexact sciences (and for more abstract ideas) with suitable modifications. An inexact science is one where no definite solutions are possible and where different solutions will have both positive and negative implications at the same time. In such a situation (a) A maximum profit, minimum loss approach may be adopted. (b) A formal study of the long-term effects of such an approach must also be carried out. (Template 8: Trade-off Matrix). A related concept that one may like to recall here is Aristotle's Golden Mean. In case various via media solutions are available, all of them need to be evaluated and the best possible solution selected. Therefore, even in the case of inexact sciences, an attempt must be made to resolve paradoxes aggressively, to the extent such a resolution is possible. In all cases, constant introspection is healthy and strongly recommended. In the case of inexact sciences, approaches may also be evaluated against a specific set of goals which may be arrived at through consensus.
39. Making short-term exceptions: Valid short-term exceptions or digressions can be made due to exigencies or lack of immediate technical solutions.
40. Reconciling short-term exceptions and long-term approaches is also crucial: Scholars must show how short-term exceptions will be merged with long-term approaches. This will form a part of DPPF techniques or Dialogue between the past, present and future techniques that are described elsewhere in this paper. Note that this may be always possible given the uncertainties pertaining to the future, but some aspects such as identifying contradictions with natural laws and human nature may help.
41. One approach may be to focus on internal contradictions i.e. contradictions within the entity, if the emphasis is on the short-term and focus on both internal and external contradictions if the focus is on a long-term analysis.
42. Stakeholder-driven approaches: This approach must ideally involve as many stakeholders and practitioners as possible by initiating an active search for them. Another approach is to look at issues from non-active stakeholders i.e. those who are positively or adversely impacted by an approach.
43. A structured understanding of the limitations, foibles, weaknesses of the present and present day approaches needs to be carried out. A structured understanding of the tacit assumption and implications of the present and present-day approaches need to be carried out. (Template 9: Analysis of the present and SWOT analysis).

44. A structured understanding the limitations, foibles, weaknesses of a culture or a geographical context needs to be carried out. A structured understanding of the tacit assumption and implications of a culture or a geographical context need to be carried out. (Template 9: Analysis of the present and SWOT analysis).
45. Benchmarking will be an integral part of this approach. This will be spatial, temporal and functional. (Template 10: Temporal Analysis)
46. The definition of an ideal state is an integral part of this approach. In an ideal state, there will be no paradoxes.
47. This approach will comprise of both a present-state and ideal-state analysis.
48. A gap analysis between the present and ideal states must be carried out (Template 11: Gap Analysis between present-state and ideal-state.)
49. A road map may then be prepared to achieve long-term goal (Template 12: Roadmap). This will also demonstrate anticipated changes to entities (Template 13: Entity State-transition diagram)
50. Solutions may be mined from the past using heuristic techniques (Template 14: DPPF techniques)
51. Paradoxes also have other implications in terms of impact on other fields of science and human behaviour and these need to be quantified and assessed. (Template 16: Cause and Effect Analysis). Paradoxes are synonymous with weaknesses in the belief system, lead to divisiveness, give rise to conflicts, promote aggressiveness and defensiveness, and throw up counter-reactions of different kinds. If dialectical approaches are not adopted in the long-term, a series of counter-reactions of the “Yo-yo type” can result. This is based on the premise that one-sidedness is against human nature. This is quite unlike a ripple because ripples usually die out. On the other hand, the effect in our model may be much larger than the cause. For example, the Hindutva monster may be a by-product of Colonial and Marxist historiography.
52. Globalisation and the spread of technology, it may be argued, are willy-nilly pushing humanity towards centrism. This is slowly but surely happening as biased interpretations become fringe and non-mainstream, and gradually get pushed to the wayside and get relegated to the background, ultimately fading into oblivion. There are three ways one can approach this issue (a) Laissez-faire or laissez-etre approaches where things are left to their own course or destiny without any proactive human interventions of any kind. The problem with this approach is that the latency time can be very high, and that course corrections can be ruthless and disastrous (b) Proactive approach- unstructured. This can reduce the latency time somewhat but would preclude a comprehensive and an across-the-board solution and may not provide a panacea for all ills. (c) Pro-active approach structured -follows the approaches championed in this paper, or other competent alternative approaches.
53. Paradoxes can be (a) Treated i.e. effectively eliminated (b) Partially treated (c) Deferred is case an immediate solution is either unviable or elusive but marked for treatment as a treatment may be possible in future or contingent to some other activity (d) Untreated due to considerations of cost and economy or absence of any kind of technical solution.
54. Such approaches must be integrated with valid scientific methodology such as hypothesis-building and the best-in-breed techniques in creative and innovative thinking, examples being Ashtuller’s TRIZ and Edward de Bono’s Lateral thinking. Our approaches such as RERS or Reflective Equilibrium through Role Swapping and CRCDE or Continuous Reconciliation of Contradictory Data and Evidence.
55. This approach may be modified to include situations where there is no conflict in core and allied principles, but the focus or emphasis alone varies. For examples, some entities emphasize some principles or aspects while playing down others.

56. For this purpose, it will be assumed that all paradoxes have a theoretical solution which may or may not be identifiable at a given point in time. Thus, an active hunt for solutions will emanate from our proposals.
57. Common sense and pragmatic approaches will always need to be followed, and intellectual nerdism must be eschewed at all costs.
58. This approach will also lead to a 'Globalization of Science' and 'Scientific Progress at the speed of light'. The key premise here is pseudo-science and biases germinate due to a combination of avoidable and unavoidable causes. Ideology is a classic case of the former, and personal self-interest being a typical example of the latter. The later can perhaps be only mitigated, while the former can be bypassed entirely.
59. In the utopian neo-centric world, there should ideally be no dissonance as neo-centric approaches move us towards a natural and resolution of paradoxes. However, in the real world, it should ideally not be so. A counterbalance to this type of approach would be an aggressive exploration of contradictory data, evidence and viewpoints through CRCDE.
60. This approach also calls for a reconciliation between short-term goals and objectives and long-term goals and objectives (Template 15: Reconciliation between Short-term goals and objectives and Long-term goals and objectives). One may argue that this needs to be always done formally.
61. One of the core requirements of this approach is 'Objectivity in mind-set' which was already discussed in this paper.
62. One may also emphasize pragmatism throughout. In our view, critiques without recommendations for action would be of absolutely no value. Likewise, recommendations for action not followed by action would be of absolutely no value. However, there may be a division of labour, and different activities may be pursued by different parties.

Additional notes:

1. A 'Next higher state' may be defined as a state where the number of paradoxes have been reduced in relation to the previous state, and society has been positively benefitted and moved to a higher state of advancement.
2. An 'ideal state' from our perspective is one where there are no internal paradoxes (i.e. within an entity) and external paradoxes (i.e. across entities) across space and time. It may be defined as a utopia or as near a utopia as deemed possible or practicable in the long term whose goals are not immediately attainable or achievable. The journey to the Ideal state may be represented by goals that are practicable and achievable. This approach is purely representative: One need not even assume that the 'ideal state' will be reached someday. However, this approach comes in very handy because it allows a state that is expected to be reached after an elimination of paradoxes is achieved and a "Theoretical ideal state'. A' Theoretical ideal state is one that is envisaged regardless of the paradoxes at hand or a detailed analysis therefrom. In other words, the 'Theoretical ideal state' is an ideal to benchmark progress against.
3. More complex inter-relationships between entities can also be constructed as warranted on a situational basis.
4. This approach may be used in conjunction with other metrics. For example, in a study of Economic policy, use of metrics such as the distribution of wealth, percentage of people below the poverty line, may be used to draw up policies and strategies for change. There may be paradoxes and inconsistencies between such metrics, but in such cases, the approach producing the lowest level of dissonance may be selected.

5. Approaches are always subject to change and improvement. Change may also be contingent to the occurrence of hitherto unexpected events. For example, the development of disruptor or game-changing technologies may warrant re-examination of a strategy.
6. Templates for various aspects of 'Neo-Centrism' are recommended but not proposed as a part of this paper.

Need for 'Activism'

Activism may be defined as creating or controlling a situation by taking an initiative. It may also be defined as acting in anticipation of future problems, needs or changes. Activism may also be referred to as action-orientation, and is related to pragmatism which evaluates actions based on their consequences and their contribution to human interests. Activism often uses some form of active campaigning to bring about cultural or social change. Activism may also be used to thwart or stall undesirable activities or diminish the undesirable effects of negative attributes of a culture. Pragmatism is an approach that evaluates theories and concepts based on their practicality, use and application to bring about a meaningful and a structured change. The basic concepts of pragmatism were first proposed by C S Peirce and William James, and in our view, activism stems from pragmatic thought and ideals, and would also make Anthropology a more pragmatic and a normative science.

The need for activism to a very large extent also stems from the limitations of Social Darwinism which may not work ideally under all circumstances and scenarios, and may have inherent boundaries and limits. The term 'Darwinism' refers to the theory of evolution of species by natural selection as proposed by Charles Darwin, and this term was originally proposed by Thomas Henry Huxley. Social Darwinism refers to the theory that individuals, groups and peoples are subject to the same principles of Darwinian selection and animals and plants. This theory in its canonical and orthodox form is largely discredited now. Proponents of Social Darwinism in some form included Herbert Spencer, Thomas Malthus, Francis Galton and Ernst Haeckel, but the term 'Social Darwinism' was itself coined by Joseph Fisher in 1877. The term 'Social Darwinism' has many, often mutually incompatible definitions. However, in 'Social Organism' (1860), Spencer compares society to a living organism and argues that just as living beings evolve through natural selection, societies evolve through analogous processes. Innovation often happens due to intellect and physical ability i.e. brain and brawn. It also largely is driven by the desire for profit or intellectual satisfaction. This section may also therefore be construed as a criticism of a laissez-etre approach. The following are the reasons why a proactive approach towards cultural and social change may be the ideal approach in a wide variety of circumstances and for most societies. We also propose to call the field of the study of proactive change to society in all its dimensions 'Manumittology' from the Latin word 'Manumettre' which means to empower or to liberate. The economic dimension may perhaps be referred to as "Manumittonomics'.

1. Activism may be necessary to counter the effects of inertia or resistance to change. Change may be resisted due to resistance in personality due to the sheer force of habit, inward-looking approach of individuals or culture, over-reliance on tradition, altered perception of issues due to cultural bias, desire to conform to norms, xenophobia, presence of vested interests, presence of over-sized institutions etc.
2. Activism is necessary for the globalisation of the field. Many early Anthropologists were arm-chair anthropologists who never closely observed their subjects of study, and at times regarded them with contempt and derision. They often used their cultures as a yardstick to judge all other cultures, and often adopted a condescending attitude to these cultures. Anthropologists later began to make extensive field visits, but preferred to observe subjects of their study dispassionately. They often viewed these cultures as interesting but alien and did not have any stake in initiating changes for the better, or extenuating undesirable aspects

of their culture. An emphasis on proactive change may therefore be necessary as the field begins to be globalised and more and more Anthropologists emerge from other parts of the world, looking at how tools and techniques can be used to solve their own problems or align them with their own priorities. This approach may then become an essential part of exorcising the ghosts of the past.

3. Activism may be necessary to moderate the negative aspects of any culture which are unfair or detrimental to the interests of the society or any of its members. This can be done by actively seeking out such traits, and also facilitating a cross-cultural comparison. Thus, Activism can induce internally-generated change by making the constituents of a society aware of the harmful effects of any negative aspects of their culture. Activism is a necessary prerequisite for directed or planned change, and may include planning, monitoring, evaluation and re-evaluation.
4. Elements with a higher proportion of allure, glitz or pizzazz may propagate faster or more easily, and this may not be in the interests of society as a whole. Glitzy advertisements for tobacco-based products for example may strike a chord with the people and boost tobacco consumption, while advertisements attempting to boost sales of health products may not. This may warrant or necessitate alternative campaigns. Aspects of an element that satisfy the principles of Social or cultural Darwinism include Technological superiority, economy, context suitability, etc. Aspects of an element that do not satisfy the principles of Social or cultural Darwinism include Allure and glitz, spread of a trait only due to its association with dominant cultures, inertia due to ignorance of other cultures, non-availability of an otherwise suitable solution due to poor marketing or non-awareness, non-economy of a suitable solution due to lack of technological or process innovation, non-suitability due to lack of modification for local use etc. In case of the latter, elements do not spread easily and may require some kind of an intervention.
5. Elements associated with more dominant cultures or sub-cultures may propagate faster, and this may not always be in the interests of society. The Cultural power or soft power of a culture or a sub-culture can play a dominant part in swaying trends. American music, pop and rap and led to the promotion of American culture around the world to the exclusion of other types of music. The rise of Bollywood has similarly threatened the popularity of other Indian language films. Japanese Cultural power is known as 'Kuru Japan', and icons of Japanese cultural power are J-pop, Manga comics, Anime, Sake and Sushi. China is making attempts to promote Chinese civilizational values abroad, and aspects of Indian culture such as Yoga, Ayurveda, Bollywood and Indian cuisine are well-known abroad. A more extreme version of cultural power is cultural imperialism. For example, a large number of television programs in Scandinavian countries are of American origin, and English words and catch-phrases are widely used in most European countries. This may lead to a situation where more meritorious aspects of other cultures are marginalized. Activism may therefore, be necessary to mitigate the negative impact of a culture on another culture, and to prevent negative traits from spreading across cultures.
6. Activism may be necessary to discover desirable traits in less dominant cultures that do not diffuse and to facilitate a process of symbiosis with the objective of long-term welfare of civilization as a whole.
7. Activism may also be necessary to counter the impact of misinformation and inaccurate perception of specific issues amongst members of a society that may lead to slower or undesirable changes in that culture or society.
8. Social Darwinism does not necessarily ensure the quality of change due to the reasons discussed in this paper. While changes may be largely unpredictable or unanticipated, activism

allows the direction of change to be broadly vetted and ratified without necessarily compromising on innovation and creativity. Likewise, Social Darwinism does not always secure the direction of change, and it may at times become necessary to alter the direction of change to make it compatible with the long-term interests of society.

9. Social Darwinism may not be all-encompassing and may not encompass all facets of cultural and social change, and may be compromised by other factors such as social inertia. Activism will allow change to be effected without any unforeseen or unexpected ill-effects associated with such a change.
10. There may be no guarantee on the speed or the rate of social or cultural change, which in an overwhelming majority of cases, may be an agonizingly slow process, and activism seeks to reduce the latency time associated with such change. In some other cases, change may be relatively faster. "We may consider each generation as a distinct nation." Thomas Jefferson once famously said implying that societal change could also be brisk. However, activism seeks to mitigate the perils and the hazards of a laissez-etre approach, and secure a direction and a minimum pace of change.
11. Lack of education or poor education infrastructure may be a bottleneck for achieving societal goals, and activism enables all constraints to be actively identified and removed. Although most Indian states have claimed universal enrolment or near universal enrolment in schools over the past one or two decades, the dropout rate is still unacceptably high, the school infrastructure largely abysmally poor, the teaching methods and pedagogical approaches outdated, and the teachers badly trained. Among the major Indian states, Kerala had the highest literacy rate of 93.91% in 2011, while Bihar was at the bottom of the heap at 63.82%. Many African countries have fared much worse and countries like Burkina Faso and the Central African Republic still have literacy rates of less than 40%. However, India's literacy rate has increased from 9% in 1900 to over 75% today. In the year 1900, 75% of American children between the ages 14 to 17 were out of school as against less than 10% now. Some progress: but the quality and reach of education must continue to improve if the full benefits of social change are to be reaped.
12. Technology may not necessarily disseminate widely, and this constitutes a roadblock to social development and cultural change. In spite of ambitious schemes like the Digital India which aim to eventually connect every village seamlessly with high-speed digital connectivity through broadband highways, digital literacy remains very poor in India, and bandwidth abysmal. Activism enables constraints to be recognised and actively got rid of. Thus, lack of awareness and lack of exposure about the latest developments taking place within a cultural system or other cultural systems may impede progress, and activism can allow for suitable programs to be instituted to counter this.
13. Poor physical infrastructure may often hamper the permeation and the percolation of change, and the impact of the lack of physical infrastructure on social and cultural change can likewise be quantified and efforts be made to eliminate it in the short and long-term. Road infrastructure still remains poor in many parts of Africa and Asia. However, schemes like the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana in India have sought to provide all villages with all-weather roads.
14. Lack of social infrastructure such as health care and sanitation may stymie progress and proactive approaches can allow such issues to be identified and addressed. However, India's social indicators such as its TFR, IMR, CBR, etc have been steadily improving as indicated by the NFHS 2, NFHS 3 and NFHS 4.
15. Activism helps tackle the ill-effects of multispeed cultural and social change. Multi-speed cultural and social change can be witnessed in most societies, particularly in developing countries. Multi-speed cultural change can be observed across many dimensions e.g. rank,

class, caste, community, social status, educational background, sub-geography, gender, age or other factors. Anybody who has had an opportunity to study such societies in depth will appreciate that differences can often be acute, spanning several decades or generations of developmental work.

16. Linguistic barriers and absence of linguistic empowerment may likewise fetter cultural and social progress, and all language policies and pedagogical approaches will need to be in line with the dynamics of language spread as discussed by us in an earlier paper. This will help formulate better language policies and better language teaching methods which will boost the competence of society as a whole.
17. Another objective of activism may be to institutionalize formal agents of change (either internal or external) that can ensure a reasonable magnitude of desirable change and permanence of efforts. This may include institutions study the society of culture for protracted periods and attempt to bring about requisite changes.
18. Activism can be used to prepare cultures for different types of change, the reasons for such a change, and enable members of a society or culture to understand the positive aspects of a change, and be prepared for negative but inevitable consequences of such a change if any.
19. Activism can also be used to temper the undesirable effects associated with change by seeking out mitigating or compensating strategies, or rolling out awareness and education programmes.
20. Activism may be necessary to achieve the objectives of neo-centrism such as aeternitism, omnimodism and manumittology. Activism may therefore be necessary to temper aspects of a culture that are against the interests of humanity as a whole, and to promote the long-term welfare of humanity. Activism can also reduce the impact of, or help avoid altogether, any catastrophic consequences, and ensure that humankind has better control over its own destiny.
21. Activism may be necessary to counter the effects of cults, ideologies, thought worlds or undesirable belief systems associated with a group. The definition of cults, ideologies and thought worlds are discussed in another section of this paper.
22. Activism may be necessary to mitigate the effects associated with cultural lag and the difference between material and non-material cultures. The term 'cultural lag' is used to describe a state of disequilibrium between material and non-material aspects of a culture. This term was first coined by Ogburn who explained that cultural lag occurs when different aspects of a culture change at different rates such that they become mutually incompatible. Ogburn proposed that the non-material culture (values, beliefs, norms, family, religion) typically lags behind material culture (technology, means of production output of the economic system). This is because progress in non-material aspects of a culture is typically stymied by social or cultural inertia.
23. Activism may be necessary to discourage a yoyo pattern of cultural readjustment or a pendulum effect, where an action results in an opposite but unequal action. Another action or a set of actions may be initiated to remedy the latter, and society may not reach a state of equilibrium within a reasonable period. There are several examples of such behaviour. For example, a dissatisfaction with, and the eventual refutation of Christian creationism lead to various movements promoting atheism, and a discontent with the latter may have prompted popular new age movements, and even the rebirth of religion. Popular new age writers and books promoting pseudoscience have become popular in recent times, and to most, these would be extremely disconcerting. Such works promote mutually incompatible viewpoints, and at this stage a reconciliation between such widely divergent views is nowhere in sight. Societies may also alternatively swing between xenophobia and xenocentrism to varying

degrees. This happens because a perfectly logical analysis may prove to be elusive and evasive. This may either be because comprehensive data may be hard to obtain, because people prefer over-simplifications or because people prefer to push a point of view.

24. Activism can help turn cognitive dissonance into a golden opportunity to bring about positive and meaningful change. It can also help minimize the potential long-term destructive tendencies associated with cognitive dissonance.
25. Activism may be necessary to counter the effects of altered behaviour within a group such as prestige bias and conformist bias especially where such behavioural patterns are not in the long-term interests of society. A prestige bias arises when members of a cultural group seek to emulate the elites in that group, or otherwise attempt to act in a manner that boosts his prestige or standing. A conformist bias arises when a member of a group attempts to act in conformity with that group's norms, values and cultural patterns, undermining creativity.
26. Activism may be necessary to induce attitudinal change which can lead to faster sociocultural change.
27. Activism may be necessary to counter and correct biases and behavioural patterns arising out of what Germans call 'Zeitgeist'. This can manifest itself, at times, as aberrant or irrational behaviour.
28. Activism may yield vital clues that can help refine theories of cultural change and offer lessons for the future. This may inevitably happen as Anthropologists prepare field notes and maintain diaries that can provide vital insights for other researchers and for future areas of study.

Limitations of activism

Subjectivity versus objectivity

Subjective issues are those issues which are based on or influenced by personal beliefs, inclinations or opinions, and can never be expressed in objective terms. The idea of subjectivity arose from the writings of Rene Descartes and Immanuel Kant. On the other hand, objective issues are those issues which are not affected by personal thoughts, biases or opinions, and those which can be expressed in clear uncertain terms, often black and white. Issues cannot however, always be categorized into subjective or objective, and any proactive will run the risk of becoming controversial and being labelled as biased, prejudiced, or lacking cultural sensitivity. It is for this very reason that 'The ethics of activism' must be widely debated among anthropologists. A similar concept is that of cultural relativism in Anthropology which states that each culture must be understood in its own terms, and that there are no absolutes, only relative attributes. Even though everything is not outside the realm of subjectivity, the objective of a Sociologist is to move as many aspects of sociology from the realm of subjectivity to the realm of objectivity to arrive at quantifications and empirical observations.

A similar concept is that of Cultural bias. Cultural bias refers to the interpretation and judgment of events, concepts or ideas based on one's cultural backgrounds or cultural experiences. It can also occur when people mistakenly believe that aspects pertaining to their own culture lack universal applicability. Different fields of sciences, such as anthropology, sociology and psychology, have made attempts to compensate for or eliminate cultural bias, but from our perspective this topic is poorly understood or inadequately tackled. This is why we have repeatedly spoken about the need for the globalisation of science. In extreme cases, cultural bias may also lead to cognitive bias. A cognitive bias refers to a systematic pattern of deviation from rational processes, whereby inferences and deductions may be drawn in an illogical or a non-standard fashion.

Relativism versus absolutism

Relativism is a doctrine which states that knowledge, truth and morality exist in relation to culture, society or historical context, and are not absolute. On the other hand, absolutism refers to the belief in absolute principles in philosophy, politics or religion. Absolutes can seldom be encountered in social or cultural studies, and activists again may be branded as predisposed and biased. An example is the over-emphasis given to material progress in some cultures, which is often used as the only yardstick of progress. Other cultures have often adopted other approaches to progress such as a harmony with nature or 'gross national happiness'. A related idea is that of a Cultural universal. This concept was proposed by Emile Durkheim, George Murdock and others, and refers to an attribute or a trait that has universal applicability, and can be used to model other cultures. Examples of cultural universals are food, clothing and shelter. Cultural relativists however reject this concept or maintain that universals are few in number. On the other hand, a study of cultural variability seeks to understand the differences between cultures across dimensions and the reasons for such differences.

Anthropological studies are also largely comparative, and traits and attributes are understood chiefly in relation to one another. Comparisons lead to better typologies, concepts, inferences, generalizations and theories. Ranking and cross-cultural comparisons are thus often preferred over absolute rating, and comparative methods were used by many anthropologists such as Kames, E B Tylor and Fred Eggan.

Nature of truth: what is ideal?

An ideal state is an imaginary perfect state constituting social, cultural, political and intellectual components that work in perfect harmony with each other and with other elements of the outside world to ensure a just, fair, equitable, harmonious, stable and a prosperous society that meets the aspirations and needs of most or all of its citizens.

Plato's ideal state

Plato's ideal state was based on the principles of justice and giving a person his due. These ideas were expounded in this treatise "republic" which was believed to have been written around 380 BC. This is a work concerning justice, the just city-state and the just man. Plato also discussed various forms of government such as timocracy (government of people who love rule and honour), oligarchy (rule by a small number of people), democracy, tyranny and despotism. Plato's principles of justice included ideas of harmony, roles of individuals and their fulfilment, discharge of duties, service to society, fair treatment of friends and enemies etc.

Aristotle's ideal state

According to Aristotle, an ideal state could be distinguished from other states by the following properties:

1. Supremacy of law
2. Development of the moral qualities of its citizens
3. Private ownership and common use of its property
4. Presence of the division and specialization of labour
5. Presence of cities of moderate size and manageable population
6. Self-sufficiency
7. Presence of different classes such as agricultural class, leisured class, warlike class, priests and administrators
8. Predominance of the middle class

Utopia

The term 'Utopia' was coined by Sir Thomas More in his 1516 book "Utopia" and describes an imaginary community or society that possesses highly desirable or nearly perfect qualities and meets the needs and aspirations of its citizens. We present the concepts of Utopia and Dystopia (even though they may appear to be a digression) so that they will help in understanding two extreme and mutually contradictory sets of possibilities, and help in a logical analysis based on the tenets of this paper.

There is no unanimity on the characteristics of a Utopian society, as these tend to vary widely from author to author. However these are typically taken to include:

1. Free flow of information, independent thought and freedom are encouraged
2. Citizens live harmoniously with each other
3. Citizens live harmoniously with nature
4. Individuality is encouraged even if it challenges established or widely prevalent norms
5. Innovation and creativity are encouraged
6. There is no resistance to change and the society evolves with the times
7. Citizens have no fear and have the courage of their convictions
8. There is rule of the law
9. Citizens know no want or deprivation and the basic needs and wants of all sections of society are addressed
10. The role of government is minimal
11. There is an absence of social evils

Dystopia

A dystopia or a dystopian society is defined as the complete absence of a utopia. The defining characteristics of a utopia are:

1. Unnaturally large government
2. Government propaganda is used to control its citizens
3. No free flow of information or independent thought
4. No freedom of thought or action
5. No tolerance of dissent
6. Citizens live in constant fear
7. Citizens live in a dehumanized state

Ethics and morals cannot be defined with precision

Ethics may be defined as the branch of knowledge that deals with moral principles and involves systemizing concepts of right and wrong conduct or acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. According to a definition given by Richard William Paul and Richard Elder, ethics are "a set of concepts and principles that guide us in determining what behaviour helps or harms sentient creatures." The Cambridge dictionary states that ethics is used interchangeably with morality, and sometimes it is used more narrowly to mean the moral principles of a particular tradition or groups of individuals. The term ethics is derived from the Greek word 'ethikos' which means relating to one's character.

Morals may be defined as conduct based on an adherence to a sanctioned or accepted code of what is right and what is wrong. While morals and ethics are often used interchangeably, there are subtle differences between the two. Morals are typically individual-oriented and are derived from the beliefs of a person. On the other hand, ethics are typically driven by a society's value system. Morals are typically more subjective and individual-centred than ethics. However, it is a fact that morals are impacted by a society's ethics.

Thus, both morals and ethics involve some amount of subjectivity, may elude consensus, and a proactive may risk pushing a point of view that does not have widespread acceptability within a cultural group, or is otherwise considered inappropriate.

Disturbing communal harmony

Another problem with activism is that it may disturb communal harmony and the society's tranquillity, peace and quiet by prompting externally-induced changes. It may promote changes that are not warranted in a given circumstance, or persuade changes when a society is ill-prepared or ill-equipped for them. It may lead to a state of disequilibrium and compromise that society's homeostasis. Thus, the ethics of inducing changes directly and indirectly from the outside may be debatable and questionable.

May interfere with personal choice or freedom

Another criticism of activism is that it may interfere with personal choice or freedom, and this by itself may be unethical under some circumstances. For example, a campaign to wean people away from colas to healthier drinks by exaggerating the effects of colas on people's health and using a heavy-handed approach or by pressuring governments to adopt an unfair, differential tax structure may be misconstrued as an impingement of personal liberty.

Inability to induce change

Another criticism of activism is that the ability to induce systemic change in a predictable fashion may not always be borne out empirically. Cultural systems may be averse or relatively immune to change especially when directed from outside, and this can lead to a futility of well-intentioned efforts.

Disruptions in the form of technology or any other unanticipated changes

Another criticism of activism may be that unanticipated and unexpected disruptions in the form of technology or any other unanticipated changes can lead to a premature and untimely end to all well-meaning attempts to promote or force-induce change.

Activism may have limited applicability in developed societies which have achieved a high level of development

One more criticism is that activism may also have relatively limited applicability or appeal in developed societies like the USA which have already achieved a high level of social and cultural development, cohesion or sophistication and have relatively limited scope to grow and to improve.

One way of addressing the drawbacks of activism may be to adopt this approach selectively, only in cases where it is warranted or required, or justifying exclusions to this approach on a case to case basis. Another tactic may be to adopt a democratic method, and to involve as many stakeholder-representatives as possible in the process of change. This are likely to counter some of the perils associated with such an approach.

How changes can be introduced

Government intervention

Change can often be brought about through government intervention. Government intervention refers to any action on measures undertaken by the government or government agencies to interfere, complement or nullify the decisions made by other individuals, groups or individuals concerning social or economic matters. This can happen by the following means:

- Governmental support for various social change programs
- Better inclusivity through universal education and better quality of education
- Strengthening the legal framework and other institutions that can accelerate the pace of change
- Provision of better infrastructure including physical infrastructure
- Promoting social inclusivity through removal of social ills and bringing about social and cultural change
- Technology-enablement by ensuring that the benefits of modern technology are widely disseminated

Changes can also be introduced as a result of collaboration between two or more governments. These can be a national government and a state government, a state government and a local government, or two or more national governments.

Internally-generated change

Change can often be internally-generated through collective action or through the appointment of internal change agents. Of late, an attempt is being made to reform Islam from within in the context of the twenty-first century, and an awareness in this regard is being generated by Ex-Muslims such as Ali Sina, Wafa Sultan and Ayaan Hirsi Ali. Hinduism, just like Christianity, has undergone meaningful and positive changes in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries through the efforts of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and others.

Intervention by third-parties

Intervention can also happen due to efforts by anthropologists, private agencies and NGO's or Non-governmental organizations. In the recent past, NGO's have mushroomed in different parts of India, claiming to provide different types of social services. Examples of NGO's in India include Akshayapatra which aims to feed schoolchildren in India thereby increasing school attendance, Udaan, an organization which helps destitute children, Helpage India, an organization which seeks to improve the lives of the elderly, and Pratham, an organization which provides education to slum children of Mumbai.

Collaborative and participative approaches

Collaborative and participative approaches can also be used with a great degree of success, and this may involve a collaboration between members of a cultural group and outsiders. This approach has worked admirably in the past and had helped bring about social change in India in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries.

Degree of activism

Activism can take on many different forms. These include direct action and disruptive techniques such as marches, protests, picketing, sit-ins, hartals, gheraos, fasts, strikes, reverse strikes, civil disobedience, boycotts, organized protests etc.²³ These actions constitute different forms of forced or induced change. Some other types of changes can be more subtle. Examples of these are prodding and nudging, leading by precept or example, or simply creating awareness. In some cases, a cultural group is merely allowed to be exposed to other cultures with the hope that change will follow. At the

²³ Methods of Non-violent action Gene Sharp, Institute of Social Research, Norway

other end of the spectrum is the laissez-etre approach, the let live approach or the non-action approach which does not constitute activism at all.

Culture and its components

Each culture has subcultures

Subcultures may be defined on the basis of ethnicity, social classes, occupation, religion, geography etc, or on a combination of one or more of these factors.

Each Culture or sub-culture has subcategories or subclasses

A list of standard subcategories or subclasses can be constructed and can be attempted to be used across cultures. This list of subsystems can be expanded as more and more cultures are analysed, and the expanded list can then be used for a restudy of previously assessed cultures. This will eventually and ideally generate a list of standard and universal subclasses.

Examples of subcategories within a culture include language, symbols, religion, music, art, drama, cinema, folklore, marriage, cuisine, other aspects of tradition etc. Culture also typically consists of material items such as cars, trucks which etc. form an inalienable part of every culture. While building a taxonomy, all dimensions of a culture such as values, norms, philosophies, principles, dogmas, ideas, beliefs, attitudes, symbols, traditions, ideologies, and artefacts should be included.

Each subsystem has components

For a meaningful and a structured taxonomy, we propose that subcategories be further sub-divided into components. These will be analogous to various classes under each subcategory. For example, we can have a multitude of components under language such as language policy, teaching methods, teacher competence, student evaluation etc. Under cuisine, we can have focus on health, focus on hygiene, nutritional balance etc. Material items include cars, trucks, tractors, locomotives, aeroplanes, rockets, computers, telephones, mobile phones etc. While identifying components, both comprehensiveness and atomicity need to be taken into account. In other words, components should be defined in such a way that no further division is possible.

Each component has attributes

Each component can have a list of attributes. Each attribute should be capable of being assessed either quantitatively or qualitatively. Attributes for our purpose, may also be known as qualities or characteristics. Attributes can be adjudged by means of suitably-designed questionnaires or other evaluation methods such as self-assessment or third-party evaluation. Attributes should be identified at a granular level such that questionnaires can be efficiently generated from them. Attributes can also be rated in absolute or relative terms which will result either in absolute ratings or rankings. Relative methods stem from the concept of cultural relativism. According to this concept, no culture is innately superior or inferior to the other. Each culture has its own uniqueness, each shaped by its own history. Attributes may also include intangible and unquantifiable attributes, or those that cannot be quantified with precision or certainty. A.L Kroeber categorized aspects of culture into two broad categories i.e. ethos and eidos. Ethos refer to the values of a culture such as aspirations and beliefs, and these must also be included in an analysis. C. Kluckhohn also differentiated between the explicit and implicit values of a culture. Explicit values of a culture were those that could be easily perceived and expressed. However, implicit values included elements such as motivations and impulses. As per our approach an analysis of attributes leads to the identification of 'Cultural traits'.

Comparative methods can also be used as such methods have been common in Anthropological studies from the time of E B Tylor in 1889. The 'Salient features' associated with each cultures can also be identified before carrying out a more detailed exercise as this will have a bearing of the taxonomy arrived at, and will throw hints on what areas to focus on. A high level assessment of the Strengths, Weaknesses and constraints of a given culture may be carried out as a precursor to a more detailed assessment. Likewise, third-party assessment reports may also be scrutinized and utilized as a precursor to a more detailed assessment. Preliminary and unstructured 'gut feel' approaches may also have some utility, but must be subsequently vetted and ratified with empirical data. Carrying out fieldwork to experience a culture first-hand would be an essential pre-requisite and mandatory. Fieldwork has been known from the days of Franz Boas and Alfred C. Haddon who carried out expeditions to British Columbia and Torres straits respectively. Ruth Benedict, Margaret Mead, A.R Radcliffe-Brown and Evans-Pritchard also carried out extensive fieldwork. These expeditions were in stark contrast to the works of other Anthropologists such as James Frazer, which were based on secondary sources of information. This is not however, to discount the role of armchair anthropologists who often combine data from multiple sources into cogent and coherent hypotheses. A.C Haddon (1934) acknowledged the role and the contributions of both fieldworkers and armchair anthropologists to anthropology. Methods used in fieldwork have been many, but one of the more common techniques is the participant-observation method which was popularized by Bronislaw Malinowski.

It would also be necessary to identify ideal cultural traits that can be applied across cultures. However, actual behaviour observed on the field may be at variance with expected or ideal behaviour, and it would be necessary to carry out a gap assessment between the two and perform a root cause analysis for the deviations. This would be followed by an action plan for remediation and eventual course-corrections.

Some traits can be sub-divided into 'good' and the 'bad', but some cannot, and it would be necessary for any researcher to keep this in mind. Neo-centrist approaches can be used to identify the 'desirable' and the 'undesirable', but looking at issues from a long-term perspective, or analysing the long-term consequences of any proposition.

An analysis may then be carried out of the traits with low ranking, followed by a root cause analysis examining the underlying causes of a low rating or ranking. This analysis must then be understood in conjunction with the 'Enablers' and 'Core drivers' specified below. An alternative approach may be to assess the attributes at two different points in time to assess the rate of change. Strategies to augment this can then be put in place.

The Ten Enablers as per our approach to cultural change

The following are the ten enablers as per our approach which we refer to as the "Proactive-interactive-symbiotic approach to long-term cultural change". These can also be referred to as facilitators and are necessary to varying degrees if change has to be orchestrated and effected, and the internal synergies of any society have to be harnessed.

1. The strength of governmental institutions, the legal framework etc.
2. Technological empowerment
3. Educational systems and language policy
4. The cults, ideologies, thought worlds, and belief systems associated with a culture
5. Economic policy and economic infrastructure
6. Social inclusivity and strength of social institutions

7. Physical infrastructure
8. An assessment must also be made of a culture's value system
9. Harmony with nature
10. Social security

1. The strength of governmental institutions, the legal framework etc.

The state is a political entity which seeks to regulate society by means of a government which has political legitimacy and administrative powers over a specified geographical area. The government which is an agency of the state, exercises legal authority over its citizens at national, state and local levels.

In most countries, governments formed by political parties formulate policies, laws, and programmes. The government typically consists of a legislature, executive and judiciary. The legislature enacts laws that are applicable within a given jurisdiction. The executive formulates policies and programmes to administer the country in accordance with the laid-down and enacted laws. The judiciary safeguards the laws and protect the rights of citizens. The government also plays other key roles such as military and defence.

Government also formulates policy measures from time to time. These attempt to govern and regulate different aspects of society, and define a broad set of parameters that can be used for the welfare of its citizens. A public policy is a law or rule that is enforced by any level of government, whether central, state, or local. Policy has a clearly-defined purpose, and is arrived at after extensive deliberations. This is arrived at after executing a series of well-defined steps such as identifying objectives, proposing measures, discussion and debates with various stakeholders, making suitable modifications after deliberations, and implementation.

Government policy which also includes social policy is often translated into or expressed by means of legislation which may be in the form of statutes or decrees. These are collectively referred to as law. Various sociologists have attempted definitions of law. According to a definition provided by Anthony Giddens, "Laws are norms defined and enforced by Governments." According to Maclver and Page, "Law is the body of rules which are recognised, interpreted and applied to particular situations by the Courts of the State." Max Weber's definition is as follows: "Law is an order, the validity of which is guaranteed by the probability that deviation will be met by physical or psychic sanction by a staff specially empowered to carry out this Sanction". Green Arnold defined law as follows: "Law is a more or less systematic body of generalised rules, balanced between the fiction of performance and the fact of change, governing specifically defined relationship and situations and employing force or the threat of force in defined and limited ways." According to Duguit, laws are "the rules of conduct normal men know they must observe in order to preserve and promote the benefits derived from life in society." Most government policies and expenditures are directly or indirectly targeted at improving social indicators and leading to social change, even though the claimed objectives may be different.

According to the World Bank, (World Bank, 2005) social policy is defined as follows:

"A more holistic approach to social policy.. would seek to promote policies, institutions and programs that balance a concern for equity and justice with the concern for economic growth....Social policy is defined as a series of public policies designed to promote social development... We envision social development as a natural complement to economic

development ...While there is lack of consensus on the definition of social development it is generally understood to comprise of a set of objectives including social inclusion, sustainable livelihoods, gender equity, increased voice and participation.”

According to Mkandawire’s (2001):

“Social policy should be conceived of as involving overall and prior concerns with social development, and as a key instrument that works in tandem with economic policy to ensure equitable and socially sustainable development...I define social policy as collective interventions directly affecting transformation in social welfare, social institutions and social relations.”

Law and social progress are tightly interlinked. The interrelationship between law and social change can be both direct and indirect. The interrelation is often direct because legislation may be necessary to bring about social change. For example, the caste system for was formally abolished in India since 1949. The Civil Rights movement led to new laws being enacted, and likewise the Apartheid regime was dismantled in South Africa in the 1990’s. Social change can be introduced by means of proactive measures such as affirmative action, laws to prevent discrimination or social segregation, welfare measures such as social security etc. examples of legislations that have been enacted in India are prevention of child marriage, child labour, compulsory education etc. Countries or societies that did not enact legislation to bring about social progress inevitably floundered and stagnated, or failed to curb social evils.

2. Technological empowerment

Science and Technology have played a key role in the development of human civilization. Francis Bacon acknowledged the crucial role played by science in social and economic progress. One of the earliest human discoveries was that of fire which took place several hundreds of thousands of years ago, according to some sources. The invention of copper, and later bronze, made possible the Chalcolithic age. The invention of full-fledged writing in Mesopotamia and Egypt led to the emergence of full-blown civilizations. The invention of the printing press by Gutenberg in 1450 led to the exponential growth of knowledge as the common man was able to reap the benefits of the spread of knowledge. The Industrial revolution led to a quantum change in man’s way of life, as many new technologies were developed. Towards the end of the Nineteenth century, and even later, many nations made school attendance mandatory, and illiteracy declined considerably - first in the developed world, and later in the developing world. Other inventions of the twentieth century such as the automobile, the aeroplane and the radio led to rapid social and cultural change in many societies. This was joined later by the television, and even later by the internet. The latter facilitated globalization and is a classic case of how technology can play a major role in the lives of millions of ordinary people. Mobile phones are now ubiquitous around the world and even India has around 800 million of them. The examples cited above are all major and game-changing technologies. In addition to these, minor technologies are constantly being invented, and most of these are improvisations of existing technologies or add-on technologies. A theory known as the ‘Theory of technological determinism’ even states that technology is the biggest determinant of social change. According to this theory, technologies overwhelm societies to such a large extent that societies eventually adapt to the changes brought about by the new technology. A society can even feel lost or become severely handicapped if these technologies are taken away or decommissioned. A similar theory was proposed by Ogburn

(1964) who saw technology as the fundamental driver of social change. He argued that technology-driven change came through a three-pronged process, namely invention, discovery and diffusion. However, in our view technology must lead to the channelization of useful information for it to be considered a core enabler.

3. Educational systems and language policy

The role of education, particularly qualitative education in ushering in social and cultural widely acknowledged today, and can make a vital and a fundamental difference between a progressive society and a mediocre one. Education is a formalized institution through which a society's children are imparted functional and technical knowledge in different areas of study, and social and cultural norms. Even though all countries possess some form of an education system, these systems vary greatly in quality, structure and reach. A country's success greatly depends on the amount of money spent on education, and education can be used to emancipate the downtrodden and promote social inclusivity.

Poor countries are often unable to spend adequate sums of money on education or the universalisation of education, and this has hampered their economic progress and social equality greatly. Education was characteristically neglected in many countries such as India, and literacy rates climbed upwards only very slowly. However, since the 1990's India began to focus on primary and secondary education with new programs and schemes such as the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA). The results have been thus far been impressive, and old mores and beliefs are rapidly being demolished even in semi-rural and rural regions. The challenge now however is to focus on qualitative improvement and modernize the antiquated pedagogical methods to attune it to serve the needs of the Twenty-first century. Most education systems still do not impart or reinforce the skills that are mandatory today, and there is often little or no correlation between the skills that they are taught and the skills that they need. Learning by rote is still common in many countries and there is little awareness on how knowledge should be applied. No measures are taken to bring out the innovativeness and creativity of children or to discover foster their talents. Textbooks are often behind the curve, and pedagogical methods are outdated. As an example, poetry and archaic English literature is mostly taught to students, when what they need is functional and spoken English. What is also lacking are empirical studies on how different types of educational systems and the quality of teaching impact children differently, mould their perception of the world and equip them to face society. Another ongoing debate in India, particularly at the state level is the role of English and the mother tongue. While the pros and cons of all approaches need to be debated threadbare, solutions are often ideologically-driven. We have dwelt on the topic of Hindi chauvinism at great length in our earlier papers.

There are also no comprehensive or satisfactory theories to explain the interrelationship between first and second-language acquisition (in monolingual and multilingual societies) and economic and social development. What explains the success of the people of the state of Gujarat many of whom have poor or non-existent English language skills, in an English-dominated India? Did their legendary entrepreneurial skills make a difference here? Why do not people of the state however set up hi-tech industries like computer chip design and manufacture? What are the primary and secondary language skills required for different spheres of economic activity.

Literacy rates vary widely from country to country. According to 2015 UNESCO estimates, the world literacy rate was 86.3%. Countries like Afghanistan were at the rock bottom with 38.3%. India's literacy rate was just 72.1%, while most developed nations reported universal literacy or close to universal literacy.

4. The cults, ideologies, thought worlds, and belief systems associated with a culture

For the purpose of our definition, a religion may also be construed as an ideology. Cults and ideologies are also informal or semi-formal institutions forming a part of society. An institution may be defined as "established forms or conditions of procedure characteristic of group activity." (McIver and Page). According to H.E Barnes, "Institutions represent the social structure and the machinery through which human society organizes, directs and executes the multifarious activities required to serve human needs." The chief characteristics of institutions are their universality across societies, presence of standardized procedures or norms, presence of controlling mechanism to control society or its members, relative permanence, abstraction, and presence of symbolic traits.

A cult may be defined as a system of religious veneration directed towards a particular figure or object. It may also be defined as a small religious group typically (typically unorthodox, spurious, in some cases fraudulent, and often with questionable moral stances). It may also be characterized by a great but irrational devotion to a person or cause, typically accompanied by a frenzy or fervour, usually stigmatized or looked down upon by society and not forming an integral part of it.

They chief characteristics of a cult are:

1. Blind and unwavering commitment towards the beliefs, principles and practices of the movement, which are often taken to be the gospel truth.
2. Over-enthusiasm towards, and often hero-worship of the leader of the movement who may often be given an exalted status, and may be projected as being beyond reproach, accountability or critical scrutiny even by bona fide authorities.
3. The leader or the leadership dictates or prescribes how its members should think, act and feel. Often, every aspect of members lives are sought to be monitored or regulated.
4. The group expects some commitment in the form of time or money from its members.
5. The leadership attempts to polarize members from non-members by creating an "us" versus "them" feeling, and often tries to use this divide to ramp up membership.
6. Rival cults and movements are looked down upon, and even mocked at. In certain cases, they may even be actively targeted.
7. Dissent, questioning, non-conformity and even individualism is discouraged and is often harshly put down.
8. There is a kind of one-sidedness in all endeavours and there is a failure to take contradictory evidence into account
9. Contradiction with the tenets of mainstream science which is often looked down upon or ridiculed. Often an attempt is made to distance the members of the cult from mainstream science and mainstream society through constant brainwashing.
10. Unsupportable assumptions and non-applicability of core values, assumptions and beliefs across space and time
11. Promotion of violence in some form or promotion of wrong or non-mainstream values.

12. Tendency to induce cognitive dissonance among their followers. Cognitive dissonance refers to mental discomfort or psychological stress experienced by a person who holds incompatible beliefs and ideas.

The word "Ideology" owes its existence to the French word "idéologie" which was coined at the time of the French Revolution, when it was introduced by a philosopher, A.-L.-C. Destutt de Tracy, as a short name for what he called his "science of ideas". Crudely explained, it may be referred to a collection of beliefs that are usually not fully tested or lack universal applicability or acceptance. These also generally conflict with the idea of value-neutrality. Ideologies archetypally possess paradoxes both internal and external that tend to pre-empt their demise and bring them in conflict with the world at large.

David W. Minar describes six different ways in which the word "ideology" has been used in different periods in time, these being:²⁴

1. As a collection of ideas with rigid content, usually normative, prescriptive and non-changing;
2. As the form or internal logical structure that ideas have within a set and may not be compatible with external principles;
3. By the role in which ideas play in human-social interaction;
4. By the role that ideas play in the structure of an organization without currency outside the organization;
5. As meaning, whose purpose is persuasion; and
6. As the locus of social interaction.

According to Willard A. Mullins an ideology is composed of four basic characteristics:²⁵

1. It must have power over cognition and must seek to control or influence individuals
2. It must be capable of guiding and altering one's evaluations and patterns of thinking
3. It must provide guidance towards action or goad people towards committing actions; and
4. It must be comprised of logically coherent beliefs that hold within an entity.

Terry Eagleton provides some further definitions of ideology as follows:²⁶

1. A body of ideas characteristic of a particular social group or class;
2. Ideas which help to legitimate a dominant political power;
3. False ideas which help to legitimate a dominant political power;
4. Systematically distorted communication;
5. That which offers a position for a subject;
6. Forms of thought motivated by social interests;
7. Identity thinking;
8. Socially necessary illusion;
9. The conjuncture of discourse and power;

²⁴ Ideology and Political Behavior David M. Minar *Midwest Journal of Political Science* Vol. 5, No. 4 (Nov., 1961), pp. 317-331

²⁵ On the Concept of Ideology in Political Science Willard A. Mullins *American Political Science review* June 1972

²⁶ Ideology An Introduction Terry Eagleton Verso 1991

10. The medium in which conscious social actors make sense of their world;
11. Action-oriented sets of beliefs;
12. The confusion of linguistic and phenomenal reality;
13. Semiotic closure;
14. The indispensable medium in which individuals live out their relations to a social structure;
15. The process whereby social life is converted to a natural reality.

According to Pitirim A. Sorokin²⁷, ideological systems can be subdivided into:

1. Main ideological systems

There are integrated systems of science, philosophy, religion, ethics, law, fine arts and the system of oral and written language. These include all systems of philosophy like the philosophy of the Upanishads, of Plato, of Aristotle, of Immanuel Kant, of Hegel etc. The components of an ideological system are tightly integrated and changes to one component lead to cascading changes in other components.

2. Combined ideological systems

There are several examples of combined ideological systems. For example, a capitalistic system may be supported by other kinds of economic and social theories which bestow upon them an additional power. Another parallel here is core Marxist ideology and Marxist historiography. Such ideological systems may also be known as composite ideological systems.

3. Ideological super systems

Ideological super systems are vast combined systems which are aggregations of several major ideological systems which may include economic, political, social and religious systems.

To these, we add the following:

1. Derived and auxiliary ideological systems

Derived and auxiliary ideologies are those which are essentially derived from a main ideology, and seek to add further meaning or provide additional clarification.

2. Influenced cultural systems

Influenced cultural systems refer to those cultures which are influenced by an ideology that evolved in a parent culture. An example here is the adoption of Islamic cultures and values in Indonesia and Malaysia despite these cultures' Non-Islamic roots and their geographical non-proximity to other Islamic countries.

3. Disparate ideological systems

Disparate ideological systems are those ideological systems which are mostly unrelated to one other, and share very few, if any common traits or attributes. Examples of such ideologies are Buddhism and Jainism in India. However, such seemingly disparate ideological systems may possess indirect relationships, and may often have influenced each other indirectly.

²⁷ Society, Culture and Personality: Their structure and dynamics, New York and London, Harper and Brothers publishers 1947

4. Implicit ideological systems

Implicit ideological systems are those ideological systems whose tenets, principles and operating procedures are not formally laid down or defined. Their principles are however, tacitly acknowledged by their adherents or followers, and they possess a fair degree of tangibility and palpability.

A thought world, on the other hand, may be defined as the world as seen in terms of the attitudes, belief systems, assumptions etc. of a given society or people. In this context, Bennett and Bennett (2004) distinguish between an objective culture, which refers to the institutional aspects of any culture and a subjective culture which focuses on the worldview of a society's people, and influences a thought world.

Ideology and cultural change are inseparably interlinked, and there are many theories to explain the interrelationship between the two. Ideologies may slow down the pace of sociocultural change and may act as impediments to paradigm attitudinal shifts. There are also many theories to explain institutional change. (From our perspective, an Ideology may also be defined as an institution)

On the other hand, religion may be defined as a system advocating or necessitating the belief in and worship of a superhuman entity known as a God. It may also be defined as a specific system of faith or worship or an institutionalized system of religious attitudes, beliefs and practices. According to Durkheim, "religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, uniting into a single, moral community all those who adhere to those beliefs and practices." The chief defining features of a religion are beliefs in supernatural beings, sacred places, objects or times, mandating or recommending prayer, worship or rituals, prescription of moral codes, defining norms for conformity and an attempt to alter reality or create an alternative worldview for its practitioners. The world's leading religions include Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism etc.²⁸

Some functionalists and structuralists emphasize the positive aspects of a religion such as its ability to maintain harmony and serve the needs of society. However, some conflict theorists believe that religion promotes disharmony, inequality and is not in the interests of society as a whole.

Institutions and institutional change

In our view, religion is a type of ideology, and an ideology is a type of mostly formal or semi-formal institution. The most popular and commonly cited definition of an institution is the one provided by Douglass North. According to him, "Institutions are the rules of the game in a society, or more formally, are the humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction along with their enforcement arrangements." (North, 1990: 3). "Institutions reduce uncertainty by providing a structure to everyday life and include both formal rules such as laws and constitutions, and informal constraints such as conventions and norms." (North, 1990:4) Most other sociologists view institutions as a set of formal or semi-formal rules which seek to govern various aspects of society, and which are essentially devised by humans for their own benefit or application. We may examine some theories of institutional change here that serve to substantiate our proposals here:

²⁸ Religion and Science: Historical and contemporary issues Ian G. Barbour HarperOne, 1997

Veblen's (1899) evolutionary theory of institutional change proposes "habits of thought", where habits are ways of thinking and acting. According to Veblen, institutions are "in substance, prevalent habits of thought with respect to particular relations and particular functions of the individual and of the community" (ibid: 190), and "the evolution of social structure is a process of natural selection of institutions"

Another theory is Roland's theory of institutional change. Roland (2004, 110) distinguishes between institutions depending on whether they change slowly and continuously or rapidly and irregularly. "He termed the former "slow-moving" and the latter "fast-moving" institutions. Culture, values, beliefs, and social norms, can be classified as a slow-moving institutions (Roland, 2004, 110). Institutional change is an interaction between slow-moving institutions and fast-moving institutions such as political and legal institutions (Roland, 2004, 118).^{29 30}

The crying need of the hour is to formulate a comprehensive theories of ideologies, as for the purpose of our study, ideology includes religion and is a particular type of institution. However, there are many well-known non-religious ideologies such as communism. An ideal theory should include the following components, and should be built on empirical data from historical studies and an analysis, for example, of the reform in Christianity, reformist movements in Hinduism, the French revolution, the Russian revolution, the Collapse of Communism etc.

- a) The underlying factors responsible for the creation of institutions, their character, and their constituents. The relationship between the ideology and the society which birthed them should also be explored. The ideology should also be explored as a causal effect of circumstances prevalent in a given society with the objective of theorizing, generalizing and extrapolating.
- b) The factors responsible for the popularization and entrenchment of inchoate institutions and ideologies.
- c) The nature of social and cultural change brought about by such institutions in various context and situations.
- d) The extent to which social and cultural change is stymied by such institutions in various context and situations.
- e) The underlying factors responsible for change or non-change of institutions and ideologies and the bearing on the societies that produced them.
- f) The causes and mechanisms leading to the termination of these institutions. This includes (a) Internal dissonance within these institutions (b) Incompatibility with other institutions (c) Incompatibility with the society itself (d) Incompatibility with human nature and the human spirit (e) Incompatibility with natural and ecological laws (f) Incompatibility with other cultures.
- g) The mode of termination which includes (a) Upheaval and revolutions (b) Cataclysmic collapse (c) Slow decline (d) Reform (e) Change introduced through external agency.
- h) The interrelationship between the mode of termination of an institution and its inherent characteristics.

²⁹ A Theory of Endogenous Institutional Change Avner Greif and David D. Laitin Stanford University, American Political Science Review, Vol. 98, No. 4 November 2004

³⁰ Comparing Theories of Institutional Change: Christopher Kingston Amherst College, Amherst, Massachusetts, USA Gonzalo Caballero University of Vigo, Vigo, Spain

- i) A study of endogenous and exogenous factors accelerating change of institutions or ideologies.
- j) A study of endogenous and exogenous factors delaying or preventing change of institutions or ideologies.
- k) A study of endogenous and exogenous factors accelerating the decline, decadence and eventual demise of ideologies.
- l) A study of endogenous and exogenous factors prolonging or preventing the decline and demise of ideologies.
- m) A study of how ideologies can be modified or altered through proactive measures.
- n) A scholarly study of how ideologies can alter human behaviour or perception and lead especially to undesirable behavioural change.
- o) A scholarly study on the interplay between ideology and social and cultural change, and how the former inevitably and inexorably impacts the latter.
- p) A scholarly study on ideology and economic progress and the interrelationship between the two.
- q) A formal study of internal and external paradoxes in institutions, and their compatibility with other institutions, and how these paradoxes can shape or alter their own success and survivability. We would like to define different types of paradoxes in this context (a) Paradoxes within the institution and its subtypes (b) Paradoxes between the institution and its parent culture (c) Paradoxes between the institution and other institutions (d) Paradoxes between the institution and other cultures (e) Paradoxes between the parent culture and other cultures leading to a destabilization of the institution. (e) Paradoxes between two sub-cultures leading to destabilization of the institution. This would include listing paradoxes, rating their severity and ranking them. Paradoxes in this case may be termed structural dissonances.
- r) A formal study of how other factors can ensure success or failure of these institutions, prolong their existence, or precipitate their downfall e.g. Maintenance of power through brute force techniques, maintenance of power through obfuscation of knowledge, use of allure, use of comatose-inducing techniques, use of a carrot and stick approach, making a claim that the ideology is a solution of another societal problem, promotion of hatred against another group or community, using the drawbacks or lacunae of another institution as a source of strength.
- s) Paradoxes and their impact on a culture's equilibrium or homeostasis, and their impact on human culture and civilization as a whole.

Per our approach, paradoxes will inevitably be left by the wayside, and ideologies will only survive in the long-term if they meet all the tenets of Neo-centrism discussed in this paper including the principles of Aeternitism and Omnimodism. Ideologies with deep-rooted and fundamental paradoxes will then be left to bite the dust. Their demise may be prolonged, through artificial methods, but disappear, they certainly will.

5. Economic policy and economic infrastructure

Economic policy can play a major role in social development. This is because sustained economic growth leads to better standard of living and improved infrastructure. It also leads to a reduction of poverty and can play a major role in solving social problems.

The type of economic system followed can also have a bearing on social change. There are different types of economic systems in place, and these are explained below:

Capitalism is a common economic system that is based on private ownership of capital and the means of production. The state plays a minor role in the economy, and is restricted to legislation and the provision of infrastructure. Individuals have a high degree of economic freedom with minimal interference from the government. An extreme form of capitalism is laissez-faire economy which is characterized by no government role. Capitalism in some form or the other has existed from time immemorial, even though the term itself may be of relatively recent origin.

Communism is an economic system in which the state has collective ownership of the means of production and distribution. In socialism, the natural resources and the means of producing goods and services are collectively owned, and there is no private ownership. Communism was proposed by Karl Marx as a reaction to what he believed were the evils of capitalism. Karl Marx believed that private property was the root of all evil, and had to be abolished. Even though Communist societies made impressive strides in alleviating poverty, the merits and demerits of capitalism and communism are a matter of debate. Communism collapsed worldwide more or less by the 1990's, and communism is seen today as an aberration, and as a God that failed. This does not robotically exonerate us from the lacunae of most capitalistic models, however.

As of today, most countries have adopted some form of Capitalism as a basis for their economies. However policies and the institutional frameworks vary widely from country to country, and policies are often shaped by legacies, politicians' proclivities and social and economic traditions. A formal analysis however continues to elude most policy makers and dogma, hunches or tradition are pervasive in economic decision making. Capitalists refuse to acknowledge their own failings or the relative advantages of communism in some domains. Consensus on optimal generalized and specialized economic models eludes us. In the USA, some Republicans are against social security and minimum wage enactments. Are such stances preceded by structured and comprehensive analyses? A comprehensive assessment of different economic modes is lacking to this very day leave alone the generation of new ones. Theorizing is a must, but it must be followed by testing with empirical data, and eventually implementation. This can make a quantum of a difference to human welfare and destiny, but may require time and most certainly a generation change.

6. Social inclusivity and strength of social institutions

Social inclusivity refers to the degree of inclusion or marginalized communities in the socioeconomic development process. Social inclusivity has been compromised in several societies, due to the presence of social classes, the presence of other forms of social stratification, the presence of elites, and multispeed social and cultural change. Developing countries and less developing countries usually show a lower level of social inclusivity than developed ones.³¹

The Gini index is often used to represent the wealth distribution among the citizens of a country. According to some studies, the inequality between rich countries and poor countries increased steadily till the 1990's, but since then the position has been somewhat reversed. Many developing countries also likewise improved their score due to the rapid rise of middle classes and declines in the number of poor.

³¹ Social stratification: An introduction by James Littleton: George, Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1972

Multi-speed cultural and social change

Multi-speed cultural and social change which arises from social differentiation can be subdivided into two broad categories, i.e. Inter-cultural differences and intra-cultural differences. Multi-speed cultural change arises due to various intrinsic and extrinsic factors, and these are sometimes known as a society's metabolic rate.

Inter-cultural differences

Inter-cultural differences refer to differences across cultures, say between Culture A and Culture B. This would again need to be compartmentalized into and analysed across dimensions, for example education, social infrastructure or physical infrastructure.

Intra-cultural differences

Intra-cultural differences refer to differences between various components of a culture, say within sub-culture A and sub-culture B. Intra-cultural differences can arise across the following dimensions.

- a) Differentiation by geography
- b) Differentiation by sub-culture
- c) Differentiation by class, rank or social group
- d) Differentiation by gender
- e) Differentiation by age
- f) Differentiation by level of education
- g) Urban-rural differences
- h) Differentiation by religious affiliation
- i) Differentiation by material and non-material aspects of a culture

In our view, the following are the common stages involved in bridging inter-cultural gaps and intra-cultural gaps. These stages would be common to both internally-induced changes and externally-induced changes and would work commendably in both scenarios.

1. Stage One: Generation of awareness of other cultures or sub-cultures and positive aspects of other cultures or sub-cultures
2. Stage Two: Overcoming Social Inertia
3. Stage Three: Setting the ball rolling
4. Stage Four: Feedback, achieving dynamic re-equilibrium and further action

Typically, any culture is at or between any of the four stages enunciated above at any given point in time. The nature of the proactive measures to be taken depend on which stage the culture or sub-culture is, and the researcher must tweak and hone his strategies accordingly to reach the goal post. In these days of globalization and the ready availability of information, most cultures or sub-cultures would have easily crossed stage one. Proactive measures would however be required to ensure that the goals are met without jeopardizing social stability, harmony or the society's dynamic equilibrium. According to Convergence theorists, this is a natural process as societies and economies develop.

Identifying areas of Cultural lag

Cultural lag typically denotes the difference in evolution and maturity between material and non-material aspects of a culture. Cultural lag arises due to cultural inertia, over-reliance on

tradition, lack of social infrastructure, or several other factors. Identifying cultural lag would be a crucial component of proactive change.

From a Neo-centrist perspective, a society is said to be in equilibrium when there are no internal and external paradoxes of any kind, or any paradoxes across space or time. Paradoxes are also inextricably interwoven with the idea of cognitive dissonance, and Leon Festinger and others have proposed that humans seek out psychological consistency to not only to thrive, flourish and prosper but also to survive. Thus, cognitive dissonance and paradoxes are antithetical to human nature and progress, and as such humans actively seek to eliminate them, either consciously or sub-consciously. Some work has already been done in the field, including the attempted extension of TRIZ in the field of social sciences. The elimination of paradoxes may be difficult to achieve in the short-term, but an action plan must nonetheless be worked out to achieve it in the long-term. Given its potential to tread upon and offend human sensibilities, this may be a task easier said than done. However, multitudinous possibilities may present themselves, if context-specific studies are initiated, and workable proposals and propositions formulated accordingly.

In addition, we may also have the following types of paradoxes arising from multispeed change:

- a) Clash between two sub-cultures within a culture: This may arise due to a multi-speed cultural change (the difference between the rate of cultural change observed between two group)
- b) Clash between two or more cultures arising due to different mores, values and norms.

7. Physical infrastructure

Infrastructure plays a crucial role in not just securing a country's economic progress but also promoting social equality, progress and harmony. Infrastructure consists of a nation's highways, roads, ports, airports, electricity, telecommunications network and its social infrastructure.

India's attention to physical infrastructure in the early years of independence was rather poor. While many state-owned enterprises were set up, the amounts allocated to the development of roads, ports and telecommunications was poor. In the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report for 2011-2012, India was ranked 89th out of 142 countries for its infrastructure, and this was largely due to abysmally low investments in this sector for decades. Even at the end of the 1980's India's telecommunication sector was outdated and the number of telephone lines woefully inadequate. The electricity grid, similarly was antiquated with outdated transmission lines, and frequent power cuts. This impacted business competitiveness, the pace of economic growth, and ultimately its social progress as well, given the fact that there is major correlation between economic growth and social progress.^{32 33}

³² What's Social Policy Got to do with Economic Growth? By Ravi Kanbur January 2006

³³ The Role of Social Policy in Economic Development Some Theoretical Reflections and Lessons from East Asia
Ha-Joon Chang United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

Better economic growth and better rural infrastructure in the 1980's and 1990's lead to better awareness among people living in rural parts of India, a greater thrust on education, greater social progress, and even better social inclusivity.

8. An assessment must also be made of a culture's value system

Values are principles, standards or qualities that an individual or a society follows or considers sacrosanct. These values guide most aspects of people's lives. They are also greatly influenced by the values of culture or society or a particular social group.

Values can influence individual judgments and decisions. They can also have a bearing on the quantum of social and cultural progress. A culture's value system can be changed through proactive measures. At times change can also be enforced through suitable legislation. Values vary from culture to culture and these can have a bearing on social progress. For example, American culture is regarded as highly individualistic with leeway for deviant behaviour. On the other hand, Chinese culture is considered to be highly collectivistic with little room for non-conformism. Some cultures like Japan are highly hierarchical, while some others like the USA, are not. Such values will influence cultural and social change to a reasonable measure.

9. Harmony with nature

Fears of runaway global warming and irreversible man-made climate change have dominated the headlines for the past one decade. Many governments have taken steps to bring about legislation to curb greenhouse gas emissions. Many new and promising technologies have taken root in the past decade or so. Solar power is becoming ever more popular by the day, and is achieving cost parity with coal. Wind and tidal power are also showing some signs of promise. Electric car batteries are improving both in terms of efficiency and cost. Other new technologies such as biodiesel production from algae have also been proposed, but with varying degrees of success. Harmony with nature will be a core and intrinsic attribute and an adjunct to healthy, holistic development especially from a long-term, neo-centrist perspective. With the dangers of global warming looming large, there may simply be no other way.

10. Social security

Social security is a concept described in Article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. According to this article,

“Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.”

Social Security may refer to old age pensions, children's education, medical treatment, social insurance, unemployment benefits etc. The definition of social security varies from country to country. Rules and entitlements also vary from country to country. While most developed countries have well-thought through social security schemes, social security schemes in developing countries vary from inadequate to non-existent. While some developing countries like India have proposed measly social security measures to begin with, implementation of

even such measures has been tardy and bogged down by political squabbles or procedural delays. It is believed that almost half of humanity has no social security at all, while of a fifth of the world's population is covered by social security measures that most experts consider adequate.

Core drivers

Per our approach, the following are the core drivers in any sociocultural transformation, and these will play a key role in determining the pace and direction of any sociocultural change.

1. Forward-looking culture (Less reliance on traditions)
2. Outwardness of a society and awareness of other cultures
3. Individual assertiveness, aspiration and ambition
4. Importance given to achievement by the members of a society and overall attitude towards development
5. Value attached to material progress
6. Hard work
7. Risk-appetite of individuals in a society
8. Importance given to innovation
9. Acceptance of ideas having an external origin (Cultural receptivity)
10. Desire to challenge existing ideas and paradigms
11. Social and cultural adaptability
12. Democratic social structures and absence of class differentiation
13. Avocations and pastimes of individuals in a society with particular emphasis on learning
14. Thrift and spending patterns
15. Cultural pride and desire to see the society develop

We now take up each of the factors listed above for a more detailed analysis, and explain what impact these can have in any effort to bring about change:

1. Forward-looking culture (Less reliance on traditions)

Traditions are beliefs or norms passed down from generation to generation. Traditions are usually rooted in a society's history or its value system. The origins of some traditions are lost in the mists of antiquity, but the origin of some traditions can be pinpointed with precision. Different societies have different traditions, some of which are positive, and some of which are not so positive. Traditions have a major bearing on social and economic progress, and can either accelerate or retard change. Examples of undesirable traditions in India had include, sati or widow-burning, child marriage and the caste system, but luckily, many of these have been got rid of.

Effects of thought worlds in Indian culture

Here are some negative effects of thought worlds in Indian culture. In spite of this, many sects of Hinduism encourage critical thought and inquiry.

Fatalism and belief in Karma

The doctrine of fatalism is typically characterized by the following core beliefs and postulates:

1. The belief that humans have no power to mould their own destiny, or do anything other than what they do in the normal course of their lives.

2. An attitude of resignation towards some impending events which are believed to be inevitable, unescapable or unavoidable.
3. A policy of non-action and inertness characterized by an inertia to bring about meaningful change.

Fatalism may have been shaped to some extent by Indian philosophy, and the philosophy of Ajivika which is a doctrine in ancient Hindu philosophy. Ajivika proposes that the reincarnation of the soul is determined by a personal and non-personal cosmic principle called niyati or destiny, and that a person's actions could have no bearing on his destiny. This is opposed to the theory of Karma (Karma means action, or morally charged action, good or bad), which states that good deeds contribute to good Karma, end the cycle of rebirth and lead to Moksha or salvation. (SU 6.16, 18) A man becomes something good by good karma and something bad by bad karma. (BU 3.2.13, BU 6.2.13-16)^{34 35}

Indian cultures may not also perhaps attach too much value to material progress and this is something that needs to be researched objectively and dispassionately. Likewise, causes for the low level of innovation and creative output in countries such as India in relation to its culture may also need to be assessed.

Lack of historical sense

Historiography in India or the absence of it, is one of the most mystifying aspects of Indian culture, and the Indian psyche as such is characterized by a vague timelessness.

Many Western scholars were struck by the absence of a historical consciousness in Ancient India. McDonnell stated,³⁶

“Ancient India has bequeathed to us no historical works. History is one weak spot in Indian literature. It is in fact, non-existent. The total lack of historical sense is so characteristic, that the whole course of Sanskrit literature is darkened by this effect, suffering as it does from an entire absence of exact chronology.”

However, F E Pargiter adds,

“Though historical works in Ancient India are wanting, yet tradition has handed down fairly copious genealogies of the ancient dynasties. These state the succession of kings, and in that way are historical. They are almost the only historical data found in Sanskrit books as regards Ancient political development; and the list of teachers in professed chronological order set out in some Brahminical books supply evidence as regards Brahminical succession. The genealogies form the basis by which the investigation of tradition for historical ends may be tested. They supply the best chronological clue, for the Vedic literature, is a sure guide in historical matters.”³⁷

Most western scholars who studied India were struck by the timelessness of Indian culture. Indians, for example, believed that their culture was timeless, eternal and unchanging. A clear sense of history had to wait till the emergence of Buddhism, and then too, western historians had to depend on the chronicles of travellers to India.

³⁴ The Hindus: An alternative history Wendy Doniger, Speaking Tiger 2015

³⁵ A Cultural History of India, edited by A L Basham Oxford India Paperbacks 2014

³⁶ Macdonell, Sanskrit Literature, page 10

³⁷ Ancient Indian Historical Tradition by F.E Pargiter, Motilal Bansaridass 1922

Tolerance for dissent with ludicrous overtones

Sarvepalli Radhakrishna brought out the diversity of Hinduism as follows, "At the core of Hinduism is the belief that truth is many-sided and different views contained different aspects of truth which no one could fully express." According to Bal Gangadhar Tilak, "recognition of the fact that the means to salvation are diverse, and realization of the truth that the number of Gods to be worshipped is large, that indeed is the distinguishing feature of Hinduism." The term 'Hindu' came into use only around ten centuries ago, and in the early days, the term 'Hindu' which was derived from the River Sindhu, was probably used in a geographical sense, not in a religious sense in its early days. Hinduism encompasses numerous sects. There is no Hindu canon in the strict sense of the term and the Bhagavad Gita is not the most important book for all groups of Hindus. There are indeed six major philosophical schools of Hinduism viz, Critical Inquiry (Mimamsa), Logic (Nyaya), Particularism (Vaisheshika), Numbers (Sankhya), Yoga and Vedanta. Likewise, some sects of Hinduism such as the Lokayatas even reject the idea of reincarnation.

One of the interesting debates in Hinduism is between the Dwaitist and the Adwaitist schools of philosophical thought. Dwaitism was founded by the 13th-century scholar Madhvacharya. Dwaitism postulates that God and the individual souls are separate entities. On the other hand, the Advaita school of Adi Shankara proposes the God and the individual soul are inseparably united, and that the atman is identical with the Brahman. Some schools like the Charvaka School and the Lokayata school of Hinduism even maintained that God did not exist. Debates and perspectives such as these bring out the diversity of viewpoints and the seeming irreconcilability between different Hindu schools of thought. Scholarly discussion were common on topics such as these in Ancient India with different sides adopting dogmatic and well-entrenched positions. Amartya Sen and other scholars have argued that this has impinged on the modern Indian temperament and impacted the Hindu psyche as well.³⁸

On the whole, Hinduism has lent itself fairly admirably to reform despite the presence of less than ideal elements even today. Raja Ram Mohan Roy and the Bramho Samaj which was founded in 1828, played a major role in ridding Hinduism of its more repugnant aspects such as caste, sati, the plight of widows, endless and meaningful rituals, and animal sacrifice which had dominated and plagued the religion in the early Nineteenth Century. Other notable reformers were Dayanand Saraswati, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Jyotiba Phule, Debendra Nath Tagore, Keshub Chandra Sen, Atma Ram Pandurang, R.C. Bhandarkar, Balshastri Jambhekar, Pandita Ramabai, Kandukuri Veeresalingam and Mahadev Govind Ranade.

Impact of culture or science and scholarship

Another common criticism been that most Indians have not been able to understand historical or cultural issues from a global standpoint, and have always approached all issues pertaining to language, culture or religion from the parochial and narrow points of view of a Brahmin, Dalit, 'Aryan', 'Dravidian', North Indian, South Indian, Marxist, Hindu, Non-Hindu etc., and what glorifies their own community and what not is necessarily correct or desirable in the interests of science or society. This perhaps stems from the caste system, but it not fully uncommon or absent in the West and other societies as the dangers associated with Eurocentrism are fully known. This has led to Dravidian nationalism, Hindu chauvinism and Hindi chauvinism among others at various periods in the past, and the scale and magnitude of

³⁸ The Argumentative Indian, Amartya Sen

such movements is some cause for consternation. It has also severely compromised the quality of research carried on in India and this is naturally a cause for concern.

Effects of thought worlds in Islamic countries

Dissent

Non-tolerance for dissent and the relative lack of religious freedom has been a hallmark of many Islamic societies. For example, in Pakistan, Christians and Hindus form an infinitesimally small portion of the population. They are however heavily discriminated against; they are not allowed to enter many public areas, draw water from wells reserved for Muslims, or bury their dead in graves reserved for Muslims. They are also censured and persecuted under Pakistan's notorious and Draconian blasphemy laws. In many Islamic countries apostasy or even criticism of Islam can attract the death penalty. Some countries like Saudi Arabia have strict laws while the laws in some countries like Malaysia are more lenient. However, complete freedom of religion or expression is virtually absent in most Islamic countries. In Islam, the land controlled by Islam is referred to as 'dar-al-Islam' or the abode of Islam, while the land not controlled by Islam is referred to as 'dar-al-harb' or the abode of war. After being conquered by Muslims, Non-Islamic subjects were even required to pay Jizya tax or a tax of submission.

Jihad

The meaning and the origin of the word 'Jihad' is being hotly debated worldwide especially in the aftermath of the September 2001 attacks on the USA, and subsequent attacks in other parts of the world including the UK and India.

The term Jihad is variously interpreted as holy war or struggle. The origin of the word 'Jihad' is thought to be 'Jihaada' which means power or abilities. (Munawwir, 1984: 234). According to some scholars, jihad means fighting the infidels and the non-believers for the purpose of glorifying Islam (Zuhaili, 2011: 6). Jihad is one of the most important teachings of Islam and jihad is viewed a path to greatness and glory, and commitment to Jihad is evaluated on the Day of Judgment.³⁹

Presence or absence of creativity

In Islam, the term used for innovation in matters of religion is Bid'ah. Many scholars consider Bid'ah to be heresy, and cite the following verse from the Qu'ran in this context "This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed my favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion." (Quran 5:4). Many other Islamic scholars have also spoken against innovation, excepting for innovations that do not pertain to religion and could therefore even be welcomed in specific instances. Examples of such innovations pertain to science, technology or economic development.⁴⁰ In spite of this, science did flourish in the Middle East on occasion, examples being the Ninth century. Many Islamic countries have also made rapid economic strides in the past fifty years, and even in spheres such as woman's education. All balanced assessments on any nexus between religions and creativity must always take into account such complex and seemingly contradictory data.⁴¹

³⁹ Jihad Academy: The rise of the Islamic state Nicolas Henin Bloomsbury, 2015

⁴⁰ Identity as adaptation to social, cultural, and historical context Roy F. Baumeister and Mark Muraven Journal of Adolescence 1996, 19, 405–416

⁴¹ Rocks of Ages: Science and Religion in the fullness of life: Stephen Jay Gould 2002

Language and Culture

The affinity between language and culture and language as a symbol of ethnic identity has pre-occupied many generations of scholars. This study has now been formalized thanks to the emergence of a new field of study called Sociolinguistics or the study of language in relation to society. Such studies have been throwing new light not only on the nature of language but on the nature of society as well. Language, which may be defined as “A purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of voluntarily produced symbols.” (Sapir 1921:8) According to Bloch and Trager, “A language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group co-operates.” (1942:5) Ethnicity, likewise, refers to a sense of identity among a group based on a sense of common heritage, language, religion, or any other aspect of culture. Ethnicity, may manifest itself in a desire to lead one’s lives according to one’s traditions, maintain status quo in the light of changes to society or fights for one’s rights whenever one’s way of life or cherished beliefs are threatened.

The term ‘culture’ has many ramifications; most anthropologists such as Margaret Mead, Julian Steward and Abraham Kardiner acknowledge it impacts personality as well, and group behaviour. Language and culture are likewise inter-related due to many factors such as semantic relativity and verbal intelligence, and Linguistic Anthropology is emerging as a major field of study in its own right. There are several possible relationships between language and society. One is that social structure may either influence or determine linguistic structure and behaviour. A second possible relationship is that linguistic structure and behaviour may either influence or determine social structure and the speakers’ worldview. A third possible relationship is that the influence is bi-directional and that language and society may influence each other. A fourth view held by a small but slowly increasing number of scholars such as Steven Pinker is that the roots of language are much deeper and that language and language structure may even have their roots in genetics. Such relationships between language, culture and society form the foundation of the emerging field of sociolinguistics.⁴²

The centrality of language to culture also does seem to vary widely from community to community, and this aspect may need to be understood in much greater detail by anthropologists. Not all traits exhibited by various ethnic groups may be seen to desirable in a universal context. Some cultures may exhibit a high degree of ethnocentrism, consciously or unconsciously, and may in part be even driven by inward-looking approaches and a lack of awareness of other contemporary cultures. Ethnocentrism has been observed in many cultures across the world, cultural relativism being the exact opposite point of view. In any case, Community sentiment, which R.M McIver and Page associate with a “we-feeling” and a “role-feeling” is common throughout the world. In India, language is seen to be more central to culture in the South and East of India than in the West or the North, and linguistic pride is particularly high among some groups such as the Tamils many of whom strive for linguistic purism. Deification of language is also widespread among the Tamils and the song “Invocation to the Goddess Tamil” is the official song of the government of Tamil Nadu. Such a feeling can also be found among the Telugus to a much smaller extent, and the song “To my Mother Telugu” is likewise the state language of Andhra Pradesh. Research is ongoing into the extent of social and linguistic accommodation of different cultures, variations of which include assimilation and adjustment, and all these factors should have a bearing on language policies

⁴² Sociolinguistics, R.A.Hudson Cambridge University Press 1980

as well. These may vary widely from group to group, and must be evaluated on a case to case basis.⁴³

According to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, language is a major determinant not only in shaping culture but also in determining attitudes and thinking patterns. Some scholars also talk about Verbal intelligence, and this would be greatly determined by language. Thus a speaker of a particular language whose uses many variations for a technical term is able to mentally conjure up variations of the same theme much more easily, than a speaker of another language whose vocabulary may be limited in this regard. Many other scholars are also likewise beginning to hold the view that language shapes worldviews and a speaker's cognitive abilities.⁴⁴

All the factors described above would naturally create variations in perception and outlook between say, a Hindi speaker, a Bhojpuri speaker, a Marathi speaker and a Tamil speaker which in turn would shape attitudes towards language and language policy. Linguistic issues and, in particular, the treatment of minority languages are have a high emotional appeal, and have often resulted in explosive situations in the past all over the world. As Bretton (1976, p. 447) points out: "Language may be the most explosive issue universally and over time. This is mainly because language alone, unlike all other concerns associated with nationalism and ethnocentrism ... is so closely tied to the individual self. Fear of being deprived of communicating skills seems to raise political passion to a fever pitch."

2. Outlook of a society and awareness of other cultures

The outlook of a society and awareness of other cultures can play a major role in bringing about social change. Most societies today, especially after the advent of the internet have seen a greater awareness of other cultures. This may at least appear to be the case upon a superficial examination. However, a deeper analysis will reveal that the issue is far more complex than meets the eye. On one hand, we have autarchic countries like North Korea, which are characterized by state-induced xenophobia. The level of awareness exhibited or demonstrated towards other cultures apparently varies very widely from culture to culture, and existing theories fail miserably in presenting satisfactory explanations and a cogent picture. Why are there wide differences in perception towards the outside world among the people in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Odisha? What are the differences between the people of Odisha and Gujarat in this regard? What are the causes for such differences? Can existing theories explain such differences or not? Can existing theories explain changes in attitudes satisfactorily or not? Answers to such questions will be found only suitably diverse data is used for theorization and hypothesis building.

3. Individual assertiveness, aspiration and ambition

Various sociologists, behavioural scientist and psychoanalysts have developed theories on self-development and we reproduce them here. Almost all these theories ascribe a major role to culture in shaping one's personality, much like the Culture and personality school.

⁴³ The Language Instinct, Steven Pinker Penguin Books 1994

⁴⁴ Through the language glass: Why the world looks different in other languages Guy Deutscher Arrow Books 2011

Erik Erikson developed another theory of personality development and proposed eight stages of development, beginning with birth and ending with death. Erikson's model of self-development gave weightage to social aspects, like the way we negotiate between our own desires and what is socially accepted (Erikson 1982). According to Jean Piaget, the development of self-evolved through a negotiation between the world as it exists in one's mind and the world that exists as it is experienced socially (Piaget 1954). According to George Herbert Mead, a person's personal identity is developed through social interaction. In order to understand himself, an individual must view him or herself through the eyes of others. (Mead 1934).

Goal definition and goal attainment is another yardstick of positive orientation towards life. Another important concept is the concept of personal meaning which can lead to a purposefulness of life, and increased performance and efficiency (Wong & Fry, 1998). On the other hand, a directionless individual may not have any purpose in life, and this may lead to depression and reduced efficiency. All such attributes are intrinsic to the society's value system and are moulded by cultural values and the individual's cultural experience.

Aspiration may be defined as "a desire or ambition to achieve something" (Oxford English Dictionary 1989). Research is also ongoing to understand the relationship between aspiration and culture and aspiration and poverty (Arjun Appadurai (2006) and Debraj Ray (2006)). However, aspiration deficit in individuals may be greatly reduced through proactive social and cultural change.

Human behaviour is largely shaped by experience. Experience is in turn shaped by cultural settings. This includes parenting, peer-interactions, education, religious instruction and the like. This naturally influences the way he thinks, interacts and behaves in any given context or situation.

4. Importance given to achievement by the members of a society and overall attitude towards development

Culture often appears to have been an impediment for progress; it has often served to hold a country or an economy back, and has allowed it to be bogged down by inertia and sloth. Few will debate the centrality of a society's culture in influencing its charter for development, and pace and direction of progress. It may even be the fulcrum and the anchor around which the entire developmental process is orchestrated. The Senegalese poet L.S Senghor once even stated that Culture was the be-all and end-all of development. Likewise, George Yudice stated that culture and development were more often than not, used interchangeably. According to the World Commission on Culture and Development "Development divorced from its human or cultural context is growth without a soul."

The importance given by a society to development and social progress can stem from its core values. Different societies may attach more importance to different values. Examples of core values in a society could include the importance given to parents, the spouse, children, marriage, the extended family and other kith and kin, friends, neighbours, learning and self-development, work, religion, music, entertainment etc. Dominant values vary widely from society to society, and even though most elements list above are cultural universals, the weightage given to them by different societies tend to vary widely. Likewise, attitudes towards

social change may also vary widely from society to society and these tend to play a major role in determining the pace of social change.

Social change can also be conditioned by beliefs and attitudes. Beliefs characteristically stem from pre-existing thoughts, ideas, notions, or reinforcements. Beliefs are inculcated through a long-drawn process often spanning decades, and can also be conditioned by beliefs passed down from generation to generation, or beliefs commonly held by society.

The term 'attitude' refers to a set of permanent or long-term feelings, beliefs, viewpoints and behavioural tendencies towards specific people, groups, or ideas. An attitude is a personally-held belief about something, and even defines ideas of right or wrong. Strong attitudes are called convictions, less strong ones are ideals and values, and more feeble ones are opinions. Attitudes may be implicit or explicit. The former cannot be easily identified or assessed, while the latter can. Attitudes, beliefs and viewpoints are often referred to as Cultural capital. Cultural capital can be either positive or negative. Cultural capital, or the lack or absence of it, be its most useful asset or can hang like a Damocles sword on a culture's citizenry. This may be referred to as Cultural Zeitgeist. Cultural Zeitgeist typically changes slowly, only through the change in attitudes of its citizens, or through other externally-induced changes.

Several theories have been put forth how attitudes are formed, reinforced or changed. For example, according to the belief-oriented approach, modification of people's attitudes can be brought about through better communication and information dissemination.⁴⁵ According to Cohen (1964), Hovland and Janis (1959), Rosenberg et al (1960), three factors can bring about change in attitudes. These were communicator effectiveness, nature of the communication and the recipients. The effectiveness of these three variables must be enhanced through suitable strategies. For example communicator-related variables include expertness, trustworthiness, prestige, impartiality, social power. The communication-related variables are timing of communication, choice of target audience, channel of communication etc. Attitude change also greatly depends on the preparedness and receptivity of the listener. According to Breer and Locke (1965), attitudinal change depends on various factors such as individualism, egalitarianism, theism and achievement. Other theories have also been proposed, notably by Simonson (This was based on the principles of Cognitive Dissonance which was originally developed by Festinger). Attitudes can also be changed through persuasion, and often communicators are employed. Some models of Attitude change have been proposed. The Yale attitudinal change approach, for example, proposes analysing the source of the communication, the nature of the audience and the communication to get the message across convincingly. The elaboration likelihood model of persuasion (Petty and Cacciopo (1986), Petty, Barden and Wheeler(1999)) specifies when people will be influenced by the logic of the arguments, and when people will be influenced by more superficial arguments.⁴⁶

However, from our approach several components may be achieving attitudinal change. The first is understating the reasons for a person's attitude along with adequate theorizing. The second factor is an assessment of a personality's behavioural traits and the reasons for his behavioural patterns. The third is an investigation into the past history of the person, if possible. The fourth is mastering the ability to put oneself in to the other person's shoes and adopt his worldviews. The fifth is understanding a person in relation to his culture. The sixth is convincing the subject of the benefits of the change in behaviour, and the dangers of

⁴⁵ Strategies of Attitude changes, 1969 Robert Bandura

⁴⁶ Fundamentals of Social Psychology Robert A Baron et al Pearson 2012

persisting with existing attitudes. Thus, achieving attitudinal change may not be easy, and an individual approach may be required. If individual-attention proves impractical, group-approaches may be applied, but groups may be defined based on attributes and characteristics.

Theory of Convergence of Thought worlds

According to our theory of convergence of thought worlds, thought worlds possessed by people pertaining to different segments of a society, or among people in different societies tend to converge over a period. This happens due to three factors. The first is the freer flow and circulation of information within or across societies due to improved technologies. The key assumption here is that technologies will always improve because they satisfy the utility factor. The second is that autarchic economic, political or cultural paradigms will not sustain because they are against the human spirit, and are tantamount to the obfuscation of knowledge. The third point that we would like to make here is that periods of positive economic growth and progress are associated with positive attitudes and periods of economic recession, depression or societal decadence. However, experience has amply borne out that periods of economic growth and technological progress vastly outnumber the periods of recession. This is because human endeavour and enterprise proactively seeks solutions to problems, and the vested interests that desire progress in a capitalistic setup always outnumber the vested interests that (if any) benefit from economic decline. However, the convergence will never be complete as it there will always be room for individual differences.

The thought worlds and worldviews of individual groups of people (some of which are driven by ideological predispositions) also tend to converge and aberrations are ultimately left by the wayside. For example, both left-wing (Marxist) and right-wing (Hindutva approaches) to history which are driven by self-imposed worldviews may be doomed and may be consigned to the annals of history. The worldview of the Archetypal American and the Asian Indian, are likely to move closer as time passes, driven chiefly by a generational change from both sides. We will see a convergence of thought in all such cases, albeit slowly. We may refer to this as the theory of Group Convergence of Thought worlds. A primary assumption and a pre-requisite here is that the factors favouring convergence will always overwhelm factors favouring divergence, at least in the long term.

The third hypothesis that we would like to introduce here is that the 'Theory of General Positive Drift of attitudes'. According to this hypothesis, human attitudes tend to improve over a period and become more positive. By positive attitudes, we mean those attitudes which aid in human or personal progress and are associated with constructive pursuits. This is because positive attitudes are essential for survival in a cut-throat world, and other deviations and irregularities will be left to bite the dust. There may be exceptions to this however, and these can be (a) Individual non-conformities (b) group non-conformities (c) Economic cycle driven non-conformities (Negative attitudes may be associated with recessions and depressions). However, as per our hypothesis, attitudes in general have a positive trend. This is because negative attitudes may be unsupportable in the long-term and may be fraught with disastrous consequences both for the individual and the society at large. Thus attitudes tend to become healthier in the longer-term (in spite of possible cultural-level, social group level and overall fluctuations) and pessimism biases, cynicism-driven biases and optimism biases will reduce in the long-term, instances of pessimism biases and cynicism-driven biases falling faster than optimism biases. However, attitudes may improve up to a point, and then level off. Improvement in attitudes will also trigger greater rationalization, and this will in turn, led to convergence of thought worlds.

Activism will however, naturally lead to a faster rate of sociocultural progress and convergence of thought worlds, and must be encouraged subject to other constraints and limitations.

5. Value attached to material progress

Progressiveness may be defined as that trait or characteristic of society which promotes positive change, improvement or reform as opposed to the maintenance of status quo or leaving things as they are. Social progress refers to the improvement of societies on social, cultural and economic fronts. This may happen either as a result of proactive measures, or as a natural part of sociocultural evolution.

Some cultures have apparently attached more importance to material progress while others have not, and this has impacted their standard of living. The idea of judging a society's progress by its material progress alone is however debatable. Other measures such as 'Gross National Happiness' have also been proposed.

6. Hard work

Work culture and work ethos vary from culture to culture, and in general, some cultures are believed to be more work centric than others. The number of hours put in at work also varies widely from country to country. In countries like South Korea, the number of hours worked is very high. On the other hand, in countries like Italy, the number of hours put in at work is relatively low. Work habits and occupational preferences also vary widely from culture to culture. For example, in the Marwari community of Rajasthan in North-western India, few people prefer the idea of working in regular jobs. Contrarily, family-owned businesses are very common in this region, and this region is characterized by a passion for entrepreneurship. The good news, rather unfortunately, ends there. Most set up family stores or small businesses. Investment in high-tech industries or technology-driven enterprises is virtually absent in the region. In the states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, many middle class families prefer to send their children abroad, particularly to the USA. In the state of Kerala, it is common for people to work in the Middle East. On the other hand, people in several other parts of India such as Odisha seldom work abroad. Thus, work preferences are a function of not only parental initiation but also societal and peer-pressure. What is more interesting is that trends can change over a period in time.

In the USA, it is common, with the exception of a few large companies, for people to change jobs regularly. Hire and fire practices are common and employment at will is the norm. In Japan where employees were characterized by their loyalty to the organisation, and work is considered central to human existence, the very thought of firing an employee would have been considered sacrilegious a few decades ago, even if the company was incurring losses or its market share was declining. After Japan's long recession of the 1990's, however, there has been a considerable change in approach. Most companies now prefer to hire a few permanent workers and many temporary workers who can be fired at will.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Management Relations in the work culture in Japan as compared to that of the West, Ruth Wolf Innovative Journal of Business and Management September – October 2013

Some cultures endow their employees with more freedom to innovate or take their own decisions. On the other hand, other cultures respect group conformity and individuality is frowned upon or treated as an undesirable trait. Work ethics and work culture can therefore be a substantive basis for cultural change especially given the fact that it is inseparably intertwined with economic progress.

7. Risk-appetite of individuals in a society

A Risk may be defined as the probability of either gaining or losing something valuable in an uncertain scenario, and the possible quantum of such gain or loss. All human efforts involve some risks, but some endeavours are riskier than the others. The risk appetite of individuals depends on a culture's history and value system. It can also be greatly influenced by parenting and upbringing. Thus, cultural differences can alter one's perception of reality, and interfere with rational choice. Culture and organizational risk-taking are also tightly interlinked, and it stands to reason why organizations belonging to different parts of the world operate differently. Risk-appetite may also be quantified, and societies may be ranked as risk-taking or risk-averse. A minimum risk appetite may be necessary to foster innovation and creativity and bring about a social metamorphosis. Risk-appetite is also necessary for entrepreneurship which fosters economic growth, and the quality and quantum of entrepreneurial efforts have historically varied widely from culture to culture. According to a study by the Global Entrepreneurship and Development Institute, countries like the USA, Canada, Australia and Switzerland ranked high on entrepreneurship while countries in Africa and parts of Asia were right at the bottom. This may also be largely due to the absence of a supporting institutional framework or low capital formation, and these countries are dragged down into a quagmire and a cesspool of non-innovation and lethargic social change.

8. Importance given to innovation

An innovation refers to the development of a new concept or paradigm, or the improvisation of an existing one. Innovations happen through four methods i.e., discovery, innovation, improvisation or recombination. Discoveries uncover previously existing but unknown facts E.g., the discovery of gravity. Inventions result when something new is produced from existing objects or concepts. Example, invention of the automobile. An improvisation may refer to a modification of an existing concept to make it better. Recombination involves recasting existing concepts in new permutations and combinations to make them work in new situations. Seemingly innocuous innovations such as the invention of the birth control pill have brought about myriad cultural and social changes in the form of higher household savings, better education and retirement planning. It has become one of the biggest sociocultural drivers in the Twenty-first century.

Almost all societies around the world embody some form of a social control, which deals with the enforcement of social norms. These are formalized in the form of rules. The means of enforcing rules are known as sanctions. Sanctions can be positive or negative. Positive sanctions are rewards given for conforming to norms. Negative sanctions are punishments for violating norms. Sanctions can also be formal or informal. Formal sanctions are enforced by some kind of an authority. Informal sanctions are typically not enforced formally but are nonetheless imposed by society. For example dressing inappropriately for an occasion may draw stares from others around you. Violating social norms may be referred to as deviance.

This can be mild or severe, and the latter implies flouting social norms with some impunity. Some societies have more tolerance for deviant behaviour than others, and may mandate conformism either formally or semi-formally. American culture however, is typically non-conformist (Hofstede 1986, Kim and Markus, 1999). Over time, some societies may become more lax in their tolerance of deviant behaviour. However, innovation and creativity often require off-beat approaches and non-orthodox ways of thinking or doing things. They may require upsetting the applecart or flouting well-entrenched norms. This may often not be possible in a stifling or an ultra-conservative environment. The output resulting from a creative endeavour may also not do down well with all sections of a conservative society. This may also be represented in a 'Creativity' versus 'Conformity' graph. Some creative endeavours may be conformist but some may not. How will society react to game-disrupting and norm-upsetting changes?

Sociologists like Emile Durkheim and Robert K. Merton advocated the idea that deviance was a necessary part of any society given its ability to institutionalize social change or initiate paradigm shifts.

According to the Global Innovation index rankings for 2016, Switzerland topped the list with the first ranking, and Sweden had the second ranking. USA was given the fourth ranking, and India an unimpressive sixtieth. There are however no comprehensive or satisfactory theories to explain the correlation between innovation and other factors inherent in a society.

9. Acceptance of ideas having an external origin (Cultural receptivity)

Cultural Receptivity would determine a culture's desire for change and progress, and how it views other cultures and components of culture not forming a part of it. Even a culture which is initially not receptive to ideas having an external origin, may undergo changes over a period in time, and may become more receptive to change. Most cultures and societies today are receptive to some degrees, as symbols of science and technology have permeated the globe, as also have cultural icons associated with the world's more dominant cultures. C. Arensberg and A. Niehoff describe cultural borrowing as the sharing of ideas and techniques across cultures. Often, external ideas are thoroughly internalized, even heavily modified if required, and used as the society and its denizens deem fit. These can then be used as tools of cultural, social, economic or technological progress. There are many examples to illustrate this. For example, Germany was the birth place of the motor car in the 1880's. In the 1890's, the first automotive industry took root in France. In the 1910's, the USA pioneered assembly line production. From the 1970's, upstarts and dark horses Japan and later South Korea, became leading automotive players on the international scene.

In this connection, cultures may be categorized as follows:

1. Dominant or influential cultural systems: Examples of such cultures include the USA. Factors impacting a culture's dominance include its technological superiority, cultural hegemony and soft power, economic influence, military influence, population and population growth.
2. Non-Dominant cultural systems: Examples of such systems include China and India. Even though such cultures may possess desirable traits, their lack of dominance in the international arena due to an absence of hard power or soft power may prevent such traits from spreading.

3. Fringe or Marginal cultural systems: Examples of such systems include Nigeria and Tanzania. Such countries are merely a speck in the international radar, and chances that such cultures can have an impact on the world at large are remote.
4. Closed or Autarchic cultural systems: Examples of such cultures are North Korea which have practically no cultural or economic connections with the rest of the world. These cultures may also be assessed based on their Degree of Autarchy

The process of symbiosis between these cultural systems would determine the global socio-cultural landscape.

Factors (impacting)

Technological superiority and Military hegemony

The technological superiority associated with a culture may lead to other cultures wanting to mimic them. For example, it was once said that the sun never sets on the British Empire. While this statement was eventually falsified, cultural icons associated with the British Empire held sway over a wide region long after it declined and passed into the annals of history due to their association with superior cultural and technological power, but were ultimately eclipsed by American symbols arising from American technological suzerainty. In the opening decades of the Twentieth century, the USA was associated with the automobile and mass production. It also eventually became associated with the Aeroplane, the computer, and with its intellectual might. This may have naturally led to other American symbols becoming ubiquitous around the globe common examples being Coca Cola and Pepsi.

Cultural hegemony and soft power

The cultural hegemony and soft power associated with a culture can play a vital role in spread of its cultural and non-cultural icons. For example, France is associated with its wines and haute couture, and Italy with its cuisine. Hollywood spread largely due to American hard and soft power, and Bollywood is making an attempt to capitalize on the unprecedented interest in India abroad.

Economic Influence

America's extraordinary and unparalleled success as an economic power in the early part of the Twentieth century is a case in point. This boosted American cultural exports to a significant degree, often ousting icons associated with rival cultures in the popular public imagination. American cultural exports included comics, cinema, fast food etc., which have become commonplace around the world.

Population and population growth

Population and population growth, taken along with other factors, can play a key role in determining cultural might. This is one reason China, India and even Africa are poised to grow as major influencing systems into the Twenty-first century and beyond, while Britain with its tiny population went into relative decline.

Factors (absorbing)

Technological superiority

The technological or technical superiority of an element may allow it to spread rapidly. For example, Automobiles replaced horses throughout the developed world very quickly after

they were invented, rendering the latter obsolete. Likewise, air travel became common throughout the developed world by the 1960's.

Perceived superiority, Allure or glitz

Elements with a higher proportion of allure, glitz or pizzazz may propagate easily. Glitzy advertisements for tobacco-based products or even colas for example impress people and boost tobacco or cola consumption even though they may endanger people's health or offer little or no nutritional value. Another related concept is emulation, where elements associated with a culture which is perceived as being superior tend to be adopted much more readily.

Solutions to problems

Elements which provide ready solutions to pressing problems may often be adopted at a faster rate, than those which have only novelty value or glamour.

Comparison with substitutes

Elements only satisfy a want or a need. If a better substitute is available at the same or at a lower price, it will seal the deal, and eliminate less competitive solutions from attaining popularity.

Economy

The economy and the value-proposition of an element in relation to its price will play a major role in determining its success and its eventual adaptation.

Utility and practicality

Utility may allow an element of culture to spread. This may explain the widespread use of the mobile phone or the internet, for example in almost every nook and corner of the world. Likewise, Japanese cars became popular in many parts of the world due to their perceived practicality, convenience and ease of use. Context- Suitability is another important attribute that must be borne in mind, and what works in the context of one culture may not work in the context of another culture. In some cases, an element may need to be simplified, and unnecessary aspects or components removed.

Alteration or improvisation during diffusion

Alteration or Improvisation during diffusion to make it for suitable for a given culture can enable an element to spread more easily. Even Ford had to rename its products in some markets, while McDonalds had to rework their menu to make it palatable to specific audiences.

Receptivity

Receptivity would depend on a culture's inherent appetite for change and progress, and how it views the external world and cultural elements not intrinsic to it. Even a culture which is initially not ready for change in any form, may undergo a transformational metamorphosis over a period in time, and may become more receptive to change. However, the spread of American icons worldwide and the Americanization of many parts of the world has provoked angry reactions worldwide especially in Islamic countries, and some other Asian countries who fear that local cultural values are being threatened.

Cultural Integration and Cultural Homogenization

Cultural integration may be defined as a form of Cultural exchange by means of which a cultural group assumes the beliefs, practices and customs of another cultural group, without jettisoning the unique characteristics of its own cultures. Cultural integration may therefore be referred to an intermingling of one or more cultures, and major cities across the world have become cultural potpourris and medleys. Another term for cultural integration is hybridization. Cultural integration also involves assimilation and acculturation. Cultural integration may be categorized into temporal analysis and synchronic analysis, where integration takes place across time and space respectively. It may also be categorized as uni-directional or multi-directional, depending on how many cultures are impacted by change.

Cultural homogenization refers to standardization of different components of a culture and the elimination of variation. Homogenization can take place within a culture or across cultures. The process of homogenization appears to have accelerated with the onslaught of globalisation which has greatly diminished the role of national governments in defining or enforcing cultural norms. Globalization has also allowed technology to spread to peripheral and often remote regions. Many sociologists have given their views on cultural homogenization. According to Liebes (2003), more and more countries were likely to adopt a Euro-American lifestyle as globalisation gathered pace. According to Ritzer (2010), the barriers working against homogenization would pale into nothingness when compared to the forces promoting it, and this alone would ensure a greater cultural uniformity. This would lead to the emergence of a "global culture" (Robertson, 1992) or "world culture" (Meyer, Boli, Thomas and Ramirez, 1997)

The following however, would be the limitations of the process of cultural osmosis and cultural homogenization, and in such cases a hybridized culture comprising of both global and local elements and a continuing amalgamation and unification of cultures but with each individual culture retaining its salient features is likely to be observed. Anthony Smith (1991) for example believes an increase of contacts between cultures does not necessarily lead to an annihilation of all differences across cultures. He believes that there is little prospect of a unified global culture, but a set of interrelated cultures:

- a) Context-suitability of cultural elements and technologies
- b) The economy and affordability of different technologies, propositions or solutions in a given context
- c) Availability of local substitutes or equivalents for a given solution
- d) Political framework of a nation
- e) Legal framework of a nation
- f) Economic constraints in a nation
- g) Lack of awareness of the outside world
- h) Lack of infrastructure as a barrier to cultural osmosis
- i) Non-permeation of technology due to various factors
- j) Innovation as a disruptor (Innovation may spread slowly)
- k) Linguistic factors (i.e. linguistic barriers)
- l) Religious factors acting as a barrier to cultural change
- m) Other ideological factors acting as a barrier to cultural change
- n) Reliance on tradition and its impact on culture and cultural change
- o) Cultural pride acting as a barrier to cultural change

10. Desire to challenge ideas, paradigms and the existing state of affairs

The desire to challenge ideas, paradigms and the existing state of affairs must necessarily be differentiated from innovation, though the former can sometimes lead to the latter. This trait apparently varies very widely from culture to culture, and may even be a necessary attribute to induce sociocultural change. Some societies which were once considered static and lethargic were infused with a new-found vigour and desire for change. Examples were changes brought about to Hindu society by great reformers such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dayanand Saraswati, Periyar E V R and others. Many Islamic societies have thus far, resisted change. However, there is an ongoing debate in many circles about the compatibility between Islam and modern democracy. The French revolution, the Russian revolution and even the fall of communism would not have been possible without the desire for change.

There are several other types of cognitive dissonance experienced by an individual during his lifetime, and these must be understood in relation to various aspects of his own culture i.e. his upbringing, peer pressure, the cultural norms associated with his own culture, the cultural norms associated with other cultures etc. We propose the following types of cognitive dissonance encountered at an individual level.

- a) Individual-level cognitive dissonance: This is the simplest type of individual-level cognitive dissonance and refers to a clash between an individual's own values or value sets arising from incompatibilities in thought processes or the prevalence of other unresolved issues. This naturally leads to a dichotomized individual with a sense of frustration and listlessness.
- b) Individual-level temporal cognitive dissonance: These refer to a clash between an individual's own values or value sets arising from changes to his own thought processes over a period in time.
- c) Clash between an individual values and the values of his immediate network: parents, peers, children etc. This may occur due to varying speeds in cultural and social adaptation.
- d) Clash between an individual's values and the values of his own culture or sub-culture arising due to differences in perception or varying rates of change. In such a case, an individual may lag behind the society's norms or may be in advance of them.
- e) At times, an individual's values may be at permanent deviance with the society's norms. Such individuals are typically geniuses, prodigies, misfits or outcasts. (Permanent Cognitive Dissonance). Such individual level cognitive dissonance can occur, for example, when an individual's upbringing and early peer-influences are at odds with the expectations of society.
- f) Multilevel cognitive dissonance: Multilevel cognitive dissonance may occur when a person is exposed to paradoxes repeatedly in various phases of his life. This may often be "personality-altering" or "belief-altering" after a flash-point is reached. This may on one hand lead to depression or suicidal tendencies but on the other hand, it may also be the springboard to creative thinking. However, cognitive dissonance within a limit (known as a threshold) may not only be inevitable, but also desirable. Cognitive dissonance within a limit may be inevitable because perfection may often be a far-fetched fantasy, and there are still too many paradoxes in science and society. It may be necessary to comply with societal norms.

- g) Multilevel cognitive dissonance leading to mass mobilization and social change: Multilevel cognitive dissonance may also lead to disenchantment with the current state of affairs, inspire mass mobilization and eventually bring about the desired social change.
- h) At times, cognitive dissonance can arise due to proactive (externally-induced or self-motivated) individual re-orientation arising from training or self-developmental programs as this can trigger maladjustment with the society at large when there is an incompatibility between the individual after his re-orientation and the society.
- i) We also propose a categorization of individual level cognitive dissonance into structured cognitive dissonance and unstructured cognitive dissonance. In case of the former, the individual carries out some kind of a structured mental analysis of his cognitive dissonance be it in formal, informal, oral or written form. In case of the latter, a structured mental analysis may not be carried out, yet it may be adequate to induce displeasure or goad him into some kind of action.

11. Social and cultural adaptability

Another prerequisite for social change is Social and Cultural adaptability, and it must be stated that all cultures do not possess this attribute in equal measure. It is often said that necessity is the mother of invention, and necessity may have, in many cases, led to greater cultural adaptation. People from the state of Kerala in Southern India have migrated to the Middle East in large numbers. On the other hand, people from Karnataka, a neighbouring state, are not known to migrate anywhere. We had discussed the causes for migration in a previous paper. But what about the underlying causes for adaptability. People from Andhra Pradesh, another state in South India were once known to be sluggish and non-dynamic. Most of them were agriculturalists, often eking out a living on uneconomically small, and often barren or semi-arid patches of land. However, there was apparently a major change in mind set among people of the region in the 1990's. Richer families began to invest large sums of money on their children's education and this was followed by other sections of society. The state is now one of the most dynamic and best-performing states of India, and at least half the H1B holders are from this region. How and why did such a profound transformation come about? This may cause rethinking in current models of sociocultural change in the true spirit of the globalisation of science as more and more case studies from relatively obscure parts of the world are taken up for analysis and scrutiny.

12. Democratic social structures and absence of class differentiation

The term caste or Varna is used to describe a complex system of social divisions that was once widely prevalent in India. Risley defines it as "a collection of families or groups of families bearing a common name; claiming a common descent from a mythical ancestor, human or divine; professing to follow the same hereditary calling; and regarded by those who are competent to give an opinion as forming a single homogeneous community". (Hutton, 47) It is an ancient system that became inseparably interwoven with the history of Hinduism. A person's caste even determines whom he can marry, what work he can do, and what he can eat or touch. The Caste system comprises of four Varnas, Brahmans, Vaishyas, Kshatriyas and Shudras. The untouchables were outside the caste system and performed scavenging and other "unclean" tasks. The caste system dates back to the Vedic age, and is outwardly a formal system of classification based on occupation. A few sociologists also believe that this classification has racial overtones, and is tied to syncretism and ethnogenesis in ancient India.

There have been other institutions similar to the caste system. For example, racism was deeply entrenched in parts of the USA till the 1960's. Apartheid continued in South Africa till the 1990's. Even Ancient Rome has classes such as the patricians and the plebeians. According to Hutton, Ghurya and N.K Dutta, the following are the characteristics of caste⁴⁸:

1. Members of caste cannot wed outside their own caste (Endogamy).
2. There are similar but strict laws governing the partaking of food with members of other groups
3. For many castes, the occupations are fixed.
4. There are some accepted stratifications among the caste in which the Brahmins have been accorded the best place on top.
5. Birth determines the caste of the individual.
6. An individual cannot change his caste under any circumstances. However, there were instances of social mobility.
7. There were norms of socialization and avoidance in place.

As most Indians are Hindu, the caste system has played a major role throughout the history of India, and it continues to exert enormous influence on Indian society and politics.

Although the caste system was formally abolished in 1949 (Articles 14, 15 and 16 of the Indian constitution also prohibit discrimination on the basis of caste), the effects of this system have not been fully annihilated to date. Factors such as the absence of education, lack of infrastructure, influence of religion and tradition, and poor economic conditions have meant that the caste system still remains entrenched in parts of rural India. However, its influence is rapidly waning in the Twenty-first century.^{49 50}

13. Avocations and pastimes of individuals in a society with particular emphasis on learning

Avocations and pastimes may vary widely from society to society. These complement the main occupations and livelihoods of a society's denizens, complement them, influence them, and are influenced by them. Why do Indian's play Cricket, a game that is in theory, foreign to them? Why are some cultures more sport-loving than the others? Why do reading habits vary widely from culture to culture? Why does the thrust given to knowledge-acquisition vary from culture to culture?

Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann introduced the concept of habitualization in a book called "The Social Construction of Reality". According to them social norms are chiefly created by habitualization. Habitualization may be defined as "any action that is repeated frequently becomes cast into a pattern, which can then be ... performed again in the future in the same manner and with the same economical effort" (Berger and Luckmann 1966). Another variation of this theme was provided by W.I. Thomas. He states, "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (Thomas and Thomas 1928). Social behaviour is therefore shaped as much by subjective construction of reality as objective reality itself. Robert K. Merton also introduced the concept of a self-fulfilling prophecy. According to him, even a false idea can become true if it is acted upon.

Mind-orientation

⁴⁸ Origin and growth of caste in India Dutta N K (1931)

⁴⁹ Indian Anthropology R N Sharma Surjeet Publications

⁵⁰ Bouglé, Célestin. Essays on the Caste System. London: Cambridge UP, 1971. Print

The theory of mind-orientation, we believe is one way of assessing social and cultural change in society. Mind-orientation refers not only to the thoughts, beliefs and values a person fills up his mind with, but also how he acts upon them to orient his attitudes in life. These will ultimately affect his actions, and his direction and purpose in life. We believe mind-orientation is shaped largely by (a) parenting and upbringing (b) peer-pressure (c) education and schooling (d) The effects of the multi-media (e) societal constraints and restrictions including a multitude of factors such as language, religion, cults and ideologies (f) Socio-economic status. In the above scenario, parenting and upbringing, peer-pressure, education and schooling etc, are much stronger influences than say, the multimedia, and these begin at a much earlier age, to boot. Factors such as parenting and upbringing, peer-pressure, education and schooling etc, are also determined by the values and attributes of religious, linguistic and cultural or social groups which will in turn impact parenting, peer-pressure and other factors impacting mind-orientation. However, the extent to which religious groups, social or cultural groups and linguistic groups exert influence varies from context to context. In some cases, the effect of a religious group, social group, cultural group, or linguistic group may be very low, marginal or even non-existent. In some other cases, their influences may be relatively high. The quantification of the impact of such groups on an individual's mind-orientation may be attempted from scenario to scenario. In many cases, other groups also exert powerful influences, examples being the values of an external or third-party culture. Analyse the American influences on Indians living in the USA for instance. Other secondary groups can also affect an individual's mind-orientation. The mind-orientation of different groups is also determined by the global socio-cultural landscape, and this is determined by the process of cultural symbiosis as described in this paper.

Thus, mind orientation is tightly interwoven with culture and society, and even in this age of globalization, an individual's mind-orientation is deeply impacted by a given society's values, preferences and constraints. Thus, the collective and general mind-orientation of individuals changes rather slowly, and cannot change beyond a point. We refer to this as general mind-orientation in society. As a result of this, an individual tends to acquire and retain thoughts that fit in with his mind-orientation, and tends to sub-consciously ignore those thoughts that do not fit in with his mind-orientation. Thus, an individual's mind-orientation impacts many aspects of his life, such as his ability to acquire and retain language, his innovation, his creativity etc. This also explains the attitudes and behaviour of individuals in a society.

On the other hand, in any society, there will always be individual exceptions. This will be chiefly due to individual and personality differences. Individual and personal differences can be found in almost every society through the world. However, some societies encourage and promote personal and individual differences, while some other do not. This is why some societies are more tolerant of geniuses, prodigies and mavericks than others. An individual tries to reconcile his personality traits with the expectations of society, and wherever this effort is not entirely successful, a degree of cognitive dissonance will remain. Thus, from our perspective, individuals may be classified into conformists, partial conformists, non-conformists, and outcasts. In order to make such a classification, we define the zone of conformity and the zone of tolerance. Non-conformity may also be assessed by degree or magnitude of non-conformity, and by the number or percentage of non-conformists in a society. The latter is a particularly useful metric, and it can also have a bearing on the ability

to bring about mass changes in society through a snowball effect, a ripple effect, a cascading effect or a domino effect, for instance.

At the same time, a society's values also keep changing, often triggered by changes to individuals' values and mind-orientation. A society's values also restrain individuals at times. Thus, the relationship between an individual's values and mind-orientation and the society's values, more and norms is extremely interesting and worth exploring at a greater level of details.

An individual's mind-orientation may also change due to other factors such as cognitive dissonance, and this may result in a mind-orientation that is at odds with the expectations of society. We have discussed this under the section dealing with 'cognitive dissonance' in this paper. Thus, an individual's mind-orientation is arrived at either very peaceably, through a series of sub-conscious mini-eureka points in a majority of cases, or in a much smaller number of cases, through great mental upheaval and trauma.

Mind-orientation may be assessed for a nationality, sub-nationality, or even religious group or linguistic group. Mind-orientation leads to disparate thought-worlds. In order to carry out this exercise, sub-categories and subclasses of each culture or linguistic or religious group along with their components and attributes, then their qualities and characteristics. These may even be represented by a Venn diagram, and shifts tracked, along with a comprehensive analysis of the underlying changes for change. It is also possible to carry out an analysis of mind-orientation by socio-economic group. In such a case, socio-economic groups may be identified based on a suitable set of criteria. Changes of the mind-orientation of socio-economic groups may also be tracked from time to time, and the causes for the convergence or divergence (the latter is unhealthy in a majority of circumstances and situations) of their mind-orientation may be explored.

We may also reiterate that an individual belongs to a religious group, a social or a cultural group, a linguistic group, and any other group. In addition, he retains his own individual characteristics. Therefore, an individual's mind orientation is an amalgam of all these. The sum total of an individual's mind-orientation may again be defined as a thought-world. However, a comprehensive of the mind-orientation of any group must be done by breaking it up into its constituent elements as described in the paper.

Theory of Mindspace

We will also introduce the concept of 'mindspace' in this paper, and we believe this is a simple but effective tool. The idea of 'mindspace' originates from the fact that every individual has limited time at his disposal, or limited mental bandwidth to focus on multitudinous issues. He can at best devote his time and attention to a limited number of activities. Thus, if he spends an inordinate amount of time on a particular activity, this automatically reduces the time available for other activities. For example, if an individual spends more time watching television, this automatically reduces the time that he has for reading. Thus, the popularization of television has adversely impacted reading habits. Let us consider another example. The advent of the internet has similarly led to the decline of television or cinema as a mode of entertainment. It has also led to the decline of reading for pleasure, but has boosted access and availability of information. Thus, the internet and the television have led to a

general decline in people's reading skills in any given language. However, this may have boosted the demand for basic, functional skills in English and the popularization of many technical words among large sections of the population in India. On the other hand, knowledge of words pertaining to art, literature and poetry may have actually declined. Similarly the interest or the ability to obtain profound knowledge on any topic through a serious study of original material may have been severely compromised. Thus, the advent of technology may always not be for the betterment of society. It may even induce a shift from productive avocations and pastimes to less productive avocations and pastimes. This may impact a wide variety of domains such as linguistic skills, learning ability and consequently, even self-confidence or attitudes towards life.

However, the popularity of the internet has brought about several attendant benefits. For example, it may have led to greater access to knowledge, generated an interest in different fields of study, reduce the aspiration deficit among some social groups, and propel them to greater heights. It may not even be too far-fetched to claim that the rise of the internet has reduced tobacco and alcohol, not just by making them aware of the dangers associated with them but also by giving them a positive orientation in life. Last but not the least, it may have allowed more and more people to reap the benefits arising from the wide dissemination of knowledge and has destroyed social barriers. It has truly become a great social leveller.

This approach may also be used, with some degree of success in analysing and predicting personality types or making career decisions. Why aren't intellectuals worldly-wise? Why aren't worldly-wise people intellectually strong? This concept may also be analysed and assessed with what we call a "tipping point". In other words, after a person has spent or invested some time and effort on an activity, he may not deem it prudent to spend inordinate amounts of time on another activity. Why aren't bookworms, outdoors people? Why aren't sportsmen bookworms?

Thus, this approach may be examined from three dimensions. The first is self-driven re-orientation which does not involve any influence or action by third-parties. The second is re-orientation induced by third parties typically through some form of activism. The third is peer-driven re-orientation which may be a sub-conscious process. Peer-driven re-orientation is a more interesting and a more potent tool because it allows us induce strategic shifts through awareness creation. This will allow changes to spread through society horizontally, and through relatively minimal effort. At times peer-driven changes may be due to a 'follow the herd' mentality or a desire to 'keep up with the Jonases'.

Mindspace shifts may also be approached from another perspective. We would like to refer to the first type as horizontal, where shifts are brought about through peer-interaction and changes in society. The second type of classification is Generational where changes in Mindspace are analysed from generation to generation. The third type is a temporal shift where changes occur in an individual over a period in time. A fourth way of analysing mindspace is by segmenting society into different strata based on education, income level, socioeconomic parameters or any other suitable criteria, and then analysing changes in the composition of society. A combination of such methods can yield rich rewards.

Mindspace shifts may also be triggered by 'Eureka points' which we may refer to as unanticipated or unexpected shifts brought about through the occurrence of specific events. These can often bring about mind-altering or permanent changes in an individual.

This approach not only allows us to analyse the underlying causes of change but also to predict cultural shifts due to disruptive technologies or other changes with greater precision. It also allows us to prepare a cause and effects diagram with a great degree of precision by analysing all downstream effects of any decision. Consequently, it also allows us to make course corrections wherever they are required in the interests of society by taking proactive measures.

This approach also has several other potential uses. For example, the spread of Hindi in South India will lead to a situation where more and more people use Hindi instead of English. This will automatically reduce the time people have to practice spoken English, or the desire among people of some sections of South Indian society to practice spoken English. However, Hindi cannot replace English per the dynamics of language spread. Therefore, English cannot be rooted out from Indian soil, and the promotion of Hindi may have actually entrenched English even more. How can the seemingly contradictory observations above be used to model a shift in people's proficiency in English? It will indeed be no exaggeration to state that the concept of mindspace can even be used to model linguistic changes and the direction of evolution of a language in general. It can also be used to tweak pedagogical theories and approaches to create the eureka moment in learners and students. What approaches can induce a positive change in mindset? Are they personality development and attitude orientation courses alone? Will changes to syllabus in core subjects also help? In this era of near-universality of education, analysing and comparing different approaches to education can help arrive at optimal solutions. A host of other possibilities will readily suggest themselves upon more detailed examination, and we therefore strongly believe that the concept of mindspace is worth pursuing to its logical end.

14. Thrift and spending patterns

Household savings rates as a percentage of disposable income have varied widely from region to region. According to a recent study, they were high in the European Union but relatively lower in the USA.⁵¹ However, these fell marginally for both the European Union and the USA between 2008 and 2015. Such statistics would therefore, reflect not only the state of a particular economy, but also the spending and consumption patterns of such societies. Most middle class families in India and other countries also do not invest wisely or prudently due to the lack of knowledge or information. Rational individual savings and investment can also boost economic and consequently social growth. It can also enhance social security.

However, cultural differences make a major difference in determining spending patterns. Indians have tended to make long-term investments particularly in land and gold. Indians have also tended to bequeath their wealth to their children, and the idea of reverse mortgage, so popular in the USA, did not take root there.

15. Cultural pride and desire to see the society develop

⁵¹ Household saving rates - forecasts - Economics_ Key Tables from OECD - OECD iLibrary.html

According to sociologist C. Wright Mills (1959) sociological reasoning is the “Sociological imagination- the ability to see the relationship between individual experiences and the larger society. This awareness enables us to understand the link between our personal experiences and the social context in which they occur. The sociological imagination helps us distinguish between personal trouble and social or public issues.” (Kendall: 2007).

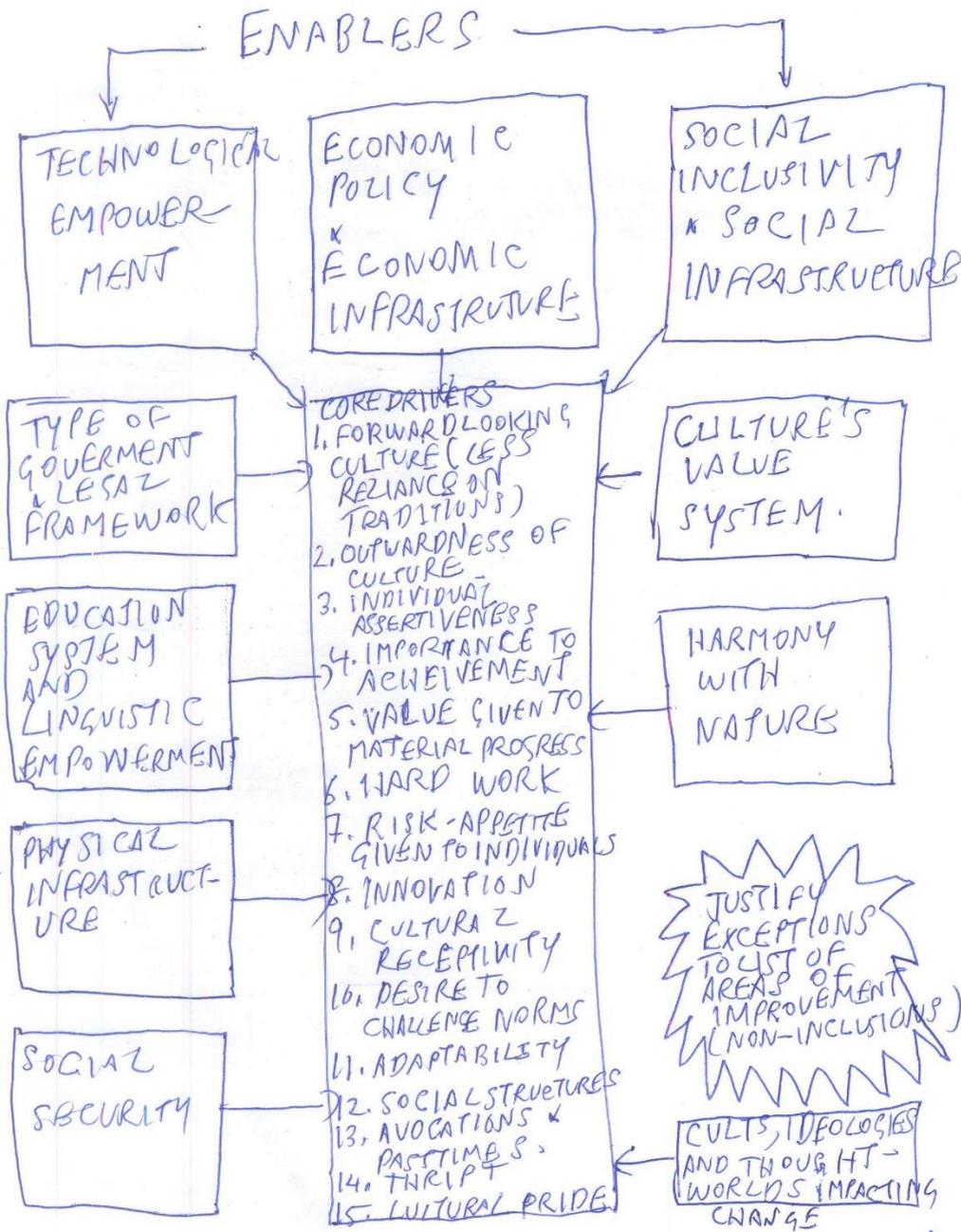
Mills (1959) also spoke about sociological imagination which is an awareness of the relationship between an individual and the wider society. This awareness allows people to understand the links between their immediate, personal social settings and the remote, impersonal social world that surrounds them and helps to shape them. This often allows an individual or a group of individuals to bring about social changes for the better.

A key role in this regards is usually played by intellectuals who understand the issues facing the society or different segments of society from multiple standpoints and promote greater awareness and seek remediation measures. Presence of internal change agents is what distinguishes mature societies from less mature ones, and some societies, unfortunately have shown very little tendency to change from within.

A level of cultural pride manifested in different may also be necessary for society to develop, and a deep-rooted sense of inferiority or xenocentrism may be antithetical to development or progress. India and other developing countries for example managed to overcome their inferiority complexes in the 1990's and developed a new-found sense of cultural pride and self-confidence. However, such cultural pride must be healthy and must not lead to ethnocentrism or a misplaced sense of confidence.

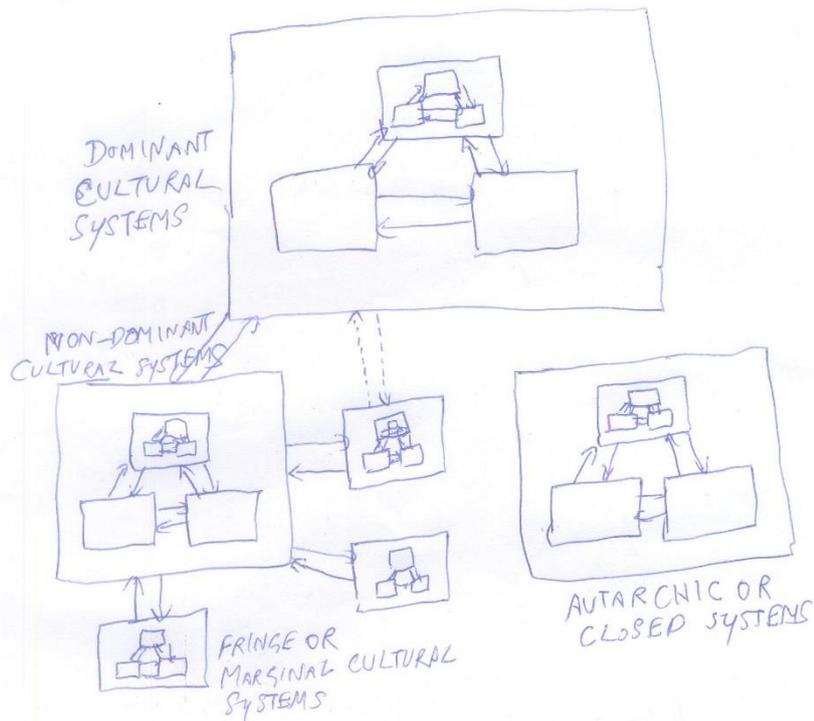
Cultural and region-specific approaches

Cultural and region-specific approaches are at the core of our strategy. What works for one culture and one region may not work for another. Thus, it is necessary that suitable strategies are chalked out taking into consideration cultural constraints and region-specific requirements. This is a critical part of our recommendations, and a necessary outcome of the eventual globalisation of science and scholarship. As a logical outcome of this exercise, this basic model will need to be extended or suitably modified to take into account unique requirements of different cultures and geographies, and further unique strategies envisioned. However, such an exercise may be beyond the capabilities of an individual scholar. This is why we vehemently and vociferously reiterate that the “Globalisation of Science”, an issue that we have already spoken about here and before, comes into the picture.



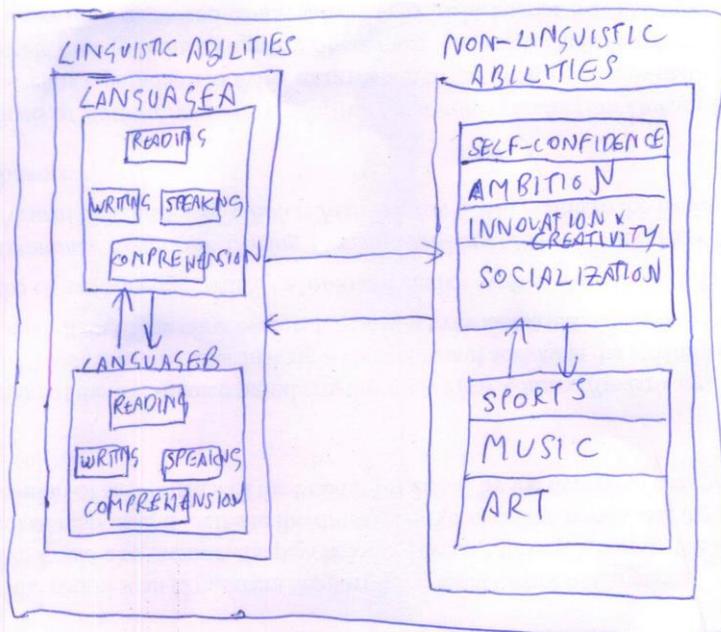
This diagram depicts the Enablers and the Core Drivers of Socio-cultural change.

The global socio-cultural landscape would be determined by the process of symbiosis depicted below (refer the paper for further details)



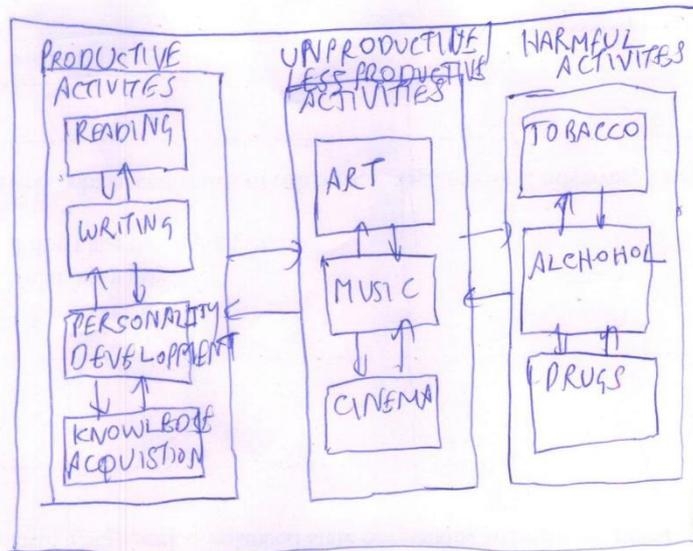
We propose categorizing cultural systems into four types viz (a) Dominant cultural systems (b) Non-Dominant cultural systems (c) Fringe or marginal cultural systems (d) Autarchic or closed cultural systems. Cultural systems may have several sub-systems, and sub-systems may have several sub-sub-systems. These may then have elements, attributes and their fruits. The success of any analysis would hinge on arriving at a fine and an optimal level of granularity. Changes can be either (a) internally-generated or externally-induced.

A visual depiction of the concept of Mindspace



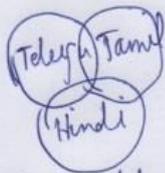
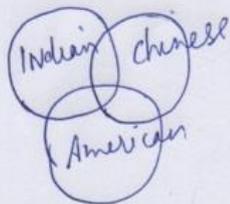
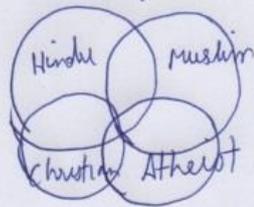
The above diagram aptly demonstrates how the concept of 'Mindspace' can be used to trace shifts in individual skills and abilities and trigger, short-term medium-term and long-term cultural change, often paradigm shifts. Changes can be induced through technological changes, social changes, education and other proactive measures.

A visual depiction of the concept of Mindspace from another perspective



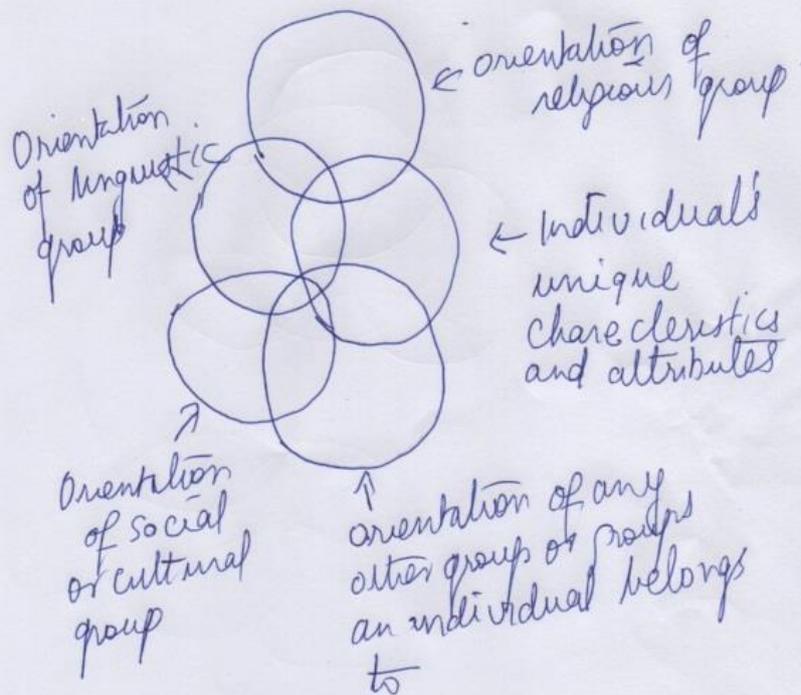
Here is another kind of analysis based on the concept of Mindspace! Here activities are very broadly classified into productive activities, unproductive or less productive activities and harmful activities. Paradigm shifts and cultural change can be brought through technological disruptions, social change or proactive measures.

Thought worlds of disparate
Religious groups, ethnic groups and
linguistic groups



The thought worlds of disparate
Religious, ethnic and linguistic
groups may be determined by
their mind orientation. This
exercise may even be carried
out for subcultures, but subcategories,
subclasses, components and attributes
may need to be identified first, then
qualities and characteristics. These
may then be represented suitably by
means of a Venn diagram, and shifts
tracked.

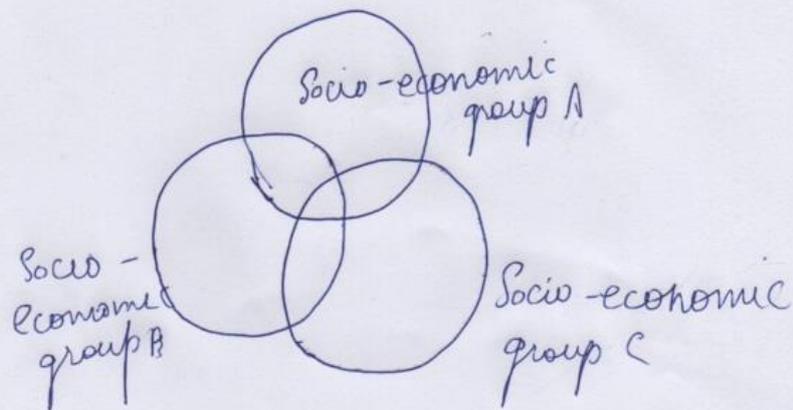
Note that these thought worlds would also be impacted by the global socio-cultural landscape



Thus, an individual's mind orientation is an amalgam of the orientation of the religious, linguistic, social or cultural group or any other group an individual belongs to, plus his own unique characteristics and attributes.

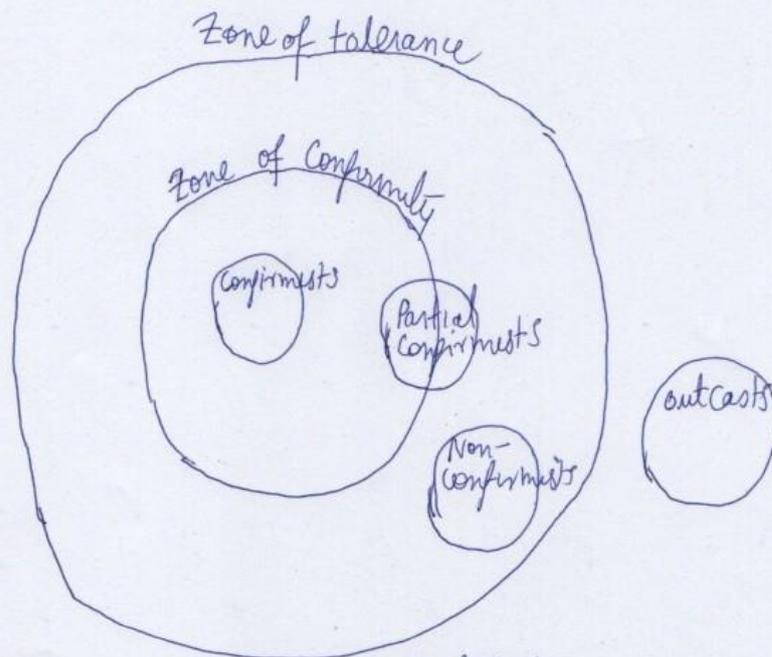
Note that their thought worlds and mind-orientation would also be impacted by the global socio-cultural landscape

Mind-orientation of socio-economic groups



An analysis of mind-orientation and thoughtworlds may also be done by socio-economic group. In such cases, socio-economic groups may be arrived at at sufficient level of granularity using a suitable set of criteria.

Individual versus a society's orientation



The theory of Mind-orientation:
 We define two zones here - the zone of conformity and the zone of tolerance. Based on this, individuals are classified either into conformists, non-conformists, partial conformists or outcasts. At the same time, societies values and mores also keep changing, often triggered by changes in values, and the mind-orientation of individuals. At times, societal values hold individuals back often. The relationship between the two is extremely interesting and worth exploring.

Note that this approach may be extended to cover religious and linguistic groups also