

KV/BKB

Respected Mrs. Bhattacharya, Dr. Dipankar Bhattacharya and friends present here,

I am deeply moved by the singular honour you have bestowed upon me to deliver the first ^{Dr. Birendra} ~~Dr. Birendra~~ Kumar Bhattacharya memorial lecture. Shri Biren^{dra} Kumar Bhattacharya was a rare person who combined in himself the dedication and zeal of a social reformer and activist who wished to reform society, and the imagination and sensitivity of a creative writer. The two qualities and others diffused into a single whole. If the situation of the Tangkhuls provoked him to go and live with them, his mind and pen was equally eager to contain the experience at its deepest in words. He was active in many domains. I recall my first meeting with him in 1956 in Allahabad at the Parimal conference organized by my late husband Shri S. H. Vatsyayan. I had occasion to watch this soft spoken sensitive writer at close quarters. He was different from K. S. Karanth who was also there, and many others. Our friendship deepened and enlarged in the following decades. He would often come to share his vision of the Sahitya Akademi as its dynamic chairman. I recall his delight and his surprise when he received the Jnanapith award. This is not the occasion for me to either reminisce or evaluate his remarkable contribution to Assamese literature as also to Indian literature. Much has been said on the subject by many people far more knowledgeable than I. I would like to restrict myself to paying my sincerest tribute to the memory of this sensitive human being and a towering presence in contemporary literature.

Amongst the many subjects that Shri Pradip Mohanta and I discussed we agreed upon the title "Interface of Culture and Development". 'Culture' today has at last been recognized, albeit reluctantly, as being of primary and fundamental importance at the level of international discourse. The reasons for this are not far to seek. The frequency and pervasiveness of conflict, on account of cultural identity or ethnicity and inflexible religious dogma, has increased at an unprecedented pace in practically all parts of the globe. The question that is being asked is – has something gone wrong with humanity? Or, is there a disjunction between culture of an individual or groups and people and the developmental goals and infrastructures of governance? Have we devalued the human in our mistaken belief that only the material, specially money, was important?

I thought it might be worthwhile and pertinent to place before you some thoughts on the nature of the perceptions on culture and development, definitions and descriptions.

From these generalisations, I have attempted to give a brief account of the history of development of world-views which were conditioned by theories of science and philosophy and economics. Thereafter I propose to place before you the special dynamics of interface of culture and development in the countries of the developing world. Finally, there is the question of the evolution of alternate models of development which may be more appropriate and viable for large parts of humanity.

So, at the very outset one has necessarily to begin with definitions, although not necessary. We all believe that we know what the word 'culture' denotes and yet there is no agreement on what it embodies, expresses and communicates. Equally problematic is the word 'development'.

First culture. It is an enigmatic term. It has been defined in many ways by anthropologists, policy makers and lay persons. It is often said that there are as many definitions of 'culture' as there are 'peoples' of the world. Nevertheless, it is possible to discern different levels of comprehension of the term and deduce some commonality amongst them all.

First and foremost is the etymology of the word 'culture' derived from its Latin root 'to cultivate'. In India the word 'Sanskriti' also connotes cultivation. It is derived from 'Krishi' – to cultivate the ground. With the advent of industrialization and the emergence (in the wake of the era of enlightenment) of the disciplines of archaeology and anthropology, 'culture' began to be distinguished from 'civilization'. While archaeology became the tool of the study of the progressive development of civilization through a study of the material remains, monuments, sculptures, artifacts, anthropology denoted the study of the patterns of living, material products and body of beliefs and particular people. The discipline itself made subtle distinctions between material and non-material culture. Naturally, it included the study of flora, fauna, as also fairs and festivals and all that we term as 'lifestyle'. The discipline further divided itself into physical, social and cultural anthropology. This simplistic statement of development of a discipline and its discourse is a necessary background for comprehending the implied tension between culture and development. We shall return to this later.

Culture was also considered at its finest and subtlest as the essence of a body of values experienced and articulated through diverse expressions, be it science, philosophy, literature, architecture and the other arts. Now no distinction was made between the past and present. It was also not an evaluative term denoting the 'other', the 'exotic'.

During the last few decades, the term 'culture' subsumes the anthropological definition, encompasses the arts and transcends to a more sophisticated notion of that 'intangible' creativity of the human which gives him and the human species a unique dignity for determining and shaping the quality of life, inner and outer. We return thus to the word 'value' and 'essence' as attributes recognizable experienced not necessarily clearly definable.

From the earliest times, in India it appears that there was a self-conscious awareness of this attribute of 'culture' in man and the need to cherish and nurture it assiduously at all times, both in moments of crisis and peace. Verbal intellectual formulations of the concept and its place in the life-pattern began early. Almost anticipating the modern definition of culture (which encompassed practically all human activity), the Indian seer conceived of culture as the sum total of the equipment of the human individual which enables him to be attuned to his immediate environment on the one hand and to the historical past on the other. The idea of continuity as also recognition of the need for a constant readiness for adaptation and assimilation was inherent. The concept of the 'still centre of being' manifested through a multiplicity of intellectual disciplines, artistic expressions and modes of behaviour, conduct and action was fundamental to such a view. Culture was the touchstone by which the very quality of life was judged and the yardstick by which its rhythm and pace were measured. Finally, it was a matter of 'ultimate value' by which the individual encountered himself and the society around. Little wonder then that in the hierarchy of 'values' it received a high priority second only to the highest, i.e. in the realm of the spirit. A cultivation of the 'self' was both for individual harmony, equanimity and tranquillity and for the ends of social and moral values. Only the disciplined, cultivated man, fully in control of his body, emotions and mind, and spirit, could hope to strive for spiritual salvation and be capable of facing the challenge of the life of action in his immediate spatial environment. It was believed that one could aspire and achieve a 'state of release', a beatitude here and now, and not in a birth hereafter; it was for the individual to will and work for it. The paths and vehicles for this cultivation of self were many; the idea of choice and freedom was essential, for one chose according to one's calling and potential. The words used in this context of the arts are significant, for they speak for the importance and value given to this sphere of human activity and the approach towards them. Words like *yoga*, a *yajna* (a ritualistic sacrifice), a *sadhana* (a concentrated activity of a selfless nature, requiring an objective negative capability on the part of the doer – the artist or craftsman) are

frequent in treatises of aesthetics dating back to the second century B.C. and legendary stories whose origins can be traced even earlier to pre-Vedic myths and symbols.

A reading of the texts of poetry, literature, ritual, philosophy and aesthetics, polity, sciences (such as astronomy and mathematics), technical disciplines (like medicine), and of recreation and entertainment ranging from archery and horse riding to swimming, leaves an overwhelming impression of an attitude to life which accepted 'beauty' at all levels and considered an integrated development of the human personality essential for a healthy society.

Perhaps it is necessary to draw attention to the fact that this path of culture and cultivation, with a full-throated ease and joy of living was distinct from the path of the 'ascetic' chosen by a significant few. While it is not possible in this lecture to trace the academic history of the lively debate on the manifold ways of the cultivation of the self and the history of the formulations on culture (more particularly the arts), or to recount the social history of the arts and artists in India, it is necessary to bear in mind that these approaches and attitudes have filtered down to the present generation to a varying degree and continue to have relevance. For the same reason, it would be pertinent to remember that while Indian democracy is young, the conceptual thinking of the people has links with a vigorous body of tradition with a long and complex history. Interdependence or interrelationship, while maintaining identifiable autonomy, is the central repetitive motif of this pattern of living and organisation. In culture, there was a self-conscious recognition of this principle which made it such an important stage of evolution of the inner man and an indispensable vehicle for creating an atmosphere of harmony and peace for the outer man.

The theoretical discussions and philosophic speculations on culture may have been meaningless, had the concepts not permeated into the being of the individual and the community, the artist and the audience alike, demanding of the second an equal effort for the shared experience to be complete. Further the world view embodied in these conceptions was not restricted to the intellectual few: it was known, recognised and shared by all strata of society, irrespective of economic, social or political status.

The main objectives of the 'cultivation of the self' and the need for 'continual communication' resulted in two distinct streams in the Indian cultural pattern. The first made it a strictly personal activity for individual evolution, and the second an essentially

participative activity. The streams flowed separately, but often co-mingled, deepened and enriched each other.

The forms which emerged and of which there is an abundance of literary, archaeological and sculptural evidence, speak of cultural development where successive waves of different civilizations and influences and even invasions acted only to enrich the fundamental tradition. Influences, borrowings, impressions, all fell into a distinct Indian pattern, adhering to some fundamentals, but having the capacity to assimilate, synthesize, to grow continually and evolve new patterns always, however, with an unmistakable Indian identity.

The word 'development' is equally loaded and complex. It also arose out of the nineteenth and twentieth century 'industrial', 'scientific', 'technological' situation where 'progress', linear progression along an unidimensional path of economic growth became key indicators for assessing the quality of life. The discourse is complex, but perhaps one has to identify the genesis of this, first, to the European Renaissance, then to Newtonian mechanistic science, Descartes' dualism of separating matter from spirit, Freud's splitting of the human psyche and the post-industrial revolutions, in a word the aftermath of mass production and generation of wealth material as a supreme value.

As a question and an answer arose Marxism. The world was divided into two economic systems of the first and second world with their political ideologies. Market economy and command economies were the yardsticks and measuring rods for all other peoples of the world. While the third world and the non-aligned countries voiced and do still voice their uniqueness and identity politically and socially, the world began to understand, by and large, the single mono-language of 'development' as economic growth GNP, GDP, in short again either economic measurable wealth or consumer capacity. With the measuring rod of economic man and the assessment and reduction of material wealth as 'money', industry and the rest, naturally the world was divided again into the Developed, Developing and the Under-developed World. Later, we have learnt to speak of the North and South. Tacitly, each of these terms implies the term of reference in relation to a measuring yardstick of the Western hemisphere and material growth of the economic Man.

Now two things are clear: one, that the attributes of development were largely industrialization, higher economic growth-rates and assessments of the quality of life by GNP and GDP. Culture became or appears to have been seen as an impediment, a

necessary hurdle to be crossed if economic well-being was to be achieved. Beliefs, individual lifestyles, small cohesive communities were at a discount, at the very moment of asserting the uniqueness of the 'individual' and his right to question and confront state or society. There was a dilemma.

At this point perhaps it is necessary to elucidate on the history of *ideas* before addressing the situation in the last decade. Let us briefly address ourselves to the recent history of ideas in the North, more specifically the west from where arose a view of life, a world view which determined and motivated the great successes and abysmal failures of modern civilization. Without going further back into history, we may identify only three fields and exponents who provided the fundamental ground for building the impressive and massive super structure of all that we understand by modern civilization. First and foremost, as I said, the European Renaissance and its aftermath. Then Charles Darwin expounded the theory of Evolution of Man which placed Man in the centre of the universe in a hierarchical superior fittest position in relation to all other forms of life, inorganic and organic. Second, Rene Descartes separated matter from spirit and laid the foundations of a dualistic thinking. Third, Sir Isaac Newton propounded a theory which viewed the universe in a deterministic mechanical manner. To these three may be added Sigmund Freud who fragmented the human being into psychological units each in conflict with one another. The socio-economic social ramifications of these notions of evolution, dualism, mechanistic science and fragmentation of the human psyche are too well known and need no elaboration.

It is against the background of these philosophic positions of a world-view that one must assess or re-assess the great expansion of colonialism and the emergence of rationalism as creed in the era of enlightenment, the nature of the industrial revolution and its aftermath and rise of the economic political philosophies of dialectical materialism.

At the historical level, a civilization built on the principles of the domination of Man, the avowed commitment only to material development, dualism and reason and confrontation and conflict, logically had to wage wars. These had an economic as also political rationale, however fundamental was the tacit acceptance of the world-view outlined above.

While this was one scenario, there was another in the countries of the South, most of whom, if not all, were under colonial rule and political subjugation. While all the philosophic, scientific, economic and technological messages arrived from the North,

they were accepted or superimposed on a totally different world-view and philosophic principles. Whatever the diversity, the divergence and difference these civilizations and cultures had developed, flowered on the basic and fundamental notion and affirmation of the principles of inter-relatedness and interdependence complementarity. Man was one form of life amongst countless others. Matter and spirit were interchangeable and time did not move in an arrow straight line of linear motion. Its movement was cyclic and there were spirals. The human psyche was a whole comprising body, mind and spirit. These may be considered over-simplification of the two world-views and the philosophic scientific underpinnings. Nevertheless, it is necessary to identify these differences, glossing over them has resulted in some confusion and lack of comprehension of the deep-rooted differences.

As is well known, countries of the South were and are the homes of most great civilizations and practically all religious systems - the Egyptian, Chinese, African, Mayan and Indian, only to name a few. Colonial rule, political subjugation or dominance brought in its wake many consequences. Not the least amongst these was economic impoverishment of monumental proportions, large populations and the installation of institutional frameworks of governance, from education and administration, legal and political systems which were ill-suited to the ethos of the world-view embedded in these civilizations. This history is well known and has been eloquently described and analyzed. However, the consequences of these historical developments continue to be apparent in all countries of the South in varying degrees.

The aftermath of Second World War no doubt brought about political freedom and the end of colonial rule but the legacy of the philosophy and the infrastructure of institutional frameworks was hardly ever rejected. Indeed most countries continued, by habit or volition, necessity or compulsion, the left-behind baggage of organizing society and governance of the erstwhile rulers. Resultantly within each country or nation state there was the co-existence of an empowered few who subscribed to the world view of the evolutionary dualistic mechanist world view speaking another language of thought and action, and the many disempowered, economically deprived, socially neglected, but culturally rich, who continue to live their lives in comparative inarticulation by the cosmo-centric (and not anthropocentric) holistic world-view of their age-old civilizations and cultures. The situation is evident in South America, as in Africa, South East Asia, South Asia and elsewhere. This was so in the fifties and is so to a large extent even today.

A radical or certainly perceptible change took place in the seventies and culminating in the eighties. Development and affluence had not brought about 'peace' to humanity. Disparities between the rich and poor had increased. Vast areas of the planet had been depleted; there were wars and riots, tolerance was absent and the arsenal of nuclear weapons was piling up. So, development to what purpose and for whom?

Despite all international conferences, forums, political and economic initiatives, there was lack of communication. The more the world shrank into a global village, the more the 'local', regional, racial, linguistic identities surfaced up in all parts of the world, not only in the so-called 'developing' and 'under-developed' world. The causes were certainly not only 'poverty' and exploitation. There were deeper, far deeper questions of the place of Man in the Universe and the Human Predicament of his contemporary condition.

Once again we have to identify some if not all reasons for this change or modification of attitudes. These changes also had antecedents in earlier decades. Let's go back to the North, or the West, and once again to the fields of science, biology and technology and their effective role in changing perceptions. Although Einstein's theory of relativity and space-time continuum may not seem to have immediate socio-cultural political implications, it is clear that gradually a deterministic, mechanistic world-view was being modified. There was mental space to consider continuums and relative positions. Time was no longer only linear. It had other movements and including cyclicity and reoccurrence. Linear progression was thus not the only principle of organizing phenomenon. Alongside was the question of absolute certitudes of phenomena, the uncertainty principle, relation of the observer and observed and finally the recognition of open, self-organizing systems. Equally forceful was the recognition of bio-diversity and interdependence of all forms of life from the smallest to the biggest. 'Gaia' the name and notion affirmed the primacy of this our earth, mother earth in all its multitudinous variety, diversity without domination, and subordination. More disturbing and frightening was the real and immanent danger of the collapse of the earth and its systems if the fragile eco-systems and balances were not maintained. It was no longer the case of Darwin's survival of the fittest, instead it was now the case of most humble being crucial in sustaining an ever changing and yet continuous flux of life. The last and most fundamental was the recognition by science and 'consciousness', that intangible and yet discernible faculty, which gave meaning to life.

So, thus, while Man was exploring outer-space and literally reaching the moon he was actually conscious of his place in the universe as one amongst many. Diversity and inter-dependence were the key words. The extension of the principle of bio-diversity to human diversity and recognition of differentiation with respect was the logical result.

Equally important and humbling was the recognition that the purely deterministic dualistic science and philosophy and the commitment to linear progress or development had not brought either economic equality or socio-cultural peace and harmony. It was also clear that no part of the world could live in isolation. If the North had to survive it needed the South, if the South had to be economically less impoverished it needed the North. Also, it was patently clear that all of humanity had to be active participants in single wide and diverse network of inter-relationships and mutual dependence if life on earth was to survive.

Question began to be asked; a welcome question at the very forums where 'culture' was either an 'ideologically' loaded term, thus a threat, or a term for the small cohesive communities of the erstwhile colonies to be given condescending protection. There was a hesitant acceptance that Culture and creativity was not the icing of the cake or the bundle of deadwood; it was the salt and sugar of life which made it relishable, meaningful, each and every moment. It was the pulsating *prana*, indefinable yet experienceable, and indispensable. Its loss could only cause death or destruction.

It is at this stage of the seemingly long detour that the precious and yet fragile world-view or world views of the countries of the South, Meso American, African, Asia become important, relevant and meaningful in this post modern world of new science, philosophies, ecological awareness and models of governance. Equally important is advisability to re-articulate the holistic world-view.

The world as we will recognize is not only at cross roads, it is instead maker and observer of a series of paradoxes. The first is that although there is an intellectual consciousness of the environmental crisis and the imminent and real ecological imbalance, there is an equal pull and compulsion to exploit natural resources to a point of disaster. While there is a cry for sustainable development based on principle of equity and balance, in fact there is an imbalance in distribution and utilization by one-fourth of humanity of 80 per cent of the natural resources and especially energy.

Second, while there is an affirmation of cultural diversity in direct relation to bio-diversity, there is equal pressure and momentum of transforming the whole world into one uniform homogenized culture without differentiation. Thirdly, while there is recognition that a single model of development based only on the measure of economic development is neither valid nor sustainable, there is a compulsive pull to bring all of humanity into irresistible cauldron of the consumer culture. And fourthly, while Man has recognized through repeated experiences that the indefinable yet discernible role of consciousness and spirit is of real abiding value, it is continually denying the existence of the non-material and spirit in shaping the material and existential condition of the human. Fifthly, while in intellectual discourse there is the acceptance of the local, distinctive, the small and self-reliant, there is avalanche of pulverizing out of existence all fragile dialects, languages, groups and communities in one monolithic mindless machinery of mono-models and invasion through a one-way information order. And, finally, while harmony, tolerance and peace are the articulated goals, in actuality Man breaks this peace through an assertion of intolerance of the others' point of view. There is impatience with non-violence and rejection of diverse paths to arrive at truth.

It is against this consciousness of the need to reorient world-views and attitudes that UNESCO took an initiative to institute a World Commission on Culture and Development. UNDP came out with its Human Development Profiles and many leaders and policy-makers recognized the need to give attention to this crucial inherent conflict or 'nexus' or symbiosis between 'culture' and 'development'. They were the twin birds on the same tree. One could not live without the other. In abject poverty and deprivation there could be no creativity; in a mechanized de-humanized impersonal developed world there could be no culture. And if the creative unique potential of the human was not given fertile ground, development would be sterile.

Logically, understandably and almost naturally the report on the World Commission on Culture and Development is entitled 'our cultural diversity'. Diversity with a universal integral vision is the key to not only understanding but also evolving plural models for a design of living for diverse groups of humanity, specially those in the South.

The recognition was not enough. Policies had to be evolved and programmes worked out. This tantamounted to redefining both development and 'progress' as also 'culture' not as a static entity of some hoary past irrelevant for contemporary needs and aspirations or entertainment, but the constant 'heart beat' and 'pulse' of the human individual and 'collective' which made him live.

As we view the situation today, it is necessary to discern the interface of culture and development on many levels and at many dimensions. Also, neither is a 'static' entity which can be juxtaposed with the other in any mechanical equation. Also, neither is 'product', even if it is fashionable to speak of cultural 'products' and development targets. Each is a 'process' and their interaction is a complex process where constant movement and 'dynamism' is indispensable. First to take the various dimensions and what we may term as interfaces of 'culture' with other domains. We can identify a few. Each has a further interface with development. Let me make an attempt to list some:-

- i. Ecological balances, culture and development.
- ii. Societal structures, cultural identities and development.
- iii. Religion and religious institutions, cultural modes and politics and development.
- iv. Racial, linguistic identities and cultural cohesiveness and nation state;
- v. Closely related to the fourth is plural cultures and mono-culture political states and development;
- vi. Cultural plurality and economic systems; how they effect and affect development. Other more specific are the interface of:
- vii. Culture and formal education system;
- viii. Culture and the arts;
- ix. Culture and science;
- x. Culture and spirituality; and
- xi. Culture and politics – national/international.

From amongst these several types of interfaces none insulated let us focus on the value of investigating the life-style of small cohesive communities we chose to call tribes or aborigines in all parts of the South but not excluding the North, e.g., Hopis, Zums and others. In the nineteenth century discourse in anthropology they were termed as primitive people or aborigines. They represented an early stage of human development and were considered to be vestiges of an archaic past, fit for microscopic study or romantic accounts of adventurers or subjects of reform with people of missionary zeal. Today both from within the cultures and outside they and their world-view based on the principles of Man in Nature and not Man against Nature, man, vegetable, animal relationship, Man, Earth, Sky relationship, through a totally different perspective has acquired and should acquire a new significance. Their cosmologies embedded in their mythical world was a model of the symbioses of the symbolic and actual. Function

form and significance are in a continuum. Their world was not and is not divided into the mundane and the sacred, the utilitarian and the ideational, work and leisure. It was and continues to be a whole where each part is related to life function and is yet imbued with deep significance. Thus there is no dichotomy between the manual and the cerebral, the intellectual, emotive and the spiritual. This totally integrated lifestyle inspired great creativity which found expression individually or collectively in all that is recognized as the great artistic traditions of bamboo, wood, textiles, metal and much else. This is evident from the artistic excellence of Yorubas to the Benins, to the tribes of Borneo, Papua New Guinea to the Maoris of New Zealand to others in Sri Lanka, Thailand, India, Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and those in the Northern countries such as Hopis, Eskimos and others. Cultural policies or development policies must recognize these groups as givers and not receivers in the shaping of future human development. The international reports of UN and UNESCO refer to their rich and diverse heritage of oral traditions, dialects, languages, lifestyles, artistic expressions. Countries of the South here, by and large with notable exceptions, have themselves looked upon this group of humanity as groups of people requiring protection and only patronage. At best the products of their creativity have been de-contextualized from the ambience of their daily life and world-view and shown in Museums or sold for export value. A great modification of policies is called for if these precious human repositories, individually and collectively, have to be given dignity and recognition on their own terms and within a context. Development experts may and can learn many lessons of sustainable development, recycling and no-waste culture from these communities. And yet they are marginalized from the rigid school system, the development schemes. They are uprooted from their environment in the mad rush for progress. What is required is to empower these communities both in economic as also social-status terms. The great reservoir of their oral knowledge and understanding of natural phenomenon, bio-diversity has to be systematically conserved and nurtured.

Now, while all this is easy to identify and recognize, in actual implementation there are insurmountable problems. As has been stated earlier, most countries of the South have accepted or adopted models of governance and regulating societies which are alien or derived. Over the course of recent history, these cohesive communities have themselves come to subscribe to the view that unless they enter and submerge in whatever is considered the mainstream of homogenized culture they are likely to be considered under-developed and unprogressive. And yet local distinctive identity, known by its other name of ethnicity, keeps surfacing up. A re-adjustment and redressal is then called for both from within and without.

Finally, after having briefly touched upon only one interface and not the others, if one were to reverse our formulation and say Development for the full creative and cultural flowering of the human being, individually and collectively, in his/her own distinctive ways through a plurality of paths, structures, the situation would change dramatically. Then the ability for creative innovation; happiness, joy, contentment, peace would be the criterion for assessing human development along with basic health, nutrition, water and food, not consumer power and product, or political dominance. A plurality of models would be acceptable and growth will not be GNP and GDP. But can humanity reach that utopia of a change of value system and therefore a new economic order, social system, global covenant on mutual respect for differentiation? Gandhiji offered a blueprint. Neither India nor anyone else accepted it then. Now many people all over the world are beginning to see the relevance of his worldview, environmental, economic, social and educational models. Alternate paradigms are being evolved where culture and development will be in symbiosis and not in tension and conflict.

Although these issues have been discussed in the report of the World Commission on Culture and Development, we have to identify practical experiments. We have to return to Gandhiji who offered a model of alternate modernity. Mahatma Gandhi had propounded a model of micro-development, based on the principles of eco-balances, self-reliance, self-sufficiency, manual and cerebral skills, non-violence and ethical values of restraint and search for truth. He had spoken of another type of equity without arbitrary equality. He had also advocated self-organizing systems of village communities. His emphasis on village agricultural industries and a system of education where function life knowledge would be integrated, has acquired new relevance and meaning. It is heartening to find that experiments of living in a total holistic way with self sufficiency and reliance of village communities have been carried out in many parts of the world. The work of A. T. Ariyaratne in Sri Lanka in *Sarvodaya* movement is one such example of the efficacy of an alternate model of development based on Gandhian principles.

The *Sarvodaya* movement in Sri Lanka claims to offer an alternative development model which is rooted in Sri Lankan culture. Its origin can be traced to Mahatma Gandhi's thought on *Swarajya* or local-self-government and his philosophy of a non-violent social transformation. He had advocated a new social order ensuring independence, self-reliance and self-realization by following the non-materialistic, spiritual path of the non-violence, sharing, caring and a search for truth. Ariyaratne

identified important socio-economic principles in the Buddhist heritage of Sri Lanka, to evolve a development model which was more suited to the ethos of Sri Lanka.

This model rejects the capitalist model of development which encourages individuals competition, consumerism and affluence as also the communist model of command economies and state imposed institutional socio-economic structures. In contrast, the *Sarvodaya* model of development is ideally and essentially the process of empowering and reawakening individual families, rural communities and urban groups to live a life with sharing, co-existence and self-reliance and recognition of interdependence. T. A. Ariyaratne outlined his philosophy in the following terms:

"Society is composed of individuals, families, village communities, urban groups, national populations and humanity as a whole. We are all living on one planet and are commonly subjected to the limitations imposed by non-renewable resources, ecological balances, climatic and temperature changes, environmental factors, psychological and social dependencies, physical survival, existence, and the awakening of every one of us is dependent on all other living and non-living entities of our planet. For the sake of building a practical programme we formulated the *Sarvodaya* Goal of the awakening of all in terms of six objectives, which are: *Purna Paurusodaya* or 'Personality Awakening'; *Kutumbodaya* or 'Family Awakening'; *Gramodaya* or 'Village Community Awakening'; *Nagarodaya* or 'Urban Community Awakening'; *Desodaya* or 'National Community Awakening'; *Vishvodaya* or 'World Community Awakening'.

Today the movement's goal is to cover 23,000 villages in which 90 per cent of Sri Lanka's population lives. It has succeeded in poverty eradication, and empowerment of the poor in many thousand villages developing Rural Technical Services involving elders, women, generating income and a number of other creative and innovative programmes. Today the impact of this programme can be felt outside Sri Lanka.

Another experiment of considerable importance is that of Ms. Oka in Bali in the field of education. She has also followed Gandhian principles of relating work and education, function, skills and knowledge. She has employed endogenous skills and the sensitivity of the Balinese to create a new viable model of education. Here education is no longer a tool of alienation from the immediate environment. It is instead an instrumentality of attuning one's creatively with the immediate environment. Elsewhere in Indonesia

experiments have been carried on to profitably incorporate the creative ability of the indigenous people to attain the goals of regulating population. One such is the pervasive use of the puppet form Wayang Kulit for family planning. Its success has been widely claimed.

The great task before many countries of the South, especially Indonesia, Sri Lanka and India, is to sustain the multi-lingual, multi-racial, multi-ethnic fabric of these nations. This is no easy task against the unbridled messages of carried and processed information through mass media. The mass media and the new information highways are a double or triple edged sword. While they bring the world together and messages from one part are carried to another instantly, they also have the capacity to destroy creativity, distinctiveness, ability for participation, not to speak of inculcating the cult of aggression and violence. There are countless cases of the increase in violence and disruption of peace on account of the unrestrained dissemination of a negative mass culture. The answer is once again in harnessing this technology and the tools of mass media for local empowerment. Participation, feedbacks, closed circuits, broadcasts and TV must replace the one-way of flow of information and entertainment on account of the economies of control of this media. Cultural policies have to be reoriented to take into account both the power positive and negative of mass media and information technology. The area is complex and full of hazards but it is crucial for ensuring a balance between the global and the local.

I hope I have been able to place before you some complexities of the interface of Culture and Development.

Kapila Vatsyayan