CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: CONTEXTUALISING THE POLITICS OF EDUCATION

School is an important agency in the social institution namely, education. The role of schools in a child's life/growth and development of personality and formation of worldview, etc., is very significant. Though, the family initiates the process of education for a child, it is the school, which gives it a direction and a clear shape. As the family has got its limits, schooling, as a follow up stage, takes over the responsibility of moulding of a child.

Time and again, sociologists and educationists have been engaged in the enquiry of the reasons for the existence of school as an agency, the purpose it serves, the difference it makes in one's life, its relationship with the larger social order etc. At this juncture, as the Indian society is undergoing a drastic change in many spheres, the social expectations from the schools are also increasing. Of course, the debates, whether, schools should play the role of transforming the society or should it play the role of maintaining the social stability and reinforcing the existing status quo, are still continuing. For some, the school is a miniature society, which provides the social environment for nurturing of social stability and moral order. Whereas, for others, it is a battle ground, where diverse political ideologies could be inculcated through education. Some regard education as the states Ideological Apparatus or tool of hegemony.

At this juncture, it is important for us to point out the relevance and the significance of the study of school education and the ideology of nationalism in post-independence India. This study acquires relevance, as it attempts to trace the linkages between two modern phenomena-school education and nationalism-which emerged during the colonial era and had continued to acquire more importance in course of time. The post-independence Indian state deliberately used the interrelationships of these two phenomena effectively in order to impose its political agenda which had deeper social implications.
In the last five and a half decades after independence, the country has witnessed a number of political developments vis-a-vis, change of regimes between the major political groups having conflicting ideologies both at the central and at the state level, resistances/reactions/responses from the minor/marginalized groups etc. Those different groups have used school education in inculcating their ideals of nationalism and nation-building in children. Soon after independence, the Congress Government led by the first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, insisted upon Secular nationalism, whereas, later, we have witnessed the emergence and growth of Cultural nationalism, based on Hindu religious identity. Hence, the study of inter-relations between school education and the ideology of nationalism is very important from the point of view of sociology of education.

Situating the Study

The Indian society has a long history, which had undergone transformation at various levels. However, the social transformation that has taken place in India in the last couple of centuries is significant. The colonial rule systematically undermined the erstwhile existing education. As Prof. Krishna Kumar points out, contesting domains of educational systems emerged during the colonial era. In his book, "Political Agenda of Education: Study of Colonialist and Nationalist Ideas." Krishna Kumar analyses the colonialist and the nationalist's ideas which emerged as two major domains of educational system in the colonial era. He also brings out how other minor domains have shaped the socio-political developments, along with the struggle for the country's independence.

Krishna Kumar brings out the sociological implications of colonial education and its impacts on the educated Indians. He begins with the refutation of the prevalent belief that the colonial education's sole goal was to produce clerks to serve the British in their administration. He argues that its impact was much deeper which had a penetrating effect. He points out, how for an educated Indian, a colonial citizen became an ideal role model and a reference point. This, believes, Kumar, is a far-reaching consequence of the

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colonial education. There was an adult-child relationship at the heart of the colonial enterprise.

The encounter between the culture and civilisation which was led by colonial education created a hierarchy among them. Such hierarchy was a result of the colonialists' attitude of looking at the non-west, with the self proclaimed superiority. The western scholarship believed that the projects of Rationality and Enlightenment, which emerged in the west in the 18th century, made them much more superior over their non-west counterparts. In other words, for an educated Indian, the West remained a permanent presence. It is in this context that we would quote Martin Carnoy who wrote:

'Even today it is very difficult for Indians to break this pattern. They feel much closer bonds with British professors than with Hindu peasants, to whom they are unable even to speak.'

This was reflected in their educational project in India. The British policy makers who drafted the plan for the pedagogy, curriculum and the knowledge system, ignored the erstwhile existing indigenous educational systems in India. As Kumar states, 'the rejection of indigenous knowledge was the central issue in the development of colonial education. The utilitarian and evangelic writings portrayed the indigenous people as degraded people who were in need of reforms.'

Another important point which Krishna Kumar brings out for debate is the deeper impact which the colonial education created among the educated Indians. They began to look at the uneducated masses with the same attitude which the colonial masters were exhibiting. It created a large gap between the Indian people who were already divided on various grounds. As the colonial masters believed, all that was indigenous to the natives were wrong and the causes for all the problems among the natives was their lack of education, the educated Indians also started believing them as truth. The superstitions, socio-economic disparity, poverty, and all other problems among the natives were attributed to the lack of education among them.

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3 Krishna Kumar: 1991, p. 37
The British rulers wanted to create a civil society, which would enable their commercial enterprise. The use of rationality and science and technology were aimed at nullifying the indigenous knowledge system. A striking point, that Krishna Kumar makes, is that, the enlightened Indians felt that they had a new birth altogether and their self-perception underwent a tremendous transformation. They became the targets for the British goods which the colonial rulers achieved through their educational system. Thus, the civil society which the British rulers wanted to create in India was predominantly commercial-oriented.

Interestingly, the colonial education also in a way was responsible for the germination of the Nationalist movement and its growth in India. Kumar points out certain progresses and dissents that arose due to the colonial education. He talks about three such progresses. The struggle for freedom involved search for three major questions. Firstly, the search for Justice: This resulted in the demand or rights to educational opportunity for the downtrodden/oppressed/marginalised castes. This resulted in the mobilisation of such people by their respective leaders for equal opportunities in terms of education and employment. This was more successful in the western and the southern provinces of the country. They believed that education would liberate them from the domination of upper castes and would be an agency to bring about a radical change in the social order.

Secondly, the emergence of movement for self identity: this movement was aimed at cultural revivalism which denounced the colonial education as an alien project. Those belonged to this movement believed that they would set a new agenda of education against the colonial education and fight its cultural imperialism. They used the religious identity as an agenda of education. This cultural revivalism was a big success in the Hindi-speaking parts of the country. Here Kumar points out the politics of language, which created a huge gap between the Hindi and non-Hindi, speaking people. While the Macaulian education system and its immense elitism created an inequality among masses the extremely reactionary possibilities of the self-identity further worsened the situation.
Thirdly, there emerged a possibility, a call given by Gandhi and Tagore, which was neither colonial system of education, nor the brahminical model of education. Thus, the colonial India witnessed different domains of education.

However, the post-independent situation is different. In his significant work, "Social Implications of Schooling, Knowledge, Pedagogy and Conscience", Avijit Pathak outlines how the Post-independent Indian state visualised its educational agenda, and how in the process of nation-making, divergent and conflicting educational perspectives have emerged. He examines the sociology of school knowledge and points out how certain ideas acquire more legitimacy than others. His analysis of the NCERT and the Ekalavya texts brings out the difference in the understanding and knowledge of India with its cultural and civilisational contradictions and complexities.\footnote{Avijit Pathak: Social Implications of Schooling Knowledge, Pedagogy and Consciousness, New Delhi: Rainbow Publishers. 2002} Pathak also points out how the discontentment with the dominant/mainstream pattern of school education has resulted in a new quest--the search for alternative models of educational system.

**Ideologies of Nation Building**

Before entering into the debates on the notion of nationalism, it would be important for us to discuss what we mean by the term 'ideology'. The term 'ideology' refers to the body of ideas reflecting the social needs and aspirations of an individual, group, class or a culture. It refers to a set of doctrines and beliefs that form the basis of a political economy and other systems. It also refers to a set of ideas which present only a partial view of reality. An ideological viewpoint also includes values. It involves not only a judgement about the way things are but also the way things ought to be. Thus ideology is a set of beliefs and values which provides a way of seeing and interpreting the world which results in a partial view of reality.

The term ideology is often used to suggest a distortion, a false picture of reality. However there is considerable doubt whether reality and ideology are separated. As Nigel Harris suggests, 'our reality is the next man's ideology and vice versa.'
The word Ideology was first used in French as *iddologie* during the time of the French Revolution, when it was introduced by the French philosopher, A.L.C. Destutt de Tracy. He used the term as a short name for what he called his 'science of ideas', which he claimed to have adapted from the epistemology of the philosophers John Locke and Bonnot de Condillac, for whom all human knowledge was knowledge of ideas. The fact is, however, that he owed rather more to the English philosopher Francis Bacon, whom he revered no less than did the earlier French philosophers of the Enlightenment. It was Bacon who had proclaimed that the destiny of science was not only to enlarge man's knowledge but also to "improve the life of men on earth," and it was this same union of the programmative with the intellectual that distinguished Destutt de Tracy's *iddologie* from those theories, systems, or philosophies that were essentially explanatory. The science of ideas was a science with a mission; it aimed at serving men, even saving them, by ridding their minds of prejudice and preparing them for the sovereignty of reason.

While de Tracy envisaged the possibility of extending the science to the social and political realm, most of his contributions were with the analysis of intellectual faculties, forms of experience and as logic and grammar. Destutt de Tracy and his fellow iddologues devised a system of national education that they believed would transform France into a rational and scientific society. Their teaching combined a fervent belief in individual liberty with an elaborate program of state planning, and for a short time under the Directory (1795-99) it became the official doctrine of the French Republic. Napoleon at first supported Destutt de Tracy and his friends, but he soon turned against them, and in December 1812 he even went so far as to attribute blame for France's military defeats to the influence of the iddologues, of whom he spoke with scorn.

Although the word ideology in the sense derived from Destutt de Tracy's understanding has passed into modern usage, it is important to notice the particular sense that ideology is given in Hegelian and Marxist philosophy, where it is used in a pejorative way.
Ideology then becomes a word for what these philosophers also call "false consciousness". G.W.F. Hegel argued that people were instruments of history; they enacted roles that were assigned to them by forces they did not understand; the meaning of history was hidden from them. Only the philosopher could expect to understand things as they were. This Hegelian enterprise of interpreting reality and reconciling the world to itself was condemned by certain critics as an attempt to provide an ideology of the status quo, in that if individuals were indeed mere ciphers whose actions were determined by external forces, then there was little point in trying to change or improve political and other circumstances.  

This is a criticism Karl Marx took up, and an argument he developed in The German Ideology and other earlier writings. Ideology in this sense is a set of beliefs with which people deceive themselves; it is theory that expresses what they are led to think, as opposed to that which is true; it is false consciousness. Marx, however, was not consistent in his use of the word ideology, for he did not always use the term pejoratively, and some of his references to it clearly imply the possibility of an ideology being true.

Twentieth-century Marxists, who have frequently discarded the pejorative sense of ideology altogether, have been content to speak of Marxism as being itself an ideology. In certain Communist countries "ideological institutes" have been established, and party philosophers are commonly spoken of as party ideologists. Marxism is an excellent example, a paradigm, of an ideology.

Karl Mannheim states that ideology consists of the beliefs and values of a ruling group which 'obscures the real condition of society both to itself and thereby tabilizes it.' Mannheim, distinguishes this form of ideology what he calls 'utopian ideology'. Rather than supporting the status quo, the way things are, utopian ideologies advocate a

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7 Ibid., pp.31-32
8 Ibid., p.33
9 Ibid., p.34
complete change in structure of society. He argues that such ideologies are usually found in oppressed groups whose members want radical change.\(^\text{10}\)

Mannheim suggests, utopian ideologies are based on a vision of a society, a perfect social system. He refers to them as images' for a future social order. Like the ideologies of ruling groups, he argues that utopian ideologies are a way of seeing the world which vents true insight and obscures reality.\(^\text{11}\)

Michael Apple believes that ideology is not imposed from above but produced in the classroom and the factory and sometimes rejected there as well. In Ideology and Curriculum, Apple's main concern is with the curriculum and the nature of knowledge in schools. He identifies and confronts complex questions about the hidden curriculum and cultural reproduction. The first major questions raised by Apple in this work are: what is Ideology, and what is the role of schooling in its transmission?\(^\text{12}\)

Apple's concept of Ideology is roughly that of Marx—false consciousness—"our basic perspectives often hide our 'real' relationships...".\(^\text{13}\) He quotes the dictum of Marx, from The German Ideology, that "the ruling class will give its ideas the form of universality and represent them as the only universally valid ones" and sees it as "one major starting point... in any attempt to explicate the relationships that exist among knowledge, ideology, and power".\(^\text{14}\) Like the Frankfurt School, Apple seeks to unmask and reveal the ideology latent in social structures.

An ideology, therefore, is a form of social or political philosophy in which both practical and theoretical elements are equally prominent. It is a system of ideas that aspires both to explain the world and to change it. In this regard, we would discuss 'nationalism,' a major socio-political philosophy, as an ideology in this work.


\(^{11}\) Ibid.,


\(^{13}\) Ibid., p. 129

\(^{14}\) Ibid., p. 155
The sociologists of the 19th century and the early 20th century did not show much attention in the study of Nationalism. Marx and Durkheim considered nationalism as a destructive element and the increasing economic integration produced by the modern industry would cause its rapid decline. However, Weber spent much time in analyzing nationalism. But, even Weber might not have estimated the importance that nationalism and the idea of nation would gain in the twentieth century. Today, at the beginning of the 21st century, nationalism is not only alive, but, also flourishing in many parts of the world. Although, the world has become increasingly interdependent in the last four or five decades, this interdependence has not caused an end to nationalism.

Nationalism became a special subject of research and investigation around the middle of the twentieth century. Eminent scholars and thinkers have attempted to study and solve the problems concerning nationalism—such as, what constitutes a nation?, under what socio-historical conditions did nations come into existence?, what role does nationalism play in human progress? And what is its relationship with inter-nationalism or the urge of men to integrate on a world scale is? etc. They have tried to study the various expressions of nationalism in diverse dimensions, such as, social, economic, political and cultural dimensions. Some of them have also investigated the history of the rise and development of nationalism in different countries and have attempted to lay bare the genetic causes of the rise and growth in each individual country. Hence, literatures have emerged on nationalism which represents an attempt to unveil complex and multifold process of the formation of the nations, their traits, struggles and modes of expression and assertion.

There are disagreements among the social scientists regarding the stages of history, at which Nationalism, Nation and Nation-state have emerged. Certain socio-historical conditions—both objective and subjective have enabled the formation of these phenomena.

at different point of evolutionary stage in different countries. E. H. Carr remarks, "Nations", in the modern sense of the world, did not emerge until the close of the middle ages. One of the leading thinkers of nationalism, Ernest Gellner, argues that nationalism, nation and the nation-state are products of modern civilisation which originated as a result of the industrial revolution of the late 18th century. According to him, nationalism and the feelings and sentiments associated with it do not have deep roots in human nature. These are the products of the large-scale societies created by the industrialism. He points out that the idea of nation and nationalism are unknown to the traditional societies.

He is of the view that there are several features of modern societies which are responsible for the emergence of these phenomena. First, a modern industrial society is associated with rapid economic development and a complex division of labour. He argues that a modern industrialism creates the need for a much more effective system of state and government in order to safeguard the economic interests of the country. Secondly, in the modern societies, as the degree of interaction for an individual gets expanded from a local village/town level to a larger territory, the need for a government with an expanded horizon is felt necessary. Moreover, mass education based on an official language taught in the schools is the main means whereby a large-scale society could be organised and be unified.

Critics say that Gellner's theory is a functionalist argument which emphasizes the role of education producing and maintaining social unity. It tends to undermine the divisions that exist in a society. Gellner's theory does not explain the passions that nationalism can arouse. The power of nationalism is not related to education alone, but to its capacity to create an identity to people. The need for identity is certainly not just born with the emergence of modern industrial society. Therefore, Gellner's separation of nationalism and the nation sharply from the pre-modern times has been strongly criticised. Nationalism, though is a modern phenomenon, it also draws on sentiments and forms of symbolism from the past.

According to one of the best known current scholars of nationalism, Anthony Smith, nations tend to have direct lines of continuity with earlier ethnic communities. He calls them ethnies.” An Ethnie is a group that shares ideas of common ancestry, a common cultural identity and a link with a specific homeland. Smith points out that many nations do have pre-modern continuities, and at previous periods of history there have been ethnic communities that resemble nations.

Thus there is a disagreement among scholars regarding the conceptualisation, function and contents of the notions nation, nationalism and nation building. As Oommen remarks today the nation is viewed as the totality of the people of the same religion, race and language, although there is no consensus on the specificity of the attributes.

He suggests that we should think of the nation as totality comprising of those who consider the nation as their homeland irrespective of their background. Such homeland may be either ancestral or adopted. However he argues that neither religion nor race is relevant to nation formation or minimum condition for a nation to emerge and exists. However the common homeland and common language for communication among individual members is necessary.

E.H. Carr remarks, the term Nation has been used to denote a human group with the following characteristics:

A. The idea of a common government whether as a reality or in the present or past or as an aspiration of future.
B. A certain size and closeness of contact between all is members,
C. A more or less defined territory.
D. Certain characteristics (of which the most frequent is language) clearly distinguishing the nation from other nations and non-national groups.

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21 Quoted in A.R.Desai 1998
E. A certain interests common to individual members;
F. A certain degree of common feelings or will associated with the picture of the nation in the minds of the individual members

However, the emergence of nationalism and nation-state in most of the developing countries of the third world had been different from those of the industrial societies. Most of these countries had been colonised by any one of the European countries and they attained independence in the second half of the twentieth century, starting from the end of the World War II. The colonial powers had undermined the existing economic, cultural and ethnic divisions among the peoples in the subject countries. They subjugated the kingdoms and tribal groupings that existed on the African subcontinent, in India and other parts of Asia and setup their own colonial administrations. As a consequence, each colony remained as a collection of Peoples and old states, or the fragments of these, brought together within the same boundaries. Most colonised areas, therefore, contained the mosaic of ethnies and other groups.

When the erstwhile colonies achieved independence, they often found it difficult to create a sense of nationhood and national belonging. Although nationalism played a major role in securing independence of the colonised areas, it was largely confined to small groups of activists. Nationalist ideas did not influence the majority of the population. Even today, many such countries are continually threatened by internal rivalries and competing claims for political authority.

The concept of nationalism in India is a modern phenomenon. As Desai points out that it emerged during the British period, ‘as a result of the action and interaction of numerous subjective and objective forces and factors which developed within the Indian society under the conditions of the British rule and the impact of world forces.’ He also remarks that the process of the growth of Indian nationalism has been complex and many-sided. He cites a number of reasons. Firstly, the pre-British Indian society had a social structure which had a unparallel history, an economic base that sharply differed from any other medieval, pre-capitalist societies. India was a vast country inhabited by a huge
population, speaking different languages, professing diverse religions and following a system of stratification based on a hierarchical order namely, the caste system. There was no homogeneity even within any single social category. For instance, the Hindus, who constituted the majority among the Indian population, (two third of the undivided Indian population) were not a homogenous group. Being a conglomeration of a number of religious cults, they were divided into a number of sects. Moreover, each caste group was divided into various sub-castes. This extremely socio-religious division of the Hindus in particular, and the Indians in general, presented a peculiar background to the growth of nationalism in India. No other country had such peculiarly powerful traditions and institutions. He writes:

"India's peculiar social, economic and political structure and religious history together with its territorial vastness and a teeming population makes the study of the rise and growth of Indian nationalism more difficult, more interesting and useful."\(^22\)

Another striking feature of Indian nationalism is that it emerged under the condition of political subjugation of the Indians by the British. The British rule initiated some of the basic changes in the social structure of Indian society, though to subserve its own interests. It radically changed the economic system and generated new currents, inaugurated a new principle of political rule, established a different criteria of sovereignty, different norms for governance and administrative bureaucratic setup. It created a centralised state. It also introduced modern education and modern means of transport and communications. It gave a fatal blow to a millennium-old feudal framework of power matrix, and in a way, provided a basis for transition. Desai points out that the British rule, though for its own interests, unconsciously introduced a qualitative structural transformation in the Indian society. He writes,

"This resulted in the growth of new social classes and the unleashing of new social forces which were unique in themselves. These social forces had conflicts with the British imperialism and became the basis of and provided the motive power for the rise and development of Indian nationalism."\(^23\)

Thus, Indian nationalism has grown and developed in a complex and peculiar social background.

\(^{22}\) Ibid, pp.4-5.  
\(^{23}\) Ibid,p.6
Nationalist Agenda after Independence

Once India attained independence, from the colonial regime, the Congress party tried to promote a definition of Indian nationality that was based on a composite nature of culture. As Christophe Jaefrelot points out it was evident in the writings of Jawaharlal Nehru, "for whom the secular genius of India rested in its capacity to assimilate exogenous elements." 24

This led him to say, that Indians were "an odd mixture of many races", a proposition however, not acceptable to the Hindu nationalists. For Nehru, the Hindu Maha Sabha and the RSS embodied Hindu communalism which undermined the national unity of India. His nationalism embodied the territorial and universalist version of nationalism. Like Ram Mohan and others of those reform movements, Nehru too wanted reason and science and relied heavily upon the west to create a new agenda for the future. He had a vision that India must overcome the obstacles which had traditionally hindered its progress. With a future-oriented worldview, he disliked the glorification of the past. 25

Nehru's philosophy of modernity includes the salient features such as national unity, parliamentary democracy, industrialism, socialism, scientific temper and secularism. 26

Nehru's emphasis upon secularism as a legitimate norm of political system in the post-independence India's national agenda was significant. Although he was not against spiritualism, he was extremely critical of the ideological and institutional functions of religion. He was of the view that India must modernise itself because it is a historical necessity and secularism was perceived as a path for modernisation. Pathak points out that Nehru initiated a new agenda which fascinated many modern intellectuals. He states, 'in the Nehruvian vision they found an opportunity to make their presence felt, utilise their knowledge and come closer to the centre of power.' 27

26 Bhikhu Parekh, "Nehru and National Philosophy of India", in Economic and Political Weekly, (January, 5-12, 1991) Quoted in Pathak, Indian Modernity, op. cit, p. 60.
27 Pathak, Indian Modernity op. cit, pp. 64-65.
Nehru, writes Pathak, ‘took care of intelligentsia, created many centres of learning-national science laboratories, institutions of technology, universities and research centres.’ He gave them an agenda to build a new nation with modernisation and industrialisation coupled with the promotion of scientific temper in order to catch up with the west. In fact, it was easier for the modern intellectuals to identify with Nehru due as Pathak puts it, to ‘his English education, his strikingly modern outlook and his secular-humanism.’

However, the Nehruvian agenda of nationalism and nation-building is being challenged by the Cultural-nationalist agenda put forward by the Hindu reactionary forces. The cultural nationalism is also regarded as the Hindu nationalism due to its ideological inclinations towards the Hindu philosophy. According to Jaefrelot the Hindu nationalism as an ideology was constructed between the 1870s and 1920s. It derives its origin from the socio-religious movements initiated by some high caste Hindus such as the Arya Samaj. This organisation was founded in 1875, emerged mainly as a reactionary movement against the British colonial state and the Christian missions. Its primary concerns were to maintain the basic elements of the traditional social order and the culture of the Hindus. The tension between cultural preservation and modernisation was solved through the invention of a distant Golden Age which was both indigenous and in accord with modern values. This idea became one of the corner stones of Hindu nationalism. However, in the 1920s some Hindu ideologues felt threatened by the mobilisation of the Muslims in the Khilafat movement.

The writings of some leading ideologues such as V.D. Savarkar, M.S. Golwalker, etc, enabled the crystallisation of the doctrines of Hindu nationalism in the 1920s. Savarkar was instrumental in bringing about a qualitative leap in the Hindu nationalism’s emergence and growth. His work, ‘Hindutva: Who is a Hindu”, first published at Nagpur in 1923, was the basic text for the nationalist ‘Hinduness’.

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28 Ibid 65
29 Ibid
30 Jaefrelot, op. cit, p11.
31 Ibid, p25
This work perfectly illustrates the mechanisms of Hindu nationalist identity-building through the ‘stigmatisation and emulation of threatening others.’ Similarly, Golwalkar, emphasised upon the idea that the Muslims were a threat to the interests of the Hindus and instigated the politics of hate among the Hindu nationalists. Both of them used the issue of the foreign origin of the Muslims, which opens up the debates on ‘insider/outsider’. The theoretical writings of these ideologues are being inculcated in the minds of those organisations who claim to create a cultural nationalism by homogenising the pluralistic nature of the Indian society.

They criticised the Nehruvian agenda of secular nationalism and believed in cultural tradition as more important than the secular or scientific temper. They seek to rewrite the Indian history and they do not want to forget the glorious Hindu tradition.

The Nehruvian agenda of nationalism faced yet another challenge that emerged from the writings of historians who were primarily concerned about the subalterns approach. ‘The adherence of this approach would argue’, writes Pathak, ‘that the Nehruvian project is a clear case of ‘bourgeois/nationalist’ elitism. What is, therefore, needed is the rescue of the reading of Indian history from the dominance of this elitism.’ Its chief proponent, Ranajit Guha,\(^{32}\) speaks of the poverty of the ‘bourgeois/nationalist’ historiography for it does not give any space to the autonomous domain of the politics of the people. According to Guha, the Bourgeois/nationalist history either does not acknowledge or take into account the contributions made by the subaltern masses to the development of the nationalist ideologies.

As Pathak reminds us, although the subaltern historiography is concerned about the colonial era, its implications are prevalent in these days when the voices of difference are being undermined by the advocates of the cultural nationalism.\(^{19}\) The subaltern awakening can be seen in the assertion of the Dalits and other marginalised sections of

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India. As they overcome their silence and regain their agency, they criticise the 'elitist/paternalistic' character of the nationalist project. This criticality of the subalterns has posed challenge to the dominant ideologies of nationalism and nation building in India.

Soon after independence, the country's educational policies were framed with the following views:

Firstly, the building of Nation-State was given the foremost priority. Education was used as a mode of creating the sentiment of national integration and a common Identity i.e. 'Indianness'. Secondly, as the country had been released from the grip of colonialism for more than one and a half centuries, the process of decolonisation was given importance. Thirdly, secular rationality, modern science and technology, urbanisation and industrialisation were considered to be the 'development-oriented' methods to be followed.

As the educational policies and the curriculum were framed with these views, it is to be noted that the nationalist education had undermined sentiments and feelings of certain community peoples namely, the tribal and the lower-caste and the rural masses. The nationalist education also homogenised the Indian society culturally and politically. These aspects gave way for the rise of different voices of dissents among various sections.

This thesis would consist of three substantial chapters following this introductory chapter. In chapter 2 we would discuss the theoretical orientations to the concepts namely, school education and nationalism. As far as the discussions on the school education is concerned, there are different views that have emerged in sociology of education. We have focussed upon four major schools of thought that is, functionalist approach, Marxian approach, critical theories on education and alternative views on education in which there emerged imancipatory thoughts. Having analaysed these four approaches we have also included the educational thoughts that have emerged in India. When we discuss about the
notion of nationalism, we have focussed upon the meaning, emergence and historical context of nationalism at large, and emergence of nationalistic thoughts in India in particular. As mentioned earlier there are two dominant ideologies of nationalism in India, that is secular nationalism and cultural nationalism, which discussed in the subsequent chapters.

The chapter 3 deals with secular nationalism in post-independence India and its impact on school education. Once the country attained independence, the political leadership, having faced the brunt of partition and its traumatic effects, decided to follow secularism in the process of nation building. In this regard we have focussed upon Jawaharlal Nehru, who is considered to be the father of Indian secularism, and under whose leadership the vision for India as a new nation emerged.

This chapter also deals with the new education system that was envisaged by Nehru for the post-independence India through which secular nationalism was to be inculcated. We have focussed upon the educational policies emerged in the post-independence India with this effect. We have taken up the analysis of history text books for the classes VI, VII, and VIII prepared by the Government of India.

Chapter 4 discusses the cultural nationalism, which emerged as a reaction to the secular nationalism in post-independence Indian scenario. With a historical approach, we have discussed the emergence of cultural nationalism through the writings of Savarkar and Golwalkar. Here the main focus is upon the Bharatiya Janata Party which projected itself a nationalist party. In fact it is under the BJP-led coalition government that (1998 – 2004) the country witnessed the inculcation of cultural nationalism based upon the Hindu religious ideals. However it resulted in sharp reactions from various sections of the society especially from the secular academicians. We have focussed upon the debates that emerged in this regard.

Finally the concluding chapter would focus upon the reactions and responses that have emerged from the marginalised sections of the Indian society towards the two dominant
ideologies of nationalism. Here, the two focal points are of the dalits and tribal communities. This chapter also takes up certain critical questions such as whether the State has succeeded in its goal of inculcating nationalism through school education, is there a possibilities of a ‘neutral education’ which does not have any indoctrination, if so, what would be the role of civil society in general and any individual in particular.

**Methodology**

This study is based on a macro-level, conceptual and reflexive study. It relies primarily upon the content analysis of the NCERT textbooks of history, documents and records of the educational policies, reports of various educational commissions and committees, early researches conducted on school education and ideology of nationalism etc. However, secondary data would be accrued through the articles from newspapers/magazines on related issues.

This thesis, needless to add, is not based on what is generally known as ‘field work’. But then, as a theoretico-historical analysis, it seeks to explore important sociological issues relating to school education and the politics of nationalism. In this sense it is endowed with major methodological challenges--how to read, interpret, analyse and contextualise the texts for study. As far the history textbooks are concerned, a special focus has been made upon the class VI, VII and VIII NCERT textbooks. The textbooks which came into being after the establishment of the NCERT, the texts which are generally known as ‘secular’ texts. Although at the time of writing this thesis, new changes are taking place in the NCERT, particularly, the new ‘child-centric’ texts written under the leadership of Krishna Kumar as the director of NCERT, I have not concentrated on those changes. Moreover, the history/social science textbooks produced by Vidya Bharati and other RSS affiliated organisations for the schools such as Saraswati Shishu Mandir are being examined. These texts often being seen as ‘vehicles’ of cultural nationalism.

Our school education heavily depends upon text books. Although new advanced technologies have entered in the arena of education, the dependency on text books has
not come down. Krishna Kumar regards text books as 'mediators' between the teachers and the students.

In Social Character of Learning, he brings out the intrinsic meaning that the question 'what does the text book mean to a learner.' According to him, it is not the number of pages stitched together between the covers, or the print arranged on each page that matters. He argues that "The purely physical and graphic aspects of the textbook do not tell us much about its educational function." He writes:

"In order to make sense of the 'text' contained in it, we would have to deal with the words that make up each lesson, though we will not be looking at the words in the way a linguist might. Words concern us in terms of the units of meaning they form, the images they convey, and the worlds they evoke."  

Kumar, in this work has used the methodology of Content Analysis to deal with words and their meanings in a systematic manner. Content analysis originated in the need for mutual surveillance that powerful nations perceived during and after the Second World War. As Kumar points out that the warring nations not only used the Surveillance on each other's preparation for war, but also on each other's ethos and mind. Therefore, need to study the media in reliable ways arose along with countless little technologies of production, storage, and reflection out of the circumstances associated with the last major war.

Content analysis is essentially a means to probe propaganda. It is hardly fortuitous that it found among its users a large number of educational researchers who wanted to probe educational texts. Education in modern times, Kumar argues, 'is not quite separable from the media that promote ideologies, opinions and consumer products. As a state apparatus, education is in fact a prime agency of propaganda although its instrumentality is more complicated than that of state-owned media or advertising. The complication arises

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33 Krishna Kumar, Social Character of Learning; New Delhi: Sage Publications. 1989, p. 14  
34 Ibid., p. 14
mainly out of the respect and popularity that certain educational concepts enjoy. One such concept is that of teaching as a process of arousing the learner's interest and curiosity. Such concepts continue to inspire some of the people professionally involved in education, and such individuals disrupt the use of education as straightforward propaganda.

Kumar also points out that there are limits to such disturbance. 'Idealistic predilections do not inspire all professionals of education, and those whom they inspire may not be in positions to hamper seriously the use of education as a tool of propaganda. With the emergence of the modern state, with its instruments of self-analysis and remediation fairly refined, the use of education for propaganda has entered into a more mature stage. Corrective procedures are working all the time to minimise the clues that indicate the propagandist nature of education.'

Content analysis has played a particularly important role in this regard, and it is hard to say with certainty whether it has helped more by way of analysing and thereby demystifying educational texts or by way of creating the possibility of increasingly refined texts.

Kumar writes:
In the school context, these norms are further enhanced by the 'fixed' nature of the syllabus, and by the popular notion that the textbook is the de facto syllabus. Textbooks are not just recommended in the Indian system; they are 'prescribed'. The prescribed textbook is the only resource available in most classrooms since children are required to purchase it themselves. Moreover, assessment of students by means of a test or the annual examination is based on their mastery over the content of the textbook.
According to Kumar, curriculum is not just a logical packaging of facts, but rather, a reorganisation of available knowledge from a certain perspective. What kinds of knowledge become available at schools for distribution has to do with the overall classification of knowledge and power in society. Schools equip individuals with knowledge and skills that are appropriate for the tasks generated by the economy and supported by politics and culture. Schools are able to supply such individuals with the help of appropriate reconstruction of knowledge.

Kumar raises the following issues:

Do texts influence us directly, in the sense that they 'tell' or 'suggest' to us which values, attitudes, and courses of action might be better for us? Or do they influence us by creating an ethos in which certain behaviours and values acquire popular appeal?

At this juncture, it is also important for us to point out why the history textbooks have been chosen for our analysis. More than any other subject, history plays a major role in inculcating the ideology of nationalism at the school level. For instance, Berghahn and Schissler write:

'Since the rise of the modern nation-state and the introduction of universal education, history in school has been geared to the teaching of the national past and to generating an identification with it. As nationalism spread and developed, this also came to mean that a sense of separateness would be instilled vis-a-vis the outside world and other nations which had a different culture, language and historical experience.' Hence, History became an important subject to inculcate the process of socialisation in schools.

Berghahn and Schissler have examined how and why the teaching of history and the use of textbooks has been related to issues of ideology and politics in the Western countries. They have also looked at the systems of textbook selection in the three countries, namely, Britain, West Germany and the United States. They observe that 'divergent practices exist with regard to the adoption of texts. The English pattern may hardly be called a system,'
whereas the operations adopted by the Americans and West Germans are in many ways similar.' They also note that, 'however decentralised it may be, the English system has come under considerable pressure for central direction in the late 1970s and early 80s. Federalism in the other two countries tends to militate against standardisation.' Due to the influence of politics and ideology, the United States, West Germany and Britain have experienced a counter-movement to the tide of social and economic history that swept through them after the Second World War. This countermovement has revived the importance of national political history and values, and with it has revived the problems from which this type of history has suffered in the past.42

School-books offer an excellent starting-point for studying the functions of stereotypes and prejudices within the difficult field of how people develop their identity and delineate themselves from others. The false images which nations have of their neighbours have strong impact upon international relations. However, school history books also contain a self-image which may be no less stereotyped than the perceptions of other countries. This self-image may be extracted directly, but it may also be discovered behind the images and the portrayal of others.43

History in schools—the way it is taught and presented in texts—has, of course, been a field of scholarly investigation among educationalists and historians for a long time. As Berghahn and Schissler write:

'Scores of history books have been examined both from the point of view of content and of didactic presentation. However, not much work has been done in this field on an international level. A few conferences have been organised to discuss how far educationalists may be able to learn something from the didactic principles adopted by their colleagues across the border. Even more inadequate is our knowledge of how textbooks portray the history of other countries and how they deal with international politics and economics.'

There are two dimensions to international research of this latter kind. Firstly, there would appear to be an advantage in foreign scholars looking at the way history texts treat specific issues of a particular country's national past. They may be able to perceive biases

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42 Ibid., p. 14
43 Ibid., p. 15
and gaps which elude the indigenous historian educated in a particular national tradition of looking at the past. Secondly it may be worthwhile to enquire into a country's perceptions, not of itself, but of the outside world as reflected in indigenous history texts.\textsuperscript{44}

In his remarkable book, Prejudice and Pride, Krishna Kumar compares Indian and Pakistani textbooks on their narrative of the freedom struggle, and finds both lacking in important ways. In projecting the freedom struggle as a secular progression, rudely interrupted by partition, and by focusing mainly on political events and personalities, the earlier NCERT textbook on modern India, Kumar argues, did not enable children to understand the processes and sociological factors that led to communalisation and partition. Nor do they get a sense of why a secular Constitution meant so much for India’s leaders.\textsuperscript{45}

Though India and Pakistan have a common past, the story of the freedom struggle is recounted in their school textbooks in vastly differing ways. In this, the first book of its kind, Krishna Kumar explains how the history texts of both countries selectively narrate incidents or refrain from doing so for various ideological and cultural reasons.

Interestingly, in an early work, Krishna Kumar observes:

The idea that every child must be made broadly familiar with the entire history of the Indian nation as a whole is almost certainly related to the charge that the state has of nation-building. This is a charge universally accepted by modern states, but in the nation-states born as a result of prolonged struggles against colonial masters, this charge is taken more seriously and vigorously than in others. In the post-colonial nation-states, the teaching of history has been perceived as a valuable instrument of continuing the nation-building exercise that the struggle for freedom from colonial control had initiated. In the relatively older nation-states, such as many of the European countries, the situation is somewhat different. There, although history has its place in the school curriculum, it does

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., p. 15
not take the form of a continuous story spanning thousands of years in chronological order. Children in their elementary grades do study specific topics relating to life in the ancient or medieval worlds, but they study these topics as isolated projects, attempting to construct what essentially is an alien past. Later, when the past is presented in chronological order, it is prioritized, in the sense that only the post-Renaissance past appears relevant to the present; the earlier past is presented even now as mainly an object of curiosity.46

Here we would like to note one incident—an informal discussion we had with a history professor of JNU. He raised a question that 'does teaching history in the school, in any way create an impression in the minds of the students? His contention was that teaching of the ideals of nation-building, secularism etc, will not have any impact on the students' worldview.

However, our focus in this thesis is not to probe the impact of such issues that came from his questions. We are primarily looking at how the state used the school-education as a means of inculcating the ideology of Nationalism in the students. Whether it achieved its goal or not, and to what extent, etc, remains for the civil society to judge.

46 Krishna Kumar, Learning From Conflict, New Delhi: Orient Longmann. 1996. pp. 25-26