CHAPTER-6
A CRITICAL PRESENTATION OF CASE STUDIES

Along with questionnaire method, we have also used the case study technique to explore the problem whether modernisation leads to the disappearance of ethnic consciousness or not. Our data from the questionnaire method have revealed that even the so-called modern persons are conscious of their ethnic identity. They express it whenever the situation demands it. We have found on all the questions except two (as already stated) that the mean score is more than two which means that there is a more predominant disposition towards thinking along ethnic lines. The mean score of 347 persons (calculated on the basis of total points secured divided by the number of questions) is more than 2 which is clearly reflective of ethnic consciousness. It would be interesting to see whether the same would be reflected in the specific case studies we will be taking up.

As stated in the chapter on the methodological discussion, the chief merit of the case study technique is that it would enable us to gain access to the innermost feelings and ideas which are otherwise difficult to obtain. Further, it would also enable us to raise new questions depending upon how the respondents react. It thus provides considerable amount of flexibility in terms of asking innovative questions and getting interesting answers. Through their personal experiences, one can gain valuable insights about how they view their ethnic identity if all they do so. An apparently most
modern person could come out with the most ethnic feelings depending upon the context. One can also find out the individual reasons for that, as given by the respondent himself.

We have taken up nine(9) case studies. These are drawn from those who mean score is more than 2 on the modernity scale. As mentioned 537 out of 920 respondents have emerged whose mean score is more than 2, indicating that they think along modern lines. We are essentially concerned only with these people as we are trying to understand whether these people also think ethnic lines. Our case studies are therefore drawn only from these respondents.

These case studies have been taken mostly with the help of some network. Care has been taken to ensure that these people come from different age and socio-economic backgrounds to gain a more coherent picture. Considerable amount of effort was made to gain access to these people who come from different age and socio-economic backgrounds and subsequently make them agree to talk about their experiences and personal lives. But what the researcher found was that it was truly an exciting enterprise to be able to extract some valuable insights which tell us whether they (despite being modern) also think along ethnic lines.

We would now present case studies and after every case study, we would attempt a brief interpretation of it.
The Case of a Principal

One illustrative case study is that of Principal of a local college. He migrated from Vijayawada (A.P.) to Bangalore in 1970 and has been staying since then. He began to work as a school teacher and subsequently became a college lecturer and the Principal of the college.

I first met him in his office and told him about the purpose of my visit to Bangalore. He looked quite curious about my topic and raised a few questions about my qualifications, the place where I am staying etc. It seemed as if he had been waiting for somebody to come to Bangalore and study the status of Telugu living there. He told me that he would like to have an extended discussion with me, which was not possible in the college, and asked me to come to his house which is near the college.

I gradually initiated the discussion about himself and his job. He said he always loved teaching and it was his dream as child to become a teacher and hand a can in his hand. It was after he became a little older that he realised that what an important profession teaching is. In his view other jobs are just jobs and teaching is something which is more than a job. As far as the job is concerned, he likes it and in fact would also like his son who is in a college to become a teacher, though the ultimate decision will have to be taken by him.

I wanted to given some insights about his thinking about various issues (which would enable us to regard him as a modern person or not).
He showed keen interest in what is happening around him and is very supportive of movements by women, environmental groups and Dalits. However he felt that the main issue of oppression is getting sidelined and these groups are being used as vote-banks. He believed that the continued exploitation of these identities for political purposes should be avoided. Instead concrete steps such as economic empowerment should be undertaken to ameliorate their condition. He showed immense faith in the power of science and technology to solve problems confronting the country. He even drew a comparative picture of Nehru's and Gandhi's thoughts and felt the former are more in tune with the needs and requirements of the country, though his respect for Gandhi continues unabated. He believed that with the help of science, men will be able to understand and solve most of the problem confronting mankind.

Then our discussion shifted to the political situation in the country. Though he was greatly dissatisfied with political trends obtaining in the country such as criminalisation of polity, growing bankruptcy of ideology, increasing corruption, he felt that the democratic type of governance is the best type of government because, with all its shortcomings, it constantly provokes people's participation. As far as the economic development is concerned, he felt that there has to be good planning and hard work on the part of the people. Otherwise the country will not be able to develop economically.
I felt that it was the time to bring his attention to the issue of ethnicity among Telgus. He said that Telugu was given a lot of importance in the past. He quoted Gandhi as saying that Kolar (in Karnataka itself) and Bangalore are Telugu-speaking areas. He expressed lament over the fact that even the number of children speaking Telugu at home has come down. Children are increasingly becoming shy of speaking in Telugu. If this trend continued, then it would be a matter of time before Telugu would become extinct as a language.

When N.T. Rama Rao became Chief Minister of A.P. there was some hope that something would be done for the Telugu language and Telugus because he constantly harped on the Telugu Pride. But unfortunately he did nothing.

He was not at all happy about the political and economic position of Telugus and regretted that Telugus were not doing anything collectively to do something about it.

Narrating his own experiences, when he was a school teacher, he faced different kinds of discrimination from his college and school days. He would be given more classes. Words would be carried to the head-master about him as a result of which the headmaster was always suspicious of him. When he moved to the college, he thought the situation would be better. It was not much different in the college. In fact serious attempts were made to
prevent him from becoming the Principal. But they could not stop him as he was the senior most Lecturer.

At this point of time he was called by one of his friends and our discussion was interrupted. I, however, could manage to get him agree to one more discussion the following day. The next day I met him and we continued the discussion from where we left.

He continued from he left. He said though he put only 2 years as the Principal of the college, he realised that teachers and even peons were not showing as much respect as they were showing to the previous Principal. The reason as he could gather was that he was an outsider in their view though he spent the best of his years in Bangalore.

When I asked him who he would vote in case a Telugu candidate was contesting in the election, he said that he would definitely vote for a Telugu candidate as that would strengthen the hands of Telugus. In fact he himself tried to persuade some people to contest in elections. But he did not succeed. Asked why he did not contest, he said since he was a govt. employee, he could not do so. Otherwise he would have been quite happy to contest in an election.

He felt that Telugu associations could play a useful role in promoting political awareness among Telugus since they have a wide network. But unfortunately they are not doing so. Moreover, Telugu associations could
organise much more activities than they were presently organising. This would promote interaction among Telugus and strengthen their unity.

In his view we could also look to these associations and other networks to seek economic assistance in case of any need and they in fact should come forward and act a pressure group on the govt. to obtain economic benefits.

He strongly supported the idea of Telugu schools because only they would focus on the promotion of Telugu schools. Asked about this, he said that the present situation demanded that one acquire proficiency in English to be able to compete well in the job market.

He also expressed concern over the increasing incidence of marriage between Telugus and Kannadigas. If this continued Telugu identity would be gradually erased. As he put it “this would lead to slow disappearance of Telugu identity”. Recently he had a serious problem in the family. His son fell in love with a Kanndiga girl and wanted to marry her. His son threatened to leave the house if his parents did not allow him to marry her. However, as he proudly said, he could persuade him to drop the idea. The fact that girl's parents were also opposed to the marriage greatly helped him. He said that he would support the publication of any magazine which dealt with the activities and achievements of Telugus and Telugu associations as that would provide a sense of appreciation of what other Telugus are doing.
Finally he expressed the hope that my work on Telugus in Bangalore would lead to the promotion of awareness about their condition and unity among them.

The above case is interesting in the sense that he happens to be the Principal of a “modern educational institution” which is expected to inculcate the value of rationalism and scientific temper. He himself exhibited attitudes which can be called modern. Some of his ideas on reservation, the operation of the political system in the country etc. are illustrative of a modern bent of mind. For example, he strongly supports the democratic type of governance which is an important component of political modernisation. His respect for Nehru who was an outstanding modern, secular and forward-looking Indian would place him certainly in the category of a modern person. He shows immense faith in the efficacy of science and technology to solve problems facing the mankind and he wants the educational system to put emphasis on the scientific understanding of the reality.

But his ethnic consciousness begins to surface when his attention is drawn to the status of Telugus in Bangalore. His suggestion that Telugu associations should come forward to extend economic assistance to the needy Telugus and his call for greater interaction among Telugus and his support for Telugu schools should be taken as a reflection of this ethnic consciousness. His lament over the decreasing tendency on the part of
children to speak in Telugu should be taken as a reflection of his ethnic consciousness too. His stringent call for a strong leadership to guide the Telugu community is a call that is associates with people who are deeply concerned with the unsatisfactory position of Telugus. His opposition to the inter-linguistic marriages be taken as illustrative of his desire not to ignore the Telugu identity. This case study tells how even an otherwise modern person would go to any length to maintain his ethnic identity. A careful deconstruction of his case would further tell us the reason for this kind of attitude. As he put it, in his personal life he has been facing discrimination due to his ethnic background. Even after he has become the Principal, people would not give him the respect that the office or Principal demands because he is an outsider. Such instances do tend to accentuate one's sense of ethnic consciousness, as he experienced it himself in his personal life.

The Case of a Film Distributor

There was this case of a film distributor, who was otherwise very popular among his friends who included Tamils and Kannadigas.

He came to Bangalore about 12 years ago with the sole purpose of making it big in film distribution. He did not go to Hyderabad or Madras as he knew that they already had well-developed film distribution system and it would be difficult to make a mark there.

He lived with his wife and three children who were very close to him. He would shudder at the very thought of staying away from them. At one
point of time he did think in terms of living alone in Bangalore at least till he established himself well. But the dropped the idea as he himself had second thoughts about it and his family members also did not support it. He was very close to his children and he would make it a point to take them into confidence whenever some decision had to be taken.

Since he was a busy person, I had to go to him thrice before I would gather some information about him and his attitudes towards other Telugus.

In an attempt to find out whether he held ideas which one could regard as modern, I raised a few issues with him. His life history was interesting in the sense that he changed three jobs before the embarked on his present occupation. To begin with, he was an L.I.C. agent and though he was doing well, he did not like it much and had a shop in Andhra Pradesh. Since he incurred some loss in that, he abandoned it and joined some private company. He left that also and came to Bangalore with the help of his uncle who introduced him to some people in the film industry. He was never afraid of changing the places and getting exposed to new experiences.

He believed one needed to put in a lot of hard work instead of depending upon the luck. Only those who believe in themselves would succeed ultimately. One also needed to have rational outlook and scientific temper. He had an enormous faith in the efficacy of science and technology. In fact, some of socio-economic problems could be explained in terms of an inability to make full use of science and technology.
He regularly participated in the elections and was contemptuous of those who could talk a lot about our political system but would refuse to go out and vote on the election day. Voting is a precious right and it must be exercised at any cost. Failure to do so would amount to abdication of one responsibility.

As far as economic development was concerned he was deeply critical of the fact that though India had immense natural resources and the third largest scientific and technological manpower it could not compete with a small country like Japan, which even after a terrible destruction caused by nuclear bombing, could become one of the most economically advanced countries. One should know how to use sciences and technology for the economic development of the country. He, however, believed that one should not ignore our traditions because they contain wealth of wisdom and guide our behaviour.

I, then slowly drew him into a discussion on Telugus living in Bangalore. He proudly claimed that he was one of the persons in revitalising one of the Telugu associations which had become dormant due to lack of support from Telugus. The main objective of the association was, as he put it, 'to forge greater unity among Telugus. When he came to Bangalore, he found that though they were some associations, they were not as active as they should have been. When I asked him specifically what exactly he meant by that, he replied in the following way "what I mean is that there should be
more cultural activities such as dramas, music, showing of Telugu films etc.” If there were organised regularly, it would promote greater awareness about our culture and language.

When I probed him further, he came out more honestly. He said “I have been seeing for more than a decade. Surprisingly Telugus are not as aggressive as, say, Tamils in demanding from the Government. I do not mean that we should fight other communities. But other communities should not feel that we are inferior or do not respect ourselves. He added that, though he did not face discrimination from other communities either in his personnel or professional relationships, he wanted to make the Telugu association strong because that afforded emotional satisfaction when he moved with other Telugu people and shared their problems and feelings. The affirmation of one's identity is possible only through such associations. He would definitely vote for a Telugu candidate if he is contesting in an election as that would provide tremendous sense of confidence to the Telugus. He was critical of the fact that Telugus associations are not doing enough to promote political awareness among Telugus. According to him there is nothing wrong in depending upon other members of the community for the economic betterment. In fact he would suggest that they should come together to act as a pressure group on the Govt. and extract concessions from them.
As far as schools are concerned, he said that he was happy he could put his children in some of the better known schools in the city. His children too were happy about the school. They had a good playing ground and the standards of teaching was quite satisfactory. They also participated in many other activities organised by the school.

The only source of dissatisfaction was, however, that his children were not exposed to Telugu language in the school. Therefore he took personnel interest in teaching Telugu to them at home. He felt that there should be more Telugu schools in the city to enable their children to study in Telugu medium schools. He also strongly believed in continuing his contacts with his relatives back home. As he put it “I like my children to keep their relations with my people back home because one day they will have to go back to Vizag (the place where they came from).”

When I asked him about the interaction with Tamils or Kannadigas, at first he looked a bit uncomfortable with the question. When I told him that this would be strictly confidential, he opened out a little. He was certainly more circumspect than the Principal of the College (the case which we have presented above). In his own words, “the relationship between Telugus and other communities is alright at present. But as I can see it, it may get strained if the present tendency among Kannadigas to keep their dominance continues. Sometimes they are wary of Tamils, which
understandable given the fact that Tamils are generally quite aggressive. But the same thing can not be said about Telugus.’’

After he started playing an important role in the activities of a Telugu association, the association has begun to organise a number of activities which is drawing a huge response from Telugus. But he was not sure how long this would continue as Telugus are not particularly known for sustaining anything. But he would continue to be active and ensure that Telugus meet as often as possible. In this context he could try to get more Telugu movies than at present. To be successful in this he needed the full co-operation of all the Telugus living in the city of Bangalore.

The fact that he has changed his profession three times tells us that he would not mind getting exposed to new experiences, a feature which we have regarded as characteristic of a modern person. His point that one has to depend upon one's hard work and not on his luck unmistakably puts him in the category of a modern person. His point that one has to depend upon one's hard work and not on his luck unmistakably puts him in the category of a modern person. His emphasis on the role of science of technology in the economic development of the country should also be taken into account.

His subsequent statement on the role of Telugu associations, his ideas about the lack of exposure among children to Telugu language are indicative of his ethnic consciousness. As he has informed us that he has played an important role in revitalising Telugu associations in the city. The
primary purpose of a Telugu association, in his word, is to forge greater
unity among Telugus and through the organisation of cultural activities
such as drama etc. Telugu associations can bring about greater awareness
about 'our' culture and language. His deep consciousness of being a Telugu
comes out clearly in this statement. The fact that he would vote for a Telugu
candidate in an election reveals his proclivity towards an affirmation of
being a Telugu.

Though he did not face any discontent in his personal life, as the
Principal did, he wanted to see that Telugus become as politically aggressive
as other communities such as Tamils in Bangalore. Further the fact that he
takes personal care at home in teaching Telugu at home speaks of his
appreciation of the role of Telugu language in affirming one's identity as a
Telugu. He speaks of the growing tendency among Kannadigas to show
dominance over other communities in Bangalore and this may lead to
strained relationship among different communities. Historically Bangalore
has been the home of many communities and Kannadigas should not treat it
as exclusively their own land. Though otherwise modern in his views on
many issues, when it comes to the question of asserting his ethnicity, he
makes his point quite clear.
The Case of a Union Leader

The case of a worker who was a Union leader working in a public undertaking is illustrative of a ‘paradox’ that exist in a modern setting. One may be a Union leader (owing allegiance to Marxism), espouse workers' causes and talk relentlessly about class and class exploitation etc. but when it comes to the question of talking about one's ethnicity, one does not have much of a problem. In fact one may feel that there is no contradiction in relating oneself to both class and ethnic group.

The union leader in question was bout 54 and has three children aged 14, 16, and 22. He lost his wife about 8 years ago. He was born and brought up in Bangalore. His parents migrated from A.P. long (he could not recollect). He studied up to Class 9 and worked in a private company before he secured a job as a worker in a public sector undertaking.

His house was located within the premises of the factory. I was introduced to him by one of the managers of the factory.

When I met him at the factory we could not talk for a long time as he was too busy with the union activities. I persuaded him to given me some time in the evening. He kindly agreed.

I started a general discussion about the factory and his job, whether he was happy with the working conditions and relationship between the management and the workers. I realized that though he studied upto Class-IX, he had some understanding of Marxist ideas with which he became
familiar through his contact with some party leaders. He was able to articulate the grievances of the workers in a clear and coherent manner. Due to his good understanding of the issues affecting workers and the ability to put forward the views and grievances of workers in a forceful way, he was elected as an office bearer of the union many times. He, of course, also suffered in the hands of the management of the factory for the visible aggression.

He had a strong belief in Marxism and said that Marxism was the only hope for the oppressed and the disadvantaged. It may have faced some setbacks in the recent past and capitalists may feel that they have succeeded. But in the long-term Marxism is bound to bounce bank. In his own factory, workers, though they may not be familiar with Marxism as such, understood well some of the basic issues affecting them. They would like to come together at the slightest instance of high-handedness on the part of the management.

When I asked him if he would mind changing the jobs if the situation demanded, he said that he would not mind. In fact he would be happy about it. I then tried to elicit his views on some of the controversial issues, he said that there was always, of course, the possibility of having a diversity of opinion on such issues. But he would personally support any move to uplift the disadvantaged in tune with his Marxist convictions.
He had immense faith in the modern science and technology and in fact would like at least one of his children to become a scientist. His scientific outlook was also reflected in his refusal to have more children. His parents wanted him to have more children as they would be a source of economic strength. But he realised that if he wanted them to get educated at least to a reasonable extent, he could not afford more than 2 or 3. In case of any illness among his children, his parents would like to take them to some quack. But he resisted such attempts several times and invariably succeeded in getting them examined by a qualified doctor.

Talking about the general economic condition in the country, he said rapid industrialisation was the only answer. The government could take every step to ensure that industries are established in every part of the country instead of only in a few regions. Privatisation may not be a good idea because it is not bothered so much about the achievement of socio-economic objectives.

Talking about the importance of reason in guiding behaviour (I had to explain to him a little about this), he said he strongly believed in that. In his perception tradition sometimes acts as an obstacle in realising one's potential. For example, women can not come out because of shackles of traditions. Good things in tradition must be accepted and bad things rejected.

Then I began to discuss some of the issues affecting Telugus in Bangalore. Then 'dilemmas' began to surface. He said he gradually became
conscious of his identity as a Telugu. Initially he was living in an area where there were many Telugus. But when he shifted to the factory, he found that it was dominated by the Kannadigas and Tamils. It was then that he became aware of the fact that he belonged to a separate linguistic community. In his own words "though I am a Marxist and not supposed to give much importance to religion, ethnicity etc. I know these are the things which are important in everybody's life. I may be talking about workers and their rights in the factory, but when I come home and want social company it is natural on my part to look for the people with whom I share a lot. Though I was born and brought up in Bangalore and hence speak fluent Kannadiga, I like to go to Telugu association meetings to enjoy some cultural programmes."

When I asked him specifically about voting in an election, he would vote for a candidate from C.P.M. if he was there. Otherwise he could vote for a Telugu candidate. If was between a Telugu candidate or C.P.M. candidate he could of course vote for the latter. At the same time as a community he would like Telugus to become stronger. Asked about this contradiction he looked a bit puzzled. Then I shifted the discussion to the role of Telugu associations in promoting political awareness or extending economic assistance to the needy Telugus. He felt that there was noting wrong if Telugu association play a more important role in developing cohesion among Telugus.
He also expressed his sadness over the fact that if there are two
Telugus, three opinions will emerge on an issue. It was important that they
forget their differences and come together on a platform for he articulation
of their political, economic and cultural demands. Unless it was done, it
would be difficult for Telugus to command respect from other people.

He also informed me that it was T. Viswanatam (the then Chairman
of the Coffee Board) who took the initiative in starting a Telugu association.
He wanted to unite all the Telugus. Even today there are some associations.
But unfortunately there are not strong and active.

Language is very important in everybody's life. In his own words “I
would like may children to study Telugu in the school along with English
and Hindi. But in the school where they are studying, Telugu is not thought
as one of the languages. I find it difficult t send my children to schools
which offer Telugu as a language because they are far from any house and
transportation becomes too expensive”.

Asked about inter-linguistic marriages he said he would have no idea
about it. But his assumption was that such marriages between the people
who are from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds would pose some
problems. He also supported the publication of a magazine that deals with
the activities of Telugus.

Lastly when I was about to end the discussion, I asked him whether it
was necessary to think in terms of one's identity in a place like Bangalore, he
said, in a contradictory tone, though he would not personally believe in that, it was inevitable.

The above case is an interesting one in that the person concerned is a Union leader and therefore his primary focus of attention is supposed to be the workers and their conditions. The articulation of his interest for the company of Telugus when he is free reveals his deep consciousness of being a Telugu.

His familiarity with Marxism certainly distinguished him from other people in his neighbourhood and factory. Marxism is essentially a modern ideology and seeks to provide an alternative discourse to capitalist modernity. He too like the previous case studies has an enormous faith in the efficacy of science and technology. His refusal to have more children and to take his children to any Godman reveals an attitude that can be considered modern. His willingness to get exposed to different experiences puts him in the category of a modern person. His critical attitude towards traditions also needs to be appreciated.

His consciousness of being a Telugu started, a revealed by him, when he shifted to the factory which is dominated by people belonging to the other linguistic communities. His inability to find social company has been the main factor responsible for looking to the other Telugus and Telugu associations. As he has said it, it is natural to look for such a company. His
point that if no C.P.M. candidate was there, he would vote for a Telugu candidate reveals his ethnic proclivity.

His call to all the Telugus to forget their differences and come together on a platform may not be in tune with his Marxist prescription. But that does not bother him. Unless they come together as a cohesive unit, they will not be able to command any respect for the other groups.

Given a chance, he would like his children to study in Telugu schools could be taken as a reflection of his ethnic consciousness. His opposition to inter-cultural and inter-linguistic marriages and his contradictory views on the continued efficacy of ethnic identity in a city like Bangalore certainly reveal his ethnic consciousness, though ambivalent at times.

The Case of a Shop-Owner

There was a shop-owner who owned a medical shop located in one of the smaller areas of Bangalore. He was 34 and had one child aged about 7. His home was just beside the shop. So he had no problems commuting between the home and the shop. He did his B.Sc.

He went to Bangalore when he was only 23 and had been struggling to gain a foot-hold there. Only three years back he succeeded in acquiring a shop. Though he did not do as well as he would have wished, he did not have serious problems either.
I got an opportunity to spend quite some time with him one day. Since the shop was open from 8 A.M. to 10 P.M., I sat in his shop discussing quite a few things with him.

I found his dealings with the customers extremely cordial. In fact I was surprised to find that sometimes he would give medicines without money just on the basis of an assurance that the money would be paid later. I realised, however, that he was known personally to many people.

He showed keen interest in what was happening around him. He was a regular reader of newspapers, the Hindu being his favourite newspaper. He was highly supportive of movements organised by environmentalists, women and Dalits. As far as Dalit movements are concerned, he supported their cause but expressed displeasure over the fact that they tended to be exclusivist in nature. These movements tended to exclude and in fact hate other groups such as Brahmins (he himself a Brahmin). If they fight for their own rights, he would have no problem.

According to him, there is bound to be some difference of opinion on any issue. For example, the policy of reservation may have its supporters and critics. It was necessary to have a proper understanding of all the dimensions of an issue and then only one should take a position. He himself would have arguments with fellow Brahmins about the policy of reservation. Most of his Brahmin friends would criticise him for supporting the policy of
reservation. In fact, he was critical of the way the policy of reservation is implemented, though he would support it as a matter of principle.

The development of scientific temper, as he put it, is a must among children. Otherwise they would not free themselves from prejudices and superstitions. It was much easier to understand and place in perspective his views on scientific temper because his work-place (medical shop) thrives on the practice of sciences.

The question of trust figured prominently in the discussion. He said he needed to trust people. In the process sometimes we might be cheated. But that would not mean that all people are not trustworthy. This was reflected in his act of giving medicines without money. As far as obeying teachers and elders was concerned, he did say that they would always think good about children and therefore their words must always be obeyed. Traditions too must be regarded with respect. Those who forget their traditions suffer immensely because they are confused.

As far as the status of Telugu is concerned, he said he was not really aware of that. He had no problems from the other communities. In fact most of his customers are Kannadigas. He never faced any problem from them.

Though he heard of some Telugu associations, he never attended its meetings. He was asked many times by some people to become a member of the association. This was due partly to his preoccupation with the shop and
partly to the distance he had to cover to attend and participate in the activities of the Telugu associations.

But he strongly supported the existence of such associations as they could provide a sense of security and support to the people. An occasional gathering of Telugus would enable them to come together and share their problems and think about solutions.

He was uncomfortable with the idea of inter-linguistic and inter-community marriages. This kind of marriage would lead to long-term problems in terms of adjustment.

As he put it, "marriages in India are not strictly between two individuals. They are between two families". Therefore unless both the families feel comfortable with each other, such marriages would not succeed.

He narrated one of the experiences he had recently. A Tamil boy fell in love with a Telugu girl. But their parents firmly refused to allow them to get them married. Then the boy and the girl eloped. This made the parents realise that they meant business and they had to relent. The boy and the girl were traced in Mysore sometime later and they were brought back to Bangalore and they formalised the marriage. But within 5 to 6 months some problems cropped up between the boy and the girl and the parent also refused to intervene in the matter. They are still having a troubled life. Their
parents always blame them that they have married against their wish and they are paying the price.

Such problems mostly arise in inter-religious and inter-linguistic marriages and therefore he is not supportive of such marriages.

He personally would like to go back to Andhra Pradesh after saving some money so that he would start something in his hometown, Vijayawada. He always believed that Bangalore, though it offers good opportunities would not be a permanent place for him.

He sometimes felt sorry that his son, who is 7, can not read and write Telugu. Learning of one's mother tongue is essential, especially when one wants to go back to his or her state any time.

Though Bangalore is such a big city, he felt that not many Telugu films are shown. Though there are some theatres which show Telugu film, they are not sufficient in number in view of a large number of Telugu films being released every year. As far as the affirmation of Telugu identity in a multi-lingual context such as Bangalore is concerned, he said that one might stay in Bangalore or New York or anywhere else, one's identity based on one's language would never be ignored. Even in U.S.A. a so-called developed and modern country, many groups have their own associations and they are making useful contribution in maintaining cohesion and providing a sense of security to them.
If one deconstructs what exactly he is, the fact that he has an enormous trust (a modern attribute) in his customers is reflected in the way he gives things on credit. Of course, it does help if the shop is in a residential area as is the case with him. His support for various movements and the ability to take a balanced view on issues would make any scholar happy. One can fight for one's rights but this should not exclude others. One's movement should not be exclusionary. Though he himself is a Brahmin, his critical support for the policy of reservation is significant.

His advocacy of the development of scientific temper among children is an eminently modern proposition. Obviously the shop which he has is a medical shop which is supposed to thrive on the practice of science.

As far as all the Telugu associations concerned, he has been unable to participate in their activities. Of course, the absence of any problem from the other communities, especially Kannadigas would have made any such networks irrelevant for him. But he has expressed support for such an association as a matter of principle, as it would provide a sense of support to the people.

His opposition to inter-linguistic marriages would make him clearly a person who is aware of his identity. The fact that he has expressed his displeasure over the inability of his children to speak, read and write Telugu is also significant in this context. His displeasure over the fact that not many theatres show Telugu films should also be taken as illustrative of his ethnic
consciousness. The continued significance he attaches to Telugu identity even in a city like Bangalore and the illustration he draws from U.S.A. to underline this certainly reveals his ethnic proclivities.

The Case of a Peon

The case of a peon working in a govt. office provides an interesting insight into the relationship between modernity and ethnicity. He was 47 and belonged to a Scheduled Caste. He was born and brought up in Bangalore. He was quite fluent in Kannada and not so much in Telugu. Asked about this, he said he grew up in a neighbourhood dominated by Kannadigas. He always played with Kannada boys in his childhood. He studied upto class VI.

What was remarkable about this person was that though he studied only upto Class-I and did not have an enriching environment having grown up on a locality inhabited primarily by the poor sections, he developed very modern and forward looking ideas. He has only one daughter who is studying in a college (with the financial assistance from the govt.). Despite being repeatedly told by his parents and relatives that he must have a son to continue the 'lineage', he refused to have more children. He showed enormous seriousness about his daughter's education, a fact reflected in his daughter coming to the level of college. He said he in fact sold some of his ancestral property to enable his daughter to study. It was later that he began to get financial assistance from the govt. He was determined to educate his
daughter because, as he said, in his family nobody (his parents, brothers or sisters) never went to school. He was therefore determined that at least his daughter should have college education.

Referring to his caste status, he did face humiliation in the hands of upper caste people in his locality. Though they lived in the same locality and shared the same abominable economic condition the fact that they belonged to different castes made their relationship not a very smooth affair. He naturally supported the policy of reservation and in fact called for a more radicalisation of dalit movement.

He showed immense faith in the power of science and rational outlook. He in fact wanted his daughter to become a scientist and if it was not possible, a government servant so that she could do something for the members of her caste.

The basic problems affecting our country are corruption and lack of economic development. Proper economic development is possible only with the use of advanced technology, the kind of technology that the 'foreign' countries are having.

Quite surprisingly, a person who has not studied much, his views on the question of obeying teachers and elders is remarkably refreshing. He said though teachers and elders generally think of good of their children, but sometimes because of ignorance would do harm to their children. Therefore we must view them critically. For example, in his own case, as stated above,
his parents forced him to go for one more child as he only had a daughter. But he refused and felt quite happy about it. Similarly, about traditions he has strong views, because he had seen the oppressive nature of traditions as they subjected him to discrimination (he himself is a dalit). Therefore traditions should not be accepted uncritically.

Referring to his status as a Telugu, he said when he was a boy, he did not think much about this. Slowly and gradually he realised that he was being subjected to discrimination at the work place. Asked to sellout what he meant by that, he said that in the office, he would be given the kind of work that his official position as a peon did not demand. For example, he would be asked to bring vegetables for officers. But the local (Kannadigas) workers are not given any work of this kind. Initially he had no problem. Because of his fluency in Kannada, his co-workers thought that he too was a Kannada. But when they realised that his parents came from Andhra Pradesh, they began to treat him differently.

As he put it, “I would like my daughter to go back to A.P. after her studies and get a job there. Slowly the feelings are becoming worse even in a place like Bangalore. It may be big and cosmopolitan city. But the fact is that discrimination goes on here also. It may not always be apparent. Only those who stay here for a long time will realise this. In the days to come, it may become more pronounced because of political and economic reasons”.

233
He believed that compared to Tamils who are more aggressive, the condition of Telugus in general is not good. As he put it, "because the Telugu community is weak politically, these problems happen. I would like the community to become more politically conscious and powerful. The way Tamils are acting as a pressure group, Telugus have never done it. This may earn them good name from other communities, but in the long term, they will suffer because of their passive attitude".

Narrating his own experience, he said once or twice he did try to leave his job and start a small shop in his locality. But he was denied the license and another local (Kannadiga) person was given. It was because he had good rapport with the officer concerned.

Asked what he would do in an election, if a Telugu candidate is pitted against somebody else, he unhesitatingly remarked he would go in for the Telugu candidate. As far as his views on Telugu associations and their role in improving awareness among Telugus about their status or extending economic assistance to the needy Telugus and promoting interaction and cohesion among them are concerned, he felt that they can play a very useful role in this connection.

He strongly supported the idea of Telugu schools and said that he sent his own daughter to a Telugu school. But she had to switch over to English medium in the college. Telugu schools are the symbol of one's entity. A
person who does not know his own language or culture can not be a complete person.

He was not clear when I asked him about the persistence of ethnicity even in a modern setting. After some explanation, he could understand and felt strongly that no amount of modernisation would erase ethnic consciousness. Taking his own case as an illustration, though he was born and brought up in Bangalore and therefore should have been a complete Kannadiga in one sense, he continued to feel attached more to Telugus than Kannadigas.

To our understanding this case is very poignant because he has faced double discrimination, first as a member of a scheduled caste and second as a member of a linguistic community which is not quite dominant in Bangalore.

What is most interesting about this case is that though he is a peon and studied only upto Class VI, some of his ideas are distinctly modern. When highly educated people like to have a son and in the process give birth to many girl children, he refused to succumb to this pressure. He has taken immense trouble in educating his daughter who is in a college now. In the process he even has to sell his ancestral property. One associates such care only with modern persons who give equal respect to both sons and daughters.
One can notice his enormous respect for science and technology in his desire to see that his daughter becomes a scientist. He even argues that proper economic development is possible only with the help of advanced technology which foreign countries are having. His views on the question of obeying parents and elders are remarkably refreshing. His views on traditions could easily place him along with very modern-looking individuals.

As he said his consciousness as a Telugu essentially began as a result of discrimination he is being subjected to at the work place. This discrimination manifests in terms of being given work which he is not officially supposed to do. There is one point which he makes is quite interesting. It is that though Bangalore is a cosmopolitan city, if one stays for a long time, one begins to realise that one's background does matter. He would like the Telugu community to become more politically conscious and powerful. This is a statement which is reflective of his deep ethnic consciousness. Certain instances in his life have made him feel the way he does. For example, once tried hard to get a license which was denied to him but given to somebody else (a local Kannadiga) because he had a better rapport with the officer concerned. On the whole, though on some issue he does have ideas which can be apply characterised as modern, as far as his ethnicity is concerned, it unmistakably comes out.
Instances such as the above have made him state that he would vote for a Telugu candidate in an election. He also feels that Telugu associations which are a symbol of one's identity have a great role to play in promoting interaction and cohesion among Telugus. Though he took a little time in understanding the question about the relationship between modernity and ethnicity, he came out clearly in favour of negating a positive relationship between modernity and ethnicity. He has used his example to emphasise this.

The Case of an Employee in a Company

There was a person aged about 25 years. He was unmarried. He came to Bangalore about 3 years ago from Rajamundry (A.P.). Since his brother was already there in Bangalore working in a private firm, he thought it would be easy for him to secure some job in Bangalore. Though he had to wait for about 2 years he ultimately could secure a job in the same company as his brother's. He did his B.A.

Since he was new to Bangalore and not very sure about my identity, he felt hesitant to discuss with me anything about Bangalore or its people. I could ultimately engage him in a discussion about a number of things which from our point of view was quite important.

He said he was not quite happy with the present job and would soon look for a better job. If one had the confidence in oneself one could go try and also get something better. One should not feel hesitant about going to
different places in search of a job. The place would hardly matter so long as the job satisfaction is there. One should be willing to expose oneself to new experiences and people.

Though he was educated only upto graduation level, he appeared to have a reasonably good understanding of the political situation obtaining in the country.

Talking about the political situation in the country, the “quality of our democracy” is poor essentially because of reasons such as illiteracy. Since people are illiterate, politicians would misguide and in fact use them for their own political interests. If democracy is to survive, people would have to become vigilant and well-informed.

Giving one illustration, common people in different religions are quite friendly with each other. In their day-to-day lives they have no problem with one another. But whenever politicians like to reap political benefits they incite communal violence. Not a single communal riot would take place if political parties behave in a mature and responsible manner.

In a country like India where different religions, linguistic and ethnic groups live, secularism is indispensable. No religious group can have monopoly and try to subjugate other religious groups. When he was told that there are different understandings of secularism and there is confusion about the real meaning of secularism, he looked a bit confused and could not reply immediately. But he felt that the best understanding of secularism would be
that of equal respect for all religions and no religious group can be discriminated against in matters of employment etc.

He showed enormous respect for children. He said that we the elders tend to underestimate the intelligence of children and treat them as stupid. But children equally intelligent and their decisions need to be respected. When it comes to the question of education or a job, children must have the final say. However, when they are making a choice, it must be ensured that they make an informed choice. Alternatives must be presented to them and the final decision be taken by them. Giving an example, he said all of us want our children to become a doctor, engineer etc. But we never bother to find out the interests of our children. This must be resisted. According to him, one has to listen carefully to what teachers and elders say. At the same time it must be ensured that one does not take them blindly. About traditions, he did not seem to have any opinion. He simply said all traditions are good and they have some meaning.

Coming to the situation in Bangalore, he heard a lot about its beauty, climate and numerous job opportunities.

He did succeed in getting a job after, of course, waiting for 2 years or so. Though he has not faced any problem from his colleagues, sometimes he felt that he was missing his home state. As said earlier, he would not mind going to any place in search of a job. But one is bound to miss one's home, friends and relatives. That is the time when one feels like going back to the
home-state. Fortunately for him, apart from his brother, there are some other Telugus working in the company. After he joined the job, he would spend most of his leisure time with them. In fact, in the office, in case of any problem, he would go to them for help. The phenomenon of going to his 'own' people, he said, was quite natural.

When the issue of marriage was raised, he said he personally would not mind if he got an understanding and friendly girl. But he emphasised that point that a girl from another community would find it more difficult to manage than the one from the same community.

As far as his attitude towards other Telugus is concerned, he said, "I understand that there is a sizeable number of Telugus, they should come together". Some of the reasons for this are, as he has given, that this would strengthen unity among them and also increase awareness about their own culture and language.

He also said, "I feel that T.V. and Radio do not show any Telugu programmes. Since they constitute a sizeable section, sometime could be allotted for their programmes also".

He also believed that since Bangalore is a cosmopolitan city and many linguistic groups live there, schools should introduce some other language such as Telugu apart from English, Hindi and Kannadiga. This would enable the children to learn their own language.
He strongly supported the idea of Telugu School and felt there should be greater interaction among Telugus. Greater interaction would be possible only with the help of associations such as Telugu associations. It is only through those associations that one comes across many opportunities to know about Telugus.

He said that he certainly felt more closer to Telugus than he did when he was in Andhra Pradesh. Though there are similarities between Telugus and Kannadigas in terms of language, culture etc. one is made to feel that one is a Telugu in some contexts. This is inevitable.

He said he would not agree to the view that if one becomes highly educated (modern), one would forget his roots (ethnic), one continues to be a Telugu no matter where one is working.

What comes out clearly about him is that though he is not in a very satisfactory position as far as his job is concerned, he believes that one ought to have the confidence in oneself and then only one would succeed. He is willing to be exposed to different experiences at different places. This is a feature which we have included in our modern attributes. He has been able to identify some of the problems affecting our democratic system such as illiteracy and ignorance. His knowledge of the dynamics of politics is also quite appreciable. For example, he attributes the occurrence of communal riots to the abominable designs of political parties. To prevent communalization of society and polity, he speaks in terms of secularism
which is essentially a modern attribute. According to him, secularism would mean equal respect for all religions.

He argues that children are equally intelligent and their decisions need to be respected. As we discussed elsewhere respect for children is one of the modern attributes.

Coming to his interaction with other Telugus, he says he spends most of his time with them and in case of any help he would go them. He believes that in case of any person, it is 'natural' for him to go to his own people. As far as marriage is concerned, a point which is quite relevant to him he is still unmarried, he would find it more convenient to marry somebody from the Telugu community. This underscores his consciousness of being a Telugu (ethnic identity). As he argues there needs to be more awareness about our own culture and language. By this he means Telugu culture and language. He definitely comes across as a person who possesses modern ideas about some issues but when it comes to the question of one's identity, he is categorical that it needs to be kept in mind.

His point that there should be greater interaction among Telugus and he personally felt much more closer to Telugus than he did when he was in A.P. should be taken as reflecting his consciousness of being a Telugu.
A 35-year-old lady, who has been living in Bangalore for some time, has two school-going children. She is a housewife working in a computer firm.

I was introduced to her husband who took me to his wife. She apparently had no inhibition in meeting a stranger.

She said she would not be busy with her children making school.

Her husband is a well-educated person having done her graduation in a field. She prefers to remain at home to take care of her children. How is this possible? She said it is not an easy task to run a house. Her husband had no role whatever in taking the children to school. She is at home taking care of children? She said it is easy to be quite modern and aware of the developments in connection with women world wide. The sources of information are essentially magazines and newspapers which she reads regularly.

She does not mean going out and working. If somebody do, that can be construed as exercise of freedom. She should enjoy what one is doing. If one is doing it for the sake of freedom, then she is enjoying the freedom. She is a regular reader of debate issues confronting the country. In fact, as she reads, she remains updated with the issues.
told me her husband sometimes wondered how she was able to have such ideas and articulate them in such a clear way.

She said that the biggest problem facing the country today is illiteracy. This has deep implications for our polity, economy and culture. The way the people are taken for a ride by our politicians is essentially because of ignorance and sometimes indifference of our people. Democracy which theoretically ensures full participation of the people is the best type of political system we can think about.

She was quite clear about importance of science and technology in the country's economic development. Being herself a student of science, it is not difficult for her to appreciate the state of Indian science. Though India claims to have a very huge scientific and technological manpower, the standard of general science is quite low. There are some outstanding scientists (she named M.S. Swaminathan A.P.J. Abdul Kalam etc.). But their number is quite limited. The general standard of science she has declined because bright students are moving towards management and technological fields. She referred to her husband who had an outstanding academic record. He preferred to opt for a job in a computer firm because it is highly paying.

When I referred to the relationship between science and religion. She believed that they have their own separate places. She subscribed to what Albert Einstein said about the relationship between science and religion. According to him one can not separate science and religion. She said one
can refer to any number of renowned scientists who are deeply religious. Their religious beliefs or convictions are not coming in the way of their outstanding scientific achievements.

Coming back to Bangalore, she has a great liking for the city. She said that Bangalore is certainly better than most other cities in the country today. It has an extremely nice climate, well-developed facilities and excellent educational institutions. She is quite happy that her children are fortunate enough to study in a place like Bangalore which has some of the best schools. But her sense of worry is that her children are growing up without any knowledge of their mother-tongue (Telugu). Despite the best efforts, she has not been able to teach them Telugu because they themselves are not serious about it. In fact, they tend to mock at the language. This is what sometimes bothers her. They are more fluent in Kannada and English than in Telugu. They think learning of Telugu is not going to help anyway. She said that this kind of thinking sometimes disturbs her. Her husband would not take much interest in the children as he simply has no time for them.

She has no direct knowledge about the political or economic status of Telugus. Whatever little information she gets it is from her husband and some Telugu friends of hers. She has been given to understand that compared to Tamils, Telugus are quite passive and are not politically very
active. When Telugus constitute a large segment of Bangalore population, why cannot they play a more important political role?

As she suggested, the lack of political activism could be removed to some extent by increasing interaction among Telugus, by having separate schools which will be of immense help in teaching their culture, language etc. Media can also play an important role in this.

When I brought in the issue of marriage, she seemed quite clear. Though she would not like to impose her choice on her children, her personal position would be that they must marry somebody from the Telugu community. Marriage outside her group would lead to a lot of uncertainty in terms of adjustment not only between husband and wife but also between relatives.

With this I immensely thanked her and left the house.

In the Indian conditions, how difficult it is to gain access to a woman and make her talk is not difficult to guess. But thanks to her understanding husband, I was able to meet her and engage her in a sustained discussion with her for quite some time.

She has given her own definition of freedom. These days freedom for a woman is taken to mean going out and working. But, according to her, freedom should mean that what a woman would like to do she must do that, even if it means staying at home and taking care of children. That explains her status as a house-wife. Though she is well-educated, she has preferred to
stay at home. Her ability to articulate issues concerning the country and the world, an ability which she has acquired through the regular reading of newspapers surprising her husband as it did me.

She has some ideas about democracy and the problems afflicting the practice of democracy such as ignorance and illiteracy. But at the same time she supports democracy (an essentially modern political system) because that is the only system which ensures full participation of the people.

Her views on science and technology definitely put her in the category of a modern person. What has impressed me most about her is her ability to distinguish between science and religion and her statement that each has its own place. Some of the top scientists are deeply religious and yet their religious believes or practices are not coming in the way of their tremendous scientific achievements. The ability to analyse issues the way she has done could only put her in the category of a modern person.

When one starts examining her ideas about Telugu language and culture, one begins to gain a distinct idea that she is quite conscious of being a Telugu. Her sense of discomfort at the inability of her children to speak their language and in fact mock at it comes out clearly. From whatever she has gathered, she is surprised as to why Telugus can not play a more important political role, say, in terms of contesting in an election and enjoying the fruits of political power. The solution is that by increasing interaction among them, political awareness can also be promoted. As far as
marriage is concerned, she visualises certain kinds of problems if they are from two different linguistic communities.

When one examines these ideas of hers, one tends to get the impression that she is conscious of her identity as a Telugu inspite of exhibiting some of the most modern ideas.

The Case of a Bank Officer

A bank officer aged about 31 has been living in Bangalore. He came from Ongole in A.P. He appeared for a competitive examination and got selected in the Vijaya Bank as a clerk about 4 years back.

It was extremely interesting to have a discussion with him as he happened to be a student leader in his college days. In fact he was arrested by the police once and released later because of the intervention of the College Principal. Later his parents dissuaded him from studying further as they felt that he was getting a bit irresponsible. Though he was keen on studying further (he did B.A.), he had to give into the pressures of his parents.

He said he strongly believed in the Marxist theory, though he had not studied much as he himself admitted. Whatever he came to know about Marx was through his Economics Lecturer who was a party cardholder of C.P.M. However, the activities in which he engaged himself in the college were not prompted by the ideology, as he himself put it. The activities were designed essentially to enhance his image as a leader such as picking up
fights with bus-drivers, theatre owners for giving tickets to students etc. It was only much later that he realised the real importance of Marxism.

He believed that Marxism would greatly help us understand the working of our polity, economy and even religion. The way religion is used by the elite sections to keep the people in the dark about the real conditions existing in the society. Giving the example of Balaji temple (in Tirupati), people go to the Mandir to offer money, valuables etc. in the hope that their wishes would be fulfilled. But how many of them would be willing to make a donation if a school is to be started? Similarly talking about the Ayodhya episode, he said people went from different part of the country to destroy a mosque, which was a ploy used by a political party to enhance its vote-bank. How many of them would render their services if a hospital or a school is to be built?

When religion is used for all kinds of destructive purposes, why should we give so much importance to it and in fact why should we believe in any religion?

He takes an enormous interest in whatever is happening around the state and the country through newspapers, T.V. etc. He is of the opinion that India is capable of competing with any country in terms of I.T. education. In fact Bangalore has emerged as the prime destination for many I.T. companies in the world. If India is not to lag behind other countries in terms
of knowledge and technology, it must open up and allow movement of the people from one country to another.

Leaving the discussion there, I turned to his views on education. He said that the educational system should aim at all-round development of a child. Sufficient importance should be given to the development of scientific temper and rational outlook.

Sensing that he was in a hurry to attend to some work, I told him that I would come back to him after one or two days and trouble him for some more time. He gladly agreed, when I met him after three days, he was happy to receive me. We continued the discussion from we left.

Like others he also had the impression that Bangalore was a wonderful city to be in. He still does not have much of a problem about the city as such. In his own words "I regard Bangalore as one of better cities. But this should not make one believe that everything is very peaceful here. One needs to stay here for sometime to understand the real social dynamics."

He narrated an incident which happened recently and which can throw some light on deep-rooted feelings that exist in Bangalore. A few days ago he went to see a Hindi film where a scuffle ensued between him and a person standing in the queue. It became clear to the other person that this man was not a Kannadiga as he spoke broken Kannada. Then he began to shout at he top of his voice (in Kannada, of course) that Bangalore which
was a peaceful and great city was spoiled because of people from other states especially Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. Unless these people thrown out from Bangalore, it can not became better. Other persons did not show any willingness to intervene.

There was a sense of anger when he narrated it to me. He said others have not come to Bangalore to beg but to do some service. But he derived consolation from the fact that this feeling is not new only to Bangalore. However moderate a person may be, one's attachment to one's roots (ethnic) can not be cut off.

He further said “I do hope that Telugus will have greater unity than it is there at present. Unless they come together and remain united, incidents such as above will continue to take place. Telugu associations can play an important role in achieving this objective”.

He subscribed to a Telugu daily called “Eenadu” which is quite popular in Andhra Pradesh. Since English dailies do not cover much news from Andhra Pradesh, he depends heavily upon the Telugu daily.

When I broached the topic of marriage and his willingness to marry a girl of a different linguistic community, he did feel a bit shy initially (he is unmarried) but later said quite clearly that such marriages are glorified in cinema and novels, they do not work successfully, generally speaking. He would not prefer such a marriage.
About his relationship with his colleagues in the bank, he initially had some problems because of the language problem. They also did not show much interest in interacting with him. They would go to the canteen in a group leaving him. These things, though small in nature, would constantly remind one of the different ethnic and cultural background.

His remarkable appreciation of the dynamics of politics in relation to religion needs to be noted. If a mosque is to be destroyed, thousand of people would go. But if a school is to be built or a hospital to be constructed, not many of us would take the trouble of participating in it. All these developments make him question the very relevance of religion. He advocates that great importance should be given to the development of scientific temper and rational outlook.

As far as the situation in Bangalore is concerned, he feels that one needs to stay for a reasonably long time to understand the real social dynamics which he illustrates with the help of an incident which took place a few days back with him. Such an eruption of anger against Tamils and Telugus has become increasingly frequent and they make one became conscious of one’s identity as a Telugu or a Tamil. As for as marriage is concerned, he like the previous cases would not like inter-linguistic community marriages because in his view they do not work successfully. His experiences in the office also make him feel a bit uncomfortable and make him conscious of a different ethnic and cultural background.
The Case of a Student

Another illustrative case study is that of a student of Bangalore University. He was doing his M. Sc. in Chemistry. He was born and brought up in Bangalore. His father is a businessman.

I had an extended discussion in the university itself over two days. As a matter of pure coincidence he knew one of my uncles who happened to be his father's friend in the college. I struck a rapport with him immediately. He also became quite open and frank with me. One got the impression that sometimes personal friendship would give us wealth of information which would enable us to draw meaningful conclusions.

He has two sisters and one brother who are all younger than him. His father has been staying in Bangalore for over 30 years. When he came to Bangalore, he virtually had nothing with him. But he soon established himself well and became a reasonably prosperous businessman. But these days, due to certain ailments, he has become quite weak. He helps his father sometimes.

I started our discussion with his views on various movements such as Women, Dalits, etc. taking place in the society. He is quite supportive of such movements and especially about women. He fully emphasises with their cause. The position of women has been indeed quite low in our society and they must get adequate opportunities to move up. He said he would be very careful in choosing husbands for his sisters. One's education and
economic status are certainly important. Whether they treat the others with
dignity and respect or not, that should be more important than one's
occupation and economic status. He is aware of so many highly educated
and well-established men treating their wives as a disposable commodity.

He also spoke of the possibility of a diversity of opinion on issues.
For example, the issue of reservation, has its own supporters and critics.
This does not mean that supporters are always right or the critics. What
becomes important in certain matters is the ability to keep our own
proclivities in check and make an objective and rational analysis of various
dimensions of the issue.

He has immense faith in the power of science and technology in
solving the problem of low economic growth, illiteracy, ill-health and
ignorance. It is only when we put sufficient emphasis on research and
development that we can come up with state-of-art technology which will be
quite essential for economic development. Problems such as poverty etc can
be effectively tackled. He is of the firm opinion that India's size and
population can be, in fact, treated as assets. But, unfortunately, in India today
there is a tendency to treat our huge population as a liability rather than as an
asset.

He believes that secularism should be given more importance. In fact
secular values should be instilled in the young minds right from the school
stage. The present communal problem can be solved by the promotion of
secular values among the youth. However, only preaching of secular ideology, though very important, will not automatically solve the communal problem. It has to be backed by adequate socio-economic measures for the improvement of the economic lot of the poor people who mostly participate in communal riots.

He says that the present political system which gives enormous powers to the centre may not be the right political arrangement for our country. Our country is a land of diversities and these diversities must be given political autonomy. More decentralisation of political power and economic resources need to be ensured for the proper growth of different regions and communities.

Talking about his experiences as a member of the Telugu community, he said that Bangalore is certainly better than most of the cities in the country. Narrating his own experiences, once he went to Delhi on some work. He had to face an insulting situation once in Palika Bazar in Connaught Place; when he refused to buy something there, the shopkeeper first persuaded him to buy it and then turned violent saying “these Madrasis do not like to buy anything but they talk too much”.

He said that such situations do not happen in Bangalore. Especially in his case, as he was born and brought up in Bangalore, he can speak Kannada as fluently as anybody can. Most of his friends are Kannadiagas. They do have some friends who happen to be Telugus. Otherwise his contact with
Telugus has been quite minimal. His father is a member of a Telugu association and he attends the meetings quite frequently.

However, he said that sometime he felt, looking at other places and communities, that Telugus should become more active then they are now. Their association can play an effective role in bringing them together and forging greater unity among them. Sometimes something happen which make one believe that whether other communities including Telugus are treated as second class citizens. Citing one instance, he said that recently there was a big gathering of Telugus and they had cultural programmes for 4 or 5 days. But that went almost unnoticed. Neither the print media nor the visual media gave sufficient importance to that programme. Only one newspaper covered it and that too in a short space. Such things make one wonder whether other communities are give as much importance as Kannadigas.

It is a fact that many communities live in Bangalore and they have been making immense contribution to the social, cultural, economic and scientific progress of the city. Hence such contributions should never be ignored. He has attended some meeting of the Telugu association (not as many as his family member) and heard one common statement i.e we Telugus should come together and stand united. Otherwise the locals will suppress us and not allow us to realise our creative potential. When he heard it initially, he thought that they were exaggerating the whole thing. But of
late he has slowly begun to realise that there may be an element of truth in that. However, he still believes that Bangalore is certainly more peaceful than most of the other places in the country at present.

About marriage, he said though he has not thought about it, he would most probably marry a girl chosen by his parents. And he know that they would prefer a girl from Andhra Pradesh. In fact some proposals have already come from A,P. and some Telugu families living in the city of Bangalore. He knows very well that his parents would not compromise on the community status of the girl.

He said that he would certainly support any magazine which deals with the activities of Telugu association and other news pertaining to Telugus. This would give us some idea about what other Telugus are doing in Bangalore, ultimately enhancing the possibility of interaction among them.

He also felt strongly that however modern a person might become he or she would not stop thinking in terms of being a Telugu.

The discussion I have had with this student has proved to be quite interesting. The fact that he happens to be one of my uncles friends some proved extremely useful in terms of getting access to some of his innermost ideas and experiences.

His respect for women comes out clearly in his statement that adequate opportunities must be given to women to enable them to climb the
socio-economic ladder. While choosing a husband for his sisters, he knows he has to play an important role and he is clear that he would examine, along with education and economic status, what kind of attitude he has towards other persons. Respect for other persons (a distinctly modern attitude) will be an important consideration in choosing a person for his sister. His recognition of the fact that there is always the possibility of diversity of opinion on issues is again a well-recognised modern attribute.

For the resolution of problems such as poverty, dependence on science and technology becomes a must. His ideas on secularism and decentralised political system are noteworthy. Secular values must be instilled in the young minds to prevent communilisation of society. He emphasises the need to recognise the fact India is a land of diversities and these diversities must be given political autonomy. As we have stated elsewhere political decentralisation is one component of modernisation.

As far as the status of different linguistic groups is concerned, he concedes that Bangalore is certainly better than cities and he illustrates this with the help of an incident which happened with him in Delhi.

However he realises that Telugus as a group should become more active than now. Telugus association can play a useful role in promoting interaction among them and bring them together. Giving one instance when Telugus are ignorant he says the activities of Telugus associations go unreported. Such things also make one feel a little uncomfortable. The
contributions made by various communities to the cultural and economic life of Bangalore should not be underestimated. Any neglect would make any one deeply conscious of his background and he is no exception to this. His strong support for a magazine which deals with the activities of the association reflects his consciousness of his ethnic identity.

To summarise, a general examination of the above case studies would reveal that the findings which we have derived from the administration of questionnaire find further substantiation in the case studies which we have presented. The illustration of some personal experiences and incidents has provided further insights into the relationship between modernisation and ethnicity. A person who is otherwise quite modern in his views on issues would begin to demonstrate ideas which are an affirmation of one's ethnicity. Reasons could vary from one person to another but on the whole, one is compelled to reject the idea what modernisation would lead to decline of one's ethnicity. This we have learnt both from there responses to our questionnaire and also case studies.

A Critical Reading of a Souvenir

We take this opportunity to look at a souvenir brought out on the occasion of completion of 25 years of a Telugu Association.

A careful perusal of the special issue brought in 1983 on the occasion of completion of 25 years of Telugu Vignana Samithi would throw some interesting light on the background and the contemporary reason for such a
Samithi. The Samithi also completed the first phase of a building meant for housing the Samithi and this coincided with the completion of its 25 years of existence.

The Samithi in question was set up in 1956 amidst great hopes of providing a platform to all Telugus where they could come and participate in the literary and other cultural programmes. Promotion of Telugu languages was the most obvious objective of such a society.

Mr. N.T. Rama Rao, the then Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, in his message published in the souvenir spoke of the great importance of such a Samithi in a city like Bangalore. The message was addressed to the then General Secretary of the Samithi. I reproduce the full text of the message as it clearly reflects the need for such a Samithi.

...... I am happy to learn that the Telugu Vignan Samithi is bringing out a souvenir on the occasion of the completion of the first phase of construction of a building. I extend my heartfelt greetings to all the Telugus living in Karnakata. I am thankful to the Samithi for carrying out a number of activities for the benefit of the Telugu community. I do hope that the Samithi will undertake new activities very actively for popularisation of Telugu language.....

Similar messages were also sent by other dignitaries. One more such greeting is worth mentioning in full. This was by Kotla Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy, former Chief Minister of A.P.
Thank you for inviting me on the occasion of starting of construction of a new building of the Telugu Vignana Samithi.

I congratulate the Samithi on making sincere efforts for the promotion of awareness about the Telugu language among all the Telugu of Karnataka. I do hope that the Samithi will intensify its activities which will ultimately lead to the greater sense of unity among Telugus in the State. I am optimistic that the Samithi will achieve success in all the activities it undertakes .......

A critical examination of the above two letters would tell us a lot about the purpose of the Samithi which is the promotion of Telugu language among all Telugus in the State. In fact the second letter makes a mention of the role of the Samithi in promoting a greater sense of unity among Telugus. It is unmistakable that the Samithi was expected to bring all Telugus under one fold thereby strengthening the ethnic bond.

In fact the following message by the then General Secretary of the Samithi would give us some idea about the thinking that underlined the functioning of the Samithi.

Since his is a lengthy message it would not be possible to translate the entire message, I would like to translate only those ideas which are relevant from our point of view which is that of finding out who took the initiative in starting the Samithi, what they wanted to achieve through this and what the Samithi would like to do in future. This would enable us to gain a clear
understanding of its role in seeking to achieve certain amount of consolidation of ethnicity. The translation is as follows: 'About 25 years ago, prominent Telugus such as Tennati Viswanatha; Suri Bhagavata Parvatanenna Sambaih, Anarao founded the Telugu Vignana Samithi. The basic objective was to provide a common platform whereby all Telugus could come and discuss their problems and take measures to promote the language and their culture. Some of these measures would include establishment etc. All this would be possible only by establishing a building and it was decided to work sincerely for the construction of a building.

About ten years have passed and we have not been able to complete the construction of the building. We have been trying desperately to tap different sources for the funds. The A.P. Govt. has come forward with Rs.50,000.00 and some industrialists have come together and made a contribution of Rs.1,50,000.00.

To carry out the above activities a separate Trust called Telugu Vignana Samithi Educational Trust has been set up.

I am sorry to say this. But I have to say it. Though there is general agreement among Telugus about our objective (that of bringing all Telugus together), we have not been as successful as we would have wished because of serious differences of opinion (which arise mostly because of personality clashes). As everybody knows, fulfilment of an objective like this requires full co-operation of everybody. If people allow their personal
differences to become an obstacle in the achievement of collective objectives, then it will become quite difficult to fulfill our objective and as a result certain amount of disappointment is set to creep in.

But I would like to assure you that I will not allow such disappointment to divert my attention from the responsibilities as the General Secretary of the Samithi. I will try to the best of my ability, with the cooperation of everybody to promote Telugu languages and culture.

........ I end with a reiteration of what I said earlier. We all need to come together, share our problems and perceptions, promote our language and culture and stay united. I will work ceaselessly for this and request everybody to co-operate with me in this venture”.

A critical reading of the above message appearing in the souvenir from the then General Secretary of the Samithi would tell us clearly about what the Samithi and its General Secretary seek to achieve.

The very existence of such an association may seem an unthinkable proposition in a city like Bangalore. Bangalore has been the home of many communities who have been living peacefully co-existing and it is generally believed that it is truly a cosmopolitan city, more cosmopolitan than many other cities in the country. Different kinds of identities are believed to have become almost non-existent in a 'modern' setting such as Bangalore. This is somewhat similar to the 'melting pot' theory that one likes to use to conceptualise the American situation.
This may hold true in the case of America but not in the case of India in general and Bangalore in particular. The situation in Bangalore may be conceptualised in terms of a 'Salad bowl' (of Nandy et al 1995:VI, as quoted in Yogesh Atal 2001:3459). This was originally used to describe the Indian situation. The same may be used to describe the situation obtaining in Bangalore. What does this mean? In their own words 'South Asia has always been a salad bowl of cultures. In a salad the ingredients retain their distinctiveness, but each ingredient transcends its individuality through the presence of others. In a melting pot, primordial identities are supposed to melt. Those that do not are expected to survive as 'coagulates and are called nationalities or minorities: they are expected to dissolve in the long run. Much of the recent violence in South Asia can be traced to the systematic efforts being made to impose the melting-pot model upon timeworn Indian realities.

The ideas stated in the message could also be located in the context of their distinct identity. This indeed provides us vital understanding of the thinking process that characterizes the Telugus (even those who are otherwise modern) living in Bangalore.