CHAPTER V

A GENERAL DISCUSSION
There is an indivisible relationship among literacy, culture and society. Literacy is essential for social and cultural practices. As Kellner and Share (2005) contend, “Literacy involves gaining the skills and knowledge to read, interpret and produce certain types of texts and artefacts and to gain the intellectual tools and capacities to fully participate in one’s culture and society” (Kellner and Share, 2005, p. 369). Rosalind Thomas (1992) says, “…we use the descriptions ‘literate’ and ‘illiterate’ today to denote a whole range of meanings, for both the ability to read and write, or the degree of refinement or culture” (Thomas, 1992, p. 1). Throughout history literacy has been considered as a prerequisite for social and cultural participation. The contrasting divisions and resemblances between different phases of the human civilization have been experienced through the age of orality to the age of literacy with the evolution of writing as a medium of communication. Sometimes literacy is considered as a force of liberation and sometimes it has been considered as a force of bondage. Arguing with Derrida, and asserting to Claude Levi Strauss, Norris (2002) notes, “Writing [and literacy] for Levi-Strauss, is an instrument of oppression, a means of colonizing the primitive mind by allowing it to exercise (within due limits) the powers of the oppressor” (Norris, 2002, p. 39).

Such contrasts between orality and literacy are profound in Greek thought considered to be the birth place of language, literature and civilization. Writing has always been dependent on orality as Ong (2002) writes, “Oral expression can exist and mostly has existed without any writing at all, writing never without orality” (Ong [1982] 2002, p.8). From a Foucauldian sense, as they are there in the condition of knowledge, resemblances and contrasts are also perceptible in the condition of literacy from tradition to modernity and to the later stages of the human civilization. It substantiates the fact that literacy/media literacy deals with the conditioning of knowledge that dialectically constitutes the condition of our society. In the subsequent stages,
the contrast between orality and literacy has become even more powerful as it has been argued that we are progressively marching towards the age of orality and tradition. The understanding and acquisition of literacy and its impact on the socio-cultural practices have become relatively difficult and complex as a result of its association with many other evolving phenomena. New modes of literacy practices in the age of new media and communication even make the contrasts between orality and literacy stronger. Such a contradiction between orality and literacy was noticed as a result of the invention of new electronic means of communication as it bridged the difference between time and space that further makes the understanding of orality literacy contrasts more difficult. On this note, Ong (1982) clarifies, “Our understanding of the differences between orality and literacy developed only in the electronic age, not earlier. Contrasts between electronic media and print [media] have sensitized us to the earlier [existing] contrasts between writing and orality” (Ong, [1982], 2002; p. 2). Then we must note here that the contrast would even become stronger in the age of new media. Virtually, we can call such a course of change in the condition of literacy, an ‘intellectual and functional detour’, as orality has become the new literacy in the new age of media and communication with its instant flow of information, idea and images.

Subsequently, it has affected the human experiences and changed the concept of reality and knowledge with a reorder in time and space. The existing differences between orality and literacy have been blurred affecting our culture, intellectual capacities and the condition of knowledge on which our society is founded. It is quite a cumbersome process to draw clear cut distinctions between orality and literacy as Ong posits:

Understanding the relations of orality and literacy and the implications of the relations is not a matter of instant psychohistory or instant phenomenology. It calls for wide, even vast, learning, painstaking thought and careful statement. Not only the issues are deep and complex but they also engage our own biases. (Ong, [1982], 2002, p. 2)
It accepts to the fact that literacy is historical in character. Hence, understanding literacy demands a historical approach as we find in Hegel’s dialectic and also in the later stages through the theory of language and literature; to mention structuralism and poststructuralism. Both literacy and culture constitute of intellectual capacities for social participation. Tomero and Varis (2010) term such intellectual capacities as “culture to include any development of knowledge: scientific, philosophical, everyday, religious” (Tomero and Varis, 2010, p. 7). This substantiates the fact that literacy is a constitutive body of knowledge and expands the idea of literacy beyond its conventional understanding, i.e. the simple act of reading and writing. Such an explanation establishes a close relationship between literacy and civilization, emphasizing the fact that literacy is a manmade social category essential in building a transparent society which is often a debatable issue.

Change in the discourse of civilization has also been seen through the development of print technology (print literacy) in the mid fifteenth century to the digital revolution (digital literacy) of late twentieth and early twenty-first century. On this note, Tornero and Varis postulate that “…digitalization of information and the proliferation of remote media have generated a kind of nuclear chain reaction with an unheard of impact all over the planet” (Ibid., p. 9). Explosion in information and communication has a direct impact on communicative energy, time and space, and also, it has changed the concept of reality, a result of time space compression. It has also changed the “chemistry of our everyday life and culture” (Ibid., p. 13) with a blend of both ‘routine and tradition’ where the everyday life has become ‘transitory and provisional’, substantiating the fact that the civilization is constantly undergoing a process of change and adaptation and becoming more and more complex.

The increasing complexities of the world, makes the role of media literacy to be of utmost importance in resolving conflicts. Grizzle et al. (2013) along with Helga Nowtony (2005) have also agreed on the increasing complexity of the world that may lead to the emergence of misunderstandings
and soft conflicts as the world is increasingly becoming “interconnected and subject to intercultural exchanges” (Grizzle et al., 2013, p. 9). Such complexities create new challenges, and at the same time, they create opportunities for acquiring new abilities. Under such contradictory circumstances, Grizzle et al. emphasize the role of media and information literacy for intercultural dialogue that would minimize conflicts across world.

In an Indian context, the need for media and information literacy is even more significant because of its multicultural attributes. Moreover, the Indian democracy, instituted on the pillars of secular and socialistic principles makes media and information literacy noteworthy in its educational and policy discourse. Considering this fact, as has been asserted by Nagaraj and Kundu (2013), “…the pedagogical approach to MIL [Media and Information Literacy] in India needs to encapsulate the country’s rich cultural diversity so that it can be used to encourage dialogue and diverse discourses on sustainable development goals” (Nagaraj and Kundu, 2013, p. 216). Such a social and cultural condition in Indian context demands a post-structural engagement of the self that accepts the increasing social and cultural differences. Based on a post-positivistic/anti positivistic plane for appropriating the social and cultural space, such a conceptualisation and practice of literacy emphasises the unity of the subject and object unlike the positivistic philosophy. This makes the identity or location of both the subject and object a more ‘fluid’ and ‘unstable’ category that adapt itself to the changing socio cultural condition. Such a condition of literacy and its practice will minimise the rate of conflict in the Indian society. In short, such a practice will increase the mobility of the alienated subjects and objects from one to the other resulting in a high degree of unity among cultures and communities.

The influence of literacy on social mobility is seen from both epistemological and ontological angles. One could notice that both the epistemological and ontological status of human identity have become more mobile or liquid in nature. On this note, emphasizing Zygmunt Bauman’s
concept of ‘liquid modernity’, Tornero and Varis (2010) conceptualize the everyday life as more liquid in character, a result of improved communication and digitalization, “unravelling: huge conglomerates of public connected via flexible mobile networks that are increasingly sophisticated and active, and hence a kind of personality dominated by a metaphor coined by Sherry Turkle ‘being alone together’ ”, (cited in Tornero and Tapio Varis, 2010, p. 14). In this context, it requires a greater degree of guidance on how to get positive benefits out of such liquid state of condition of our society.

Communication revolution has also brought changes in the demographic structures of the world not to exclude India. It has changed the cultural geography of the world, i.e. the circumstances under which cultural production and dissemination take place. Such a change is often related to literacy connected with accessibility and mobility of cultures and people from one part of the world to others creating new and varied forms of transnational identity. Even, identity as a concept has become more fluid and transient constructed more through a virtual mediation (virtual literacy) rather than change in the exact location or condition of the living being. It has further created new categories as in line with gender, ethnicity, nationality, race, and class with a rupture in the socio cultural space that is experienced from the global to local levels. In the Indian context, the increasing number of movements, raised in line with sexual liberation of women and transgenders have led to a contradictory social and political space.

Location as a concept has become nonexistent as a result of revolution in media technology. As Manuel Castells (2010) states: “The rise of the network society calls into question the processes of the construction of identity during that period, thus inducing new forms of social change” (Castells, 2010, p. 11). Most arguably, with the above statement Castells would have been anticipating a change in the social condition translated through construction of varied forms of identity. Such a change has tremendously affected the psychodynamics of the world civilization where we experience a condition of what Sherry Turkle
(2009), as mentioned earlier, has metaphorically called ‘being alone together’. Further, such a condition of the human existence has been reflected by Couldry and Markham (2008), where they consider the human experience in a constant state of ‘troubled closeness or satisfied distance’, a paradoxical or ambivalent or dialectical situation, where “we feel at once central and marginal to our lives” (Williams, 1973, p.295-96, cited in Couldry and Markham, 2008, p.5).

Thus, it is a spatial and temporal break in the relations of production that conditions the meaning of life or human identity. While the instant flow of information, ideas and culture with the help of new media technology has bridged the differences existing earlier, it has created new and virtual limits. New media and communication has extended our capacity to imagine, and realize them through association and constitution of new communities as it had once been imagined and materialized through the evolution of print technology, as reflected by Benedict Anderson ([1983], 2006). Multiple literacies from technological to cultural contexts have constituted new cultural communes. As in India, cultural communes are formed on different counts starting from their ethno-religious attributes to techno-religious habits.

Understanding media literacy requires an interdiscipliary approach. Though the conventional approach to media literacy stresses on critical inquiry, Richard Hoggart, as it is written in Bailey et al., has stressed on both ‘critical literacy’ and ‘imaginative literacy’. Such a reorientation of literacy makes its general understanding as a functional ability to access and disseminate information, images and ideas either through print, television or new media questionable. Opposed to the truncated and two dimensional literacy, Hoggart, “has extolled the virtues and importance of teaching people a kind of literacy that ‘is critically aware, not easily taken in, able to “read” tricks of tone, selectivities, false ad hominem cries and all the rest” (Bailey et. al., 2012, p. 157). Hoggart’s point is well taken as he is opposed to a sort of functional literacy conceived in present day school curricula. Instead, Hoggart calls the educated citizens to be critically literate and insists on them to adopt the slogan
‘Critical literacy for all’. Further, Hoggart pleads for, as in Bailey et al., an imaginative way of life through an ‘imaginative literacy’, experienced through art and literature to grasp the experiential relationship between culture and society. Most arguably, literacy in a Hoggartian sense is much more influenced by literary analysis, which can also be used in interpreting other ‘expressive phenomena’. Hoggart’s cultural analysis is often occupied by literature to understand the ‘experiential wholeness of life’ that leads to a theoretical break in conceptualizing and analyzing media literacy and its varied attributes. Further, as stated in Bailey et al., Horggart argues that literature “can help recreate, inwardly, that shared sense of being Human without which our world would truly be a wilderness and chaos’ (Hoggart, 2002, p. 131; Bailey et al., 2012, p. 19). Most likely, in Hoggart’s sense, literacy has been imagined more as a condition that would create, as predicted by Tornero and Varis (2010), a ‘new humanism’ possible through our engagement with art and literature. Further, as stressed by Nagaraj and Kundu (2013) such a condition of literacy would promote an idea of life possible through the culture of sharing, laying the foundation for a culturally diverse and liberal society in an Indian context. Such a condition of literacy would promote a multicultural society.

Such a method of conceptualizing media literacy is premised on cultural studies. Hoggart, as Hebdige in later stages, emphasizes the need for good literature for understanding the society better and writes: “[First] without understanding good literature, no one will really understand the nature of society; second, literary critical analysis can be applied to certain social phenomena other than ‘academically respectable literature’ (for example the popular arts, mass communications) so as to illuminate their meanings for individuals and their societies” (Hoggart, 1966 cited in Hebdige, 1979 p. 8). Hebdige’s intention through the above text is to assert that it always requires a literary bent of mind to understand the society better. It has also been argued by Bailey et al. that in the age of neoliberal nation states where we are approaching closer to or virtually within ‘knowledge economy’ and ‘e-democracy’, media literacy can assist in the reskilling of whole workforce
while also enhancing the democratic process (Bailey et al., 2012, p.159). Such a process of change, both in the economic and democratic circles, makes the promotion of media literacy imperative. A critical understanding of both media and literacy would certainly strengthen democracy and it would enhance public participation.

Such a social and cultural condition requires multiple literacies. As Sonia Livingstone (2009) suggests, “media literacy is a term of reference that includes a multiplicity of ‘literacies’ (for example, ‘information literacy’, ‘digital literacy’, ‘film literacy’ and ‘television literacy’, among others) and has been ascribed a plurality of contrasting definitions by educationists, media practitioners, and public policy-makers” (Livingstone, 2009, p. 184; Bailey et al., 2012, p. 158). Livingstone also emphasizes the role of critical literacy in the new multimedia environment and suggests that “critical literacies are even more important in multimedia and online domain” (Livingstone, 2009, p. 185). As said by Bailey et al., “Livingstone advocates an ‘evaluative judgment’ to question the ‘authority, objectivity or quality of mediated knowledge’ (Livingstone, 2003, p.12; Bailey et al., 2012, p.160). Moreover, Livingstone prods, as it has been argued by Hoggart, for an expanded notion of literacy relying more on the literary mode of analyzing media texts. As there in Bailey et al., Livingstone recommends, “educationists and policy makers resist adopting an overly reductive definition of media literacy for the time being” (Ibid., 2012, p. 160). Asserting Silverstone (2007), Bailey et al. also argue for a healthy and effective media education than media policy that would lay the foundation for a relatively deregulated media, liberating itself from undue state control and censorship. Considering the growing presence of media in an Indian context, Biswajit Das (2009) points out that India has become a country from “media scarcity” to “media abundance” and argues for a healthy media education policy for the promotion of media education with a “distinct pedagogy”.

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Media literacy thus deals more with a healthy questioning of media or deconstructing media to locate the subjective elements that work beneath the construction of media content. It also questions the authoritarian elements, in the pretext of which media policy is constituted, that ultimately affects the quality of media content and the knowledge embedded within media texts. Such a form of literacy or critical questioning of media relies heavily on an ideological critique as reflected through the works of Althusser (2008). As per ideological critique, the concept of literacy/ media literacy can be seen as a contradictory phenomenon. It works both as a force for liberation and also as a force for subjugation or subjection of individuals. In a sense, media literacy can be seen form a contradictory two dimensional position. From one direction, it can work as a hegemonic tool; from another direction, media literacy can be a force for the production of a liberal and more inclusive society with representations of diversity.

The socio-cultural condition in India demands a close reading of media and different policy practices to deconstruct the false ideological elements that either suppresses individual freedom and liberty or gives them a false notion of individuals with free choice. At this critical juncture, the masses need to sharpen their abilities to discriminate between favourable and unfavourable media contents and the discourses of other state and non state agencies. As Bailey et al. argue:

"It seems entirely sensible to argue that current debates about media literacy should similarly grapple with questions that are equally concerned with processes of discrimination and ‘close reading’. Without these critical and evaluative literacy skills, there is a danger that media literacy will end up becoming functional or vocational literacy. (Bailey et al., 2012, p.160)"

Literacy/ media literacy as a contextual category constructs history. History as a spatio-temporal construct is constituted by literacy discourses. In different phases of the human civilisation the contexts of practicing literacy has been

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different. While being constituted by the available literacy practices, dialectically, history reconstitutes the condition of literacy. History reconditions the social, political and cultural existence of the being both in its abstract and concrete forms. It brings change in the existing intellectual traditions and conditions of knowledge that further conditions the society and our social existence. The socio-cultural condition of contemporary India is the conflict among historical discourses that struggle to keep their traditional attributes intact. At the same time, they come into a conflict with the discourses of enlightenment and modernity facilitated by the development and inclusive policy paradigms of the state that articulate new borders in social, political and the cultural space. Further a post-structural consciousness among the masses has led to a conflict between the dominant discourses of enlightenment modernity and its post modern counter practices. But one should also be very careful about post-structural practice in reverse top to bottom that can be more dangerous for a country like India.

In India the cultural and political practice are determined by a combination of caste, ethnic, religious, language and development factors. In North India, politics is fought on caste and religious grounds, whereas, in North-East India, ethnic politics is more powerful. Similarly, in the central India political battles and cultural conditions are determined by the clash between a capital intensive development ideology supported by the state, and the idea of self determinism among the indigenous tribal communities. In the western India, language is a major factor that determines the political culture of the region, while, in the south, the cultural condition is constituted by a fair balance of caste, development and language ideology. In almost all the metro cities of India, empowerment, social status and consumption pattern determine the socio-cultural space.

Socio-political conditions in India in the recent days are also affected by the rise of the critical mass. The critical mass as noticed in the Indian context--in the form of civil society movements--may be assigned to the post-structural
practice as a literate tradition. The critical mass today does not limit itself to a particular community/location on the basis of either their religious or communal attributes. Rather, it raises its voice against the obscurantist and sectarian violence of the state as a dominant institution. Such a trend has strengthened social movements in India, for instance the Anti Corruption Movement started by Anna Hazare and led by civil society organisation with an objective of rescuing the state from the clutch of a corrupt bureaucracy that is led by a more corrupt set of parliamentarians. The critical mass also resists the dominance of the state translated through the imposition of a legitimizing identity in the name of caste, community, religion, gender, and sex.

If one observes, the situation looks quite complex; because, a post-structural literate tradition, on the one hand has slightly diffused the existing socio-cultural differences constructed through the dominant discourses of the state, on the other, it has reinvigorated the differences on communal lines. Further, the mediation of such communal events has led India to become a place of contradictory discourses competing with one another for space and power. One should also notice that these communal events are mediated either through media discourses or policy discourses of the state in the pretext of social inclusion. Such deceptive discourses of the state and the media have given the masses a false impression of empowerment. The contradictory space in an Indian context can be compared with the condition of anarchy where the struggle lines lie between the state sponsored violence that are perpetrated in the name of social inclusion and its resistance by the critical mass.

A post-structural consciousness has its impact on the political condition in India that has further politicized the politics making it a more complex process to deal with just like the complexity of Indian society. On this note, Saul Newman’s conceptualisation of post-structural politics proves to be a correct way of reflecting the political condition in India. It has led to the fragmentation of politics and political parties in an Indian context. The rise of regional politics
in India may also be attributed to such a post-structural consciousness. As Newman (2005) notes:

The impact of a poststructuralist approach to politics therefore lies in ‘de-naturalising’ it, in showing that there is nothing natural or eternal about existing political identities, discourses and practices. They are not set in tone, but, on the contrary, are historical formations whose meaning can be contested and whose structures can be transformed. In other words, poststructuralism makes visible the hidden discontinuities behind these structures and discourses, thus confronting them with their own contingency. Poststructuralism therefore politicizes politics. (Newman, 2005, p. 154).

Political identity in India is constructed in the discourses that start at the parliamentary levels and mediated through the state and some of the non-state agencies like media. One such recent example in the Indian media and political discourse is the branding of Narendra Modi as the saviour of a nation struggling to recuperate from the chronic disease of corruption inflicted by UPA. The Indian media which were branding Modi as a mass murderer and anti Muslim crusader, more recently, have started to give a positive face to Modi and his political agenda with respect to different minority communities. Such a discontinuity can be attributed to how the power relations a particular community or organisation establishes with the centre of power results in a change in the institutional discourses of the state. Institutional practices in India have become more hypocritical in nature, and when it comes to media performance media literacy as critical practice would deconstruct media hypocrisy/dualism in India.

One has to accept the complexity of the Indian society when it comes to analysing the social dynamics in relation to literacy practice. From a poststructural perspective, understanding inter-textuality is essential in literacy practice. It gives us an opportunity to deconstruct the text and derive meanings from different subject positions. Theoretical understanding develops new subject positions with respect to dealing with the political and cultural condition we face in contemporary India. If one observes, people in India now
a day's face a paradoxical situation, where it seems as if they have been alienated from their history. Everything they experience today is out of context. At the same time, they are constantly reminded their history, that more or less can termed as an orality-literacy contrast that has led to dissatisfaction and social anguish among a sections of community. It takes the whole Indian society to a contradictory situation where we ponder over whether to recall our past or should we march ahead with the glory of progress and a sense of self determinism. Our sense of history is more fractured and fragmented along with the division and multiplicity of literacy practices. It asserts to the fact that literacy and history are synonymous and literacy is a historical category. Historical understanding is an essential component of literacy practice that demands an understanding of one’s socio cultural history. From this context there is certainly a need for rewriting the Indian history to liberate itself from a pre-colonial to colonial and post-colonial impacts and dominance of a certain section of elite representation. A subaltern presence in the Indian historical tradition and archives would strengthen the cultural unity and integrity of the country across class and communal divisions. A post-structural practice in writing history and our engagement in political practice can only reinstate the necessary condition required for social unity.

The political transformations as we are witnessing recently in India is the result of a postmodern/poststructural literacy has something to do with post structural theory and its application in practical life. We may name it radical literacy. Whether, the political condition now we are experiencing, not only in India but the world over, is a result of an academic and intellectual intervention in national and global politics or it has grown out of necessity, is always difficult to assess. The increasing ratio of educated and literate youths in the political practice indicates the fact that radical theory/ideology like deconstructionism and post-structuralism is certainly playing their roles in political transformations. It has led to the beginning of new radical politics in a global scale starting from Middle East, Northern Africa and India.
As Neman (2005) suggests:

Given the contemporary epistemological conditions of what is termed ‘postmodernity’, where the universal grand narratives of the Enlightenment are coming in for question, and where the social and political field is increasingly differentiated and fragmented, radical politics can no longer rely on fixed rational and normative foundations to guide it, or on a universal notion of human essence that seeks emancipation. Rather, radical politics today must remain open to a multiplicity of different identities and struggles, particularly those that take place at a more localised level at the interstices of power. Here we might refer to politics of ‘post-anarchism’—an anti authoritarian politics that affirms the contingency of political identity, the indeterminacy of history and the new possibilities of emancipation offered by postmodernity”. (Newman, 2005, p. 49)

Such political struggles over identity and self determination are also contextual in nature as in some places they have root of militant nationalism, whereas, in some other places they have their root in Gandhian nonviolence. Though such political struggles are fought in Gandhian principles of peace and nonviolence, we argue that Gandhi was a radical politician and consider non-violence a radical practice in its own right. We find the trace of Derridean principle of ‘difference’ or ‘delay’ in the Gandhian nonviolence. This asserts to the fact that Gandhi was a dialectician in his own right and his principle of dialectics was non-violence, essentially, a radical principle that always questions the normative violence. Radicalism has two faces: one is of violence, and the other is of the practice of nonviolence.

Critical media literacy based on the above mentioned principles of post-structuralism, nonviolence and deconstructionism or as mentioned by Newman as ‘post-anarchism’ leads to the onset of a radical democracy. The arrival of post-structural politics gives an opportunity for the parties in politics, both at the centre and periphery, to take part in policy decisions directly or indirectly. In a sense, it acts as a counter narrative to the democratic setups which are increasingly becoming pseudo-democratic in character. From a poststructuralist perspective, radicalism is an intervention by the affected masses in the politics
and administration of the state for greater benefit of the country and humanity as a whole. Such radical and interventionist approach of the radical mass in the institutional affairs of the state have the potentialities to create new humanism across the world.

Media and literacy’s role in social change in the political and cultural arena can be observed from the intensity and vigour in which different social and unsocial events expands their territory and affects people from distant places. One example of such social movements is feminist movement and its extension to other parts of the world including India. Feminism as a post-structural category has attempted to restructure the feudal nature of Indian society and media resulting in a more conflicting and contradictory spatial discourse. Women in India have resorted to counter practices with the hope of protecting their rights and access to social space. A negative representation of women in Indian media has badly affected their social status and position. Such a condition redirects us to redefine media literacy that values the principles and guidelines with respect to representation of women in media. From media literacy perspective as argued by Kellner and Share, “feminist theory and standpoint epistemologies provide major contributions to the field of critical media literacy” (Kellner and Share, 2005, p. 370). Arguing with Carmen Luke (1994), Kellner and Share has also argued for a transformation in media misrepresentation and stereotyping off women. As further argued by Kellner and Share, it requires “unveiling the political and social construction of knowledge, as well as addressing principles of equity and social justice”. (Kellner and Share, 2005, p. 370). At the same time, the issues related to violation of human rights as in the case of violence against women should be depoliticised to keep such movements alive for an authentic purpose.

However, Manuel Castells (2010) has a different note on the feminist movements as to its potentiality to restructure the existing patriarchal order of the state. With reference to the feminist movement and its impact on the spatial dimensions of the society facilitated by media representations, Castells opines:
Feminists and sexual identity movements affirm the control of their most immediate spaces, their bodies, over their disembodiment in the space of flows, influenced by patriarchalism, where reconstructed images of the women and fetishes of sexuality, dissolve their humanity and deny their identity (Castells, 2010, p. 424).

Similarly, new literacy/media literacy has also led to the birth of new ethnicities. It has given an opportunity for various ethnic communities to reimagine their territory and reconstruct new ethno-national identity. Such imagined communities have led to the evolution of new social categories like mediated-ethnicity and mediated-ethnic-nationalism. The imaginary expansion of consciousness as a result of new literacy practices with the help of new and social media and electronic messaging have given these communities a new platform to associate and unite. It has led the world to a conflicting state where different communities confront over their rights and liabilities.

Media literacy as both an epistemological and ontological condition has altered the structure of knowledge. The flow of knowledge is affected by new media intervention and literacy connected to it and provides newer platforms for them in the periphery. It has altered or destabilised the centre-periphery model of knowledge production and its dissemination among the masses. Not only the flow of knowledge, but also the knowledge content now days is more diverse in character. The fracture and fragmentation of the civil society and the public sphere in India may be attributed to the knowledge structure facilitated by new media and literacy. In an Indian context as in the world, new knowledge structures have produced new identities that bring further divisions within the society. Propelled by new media, such new identities/knowledge structures have mediated across cultures and communities further leading to cultural conflicts. From an ontological/logocentric perspective such practices have led to the beginning of symbolic politics through metaphorical representation of different ideologies turning the social symbolic space more conflicting along with the identity it resurrects. For instance the colour saffron has been attributed to Hindu fundamentalism, whereas, the colour green is credited to Islamic terrorism. Such incidents and practices have restructured the
democracy. On this note Castells write: “The development of symbolic politics, and of political mobilization around “non-political” causes, electronically or otherwise, is the third trend that could be in the process of reconstructing democracy in the network society” (Castells, 2010; p. 417). It asserts to the fact that in the network society any type of mobilization has become possible and even as Castells has rightly stated, in the network society even the non-political gains a political status.

Nationality as a concept has been redirected from its earlier position as it used to be during the age of print literacy. Digital literacy in India and for that matter of the world has led to the birth digital nationalism. Nation as a concept now a day is more divided, at the same time in occasions it is more united in character that depends upon the communal aspirations and new literacy practices for its dissemi-nation. Nationalism in India is waged on various grounds both in reality and virtuality. But the latter category of nationalism--a kind of virtual nationalism-- has become more common practice among the neo techno-literates of the Indian mass. The intensity of such neo nationalism may be higher, but its durability is a questionable issue because it is more of a transient and short lived in character.

The fragmented structure of knowledge as a result of new media literacy and its practice has fragmented further the structure of public sphere, politics, and civil society in India. Civil society has lost its primary function of providing a platform for people’s participation as in many instances it has been motivated by political parties with interests or the civil society with having a political agenda of its own. Civil society movement in India have also strengthened on the basis of the claim for a unique identity among different communities or sections of the population. The increasing rate of violence against women has led to the birth of civil society that resists the dominance of patriarchal order. Civil society constituted on the ground of an unusual sexual identity among the queers and transgender has led to new social movements based on their rights over the immediate control of their body and spatiality.
connected to it. This has not only created contradiction in the social cultural space but also it has led to policy contradictions linked with political and party ideology. Similarly ethnicity as a concept, as discussed earlier is deterritorialised or despatialised as a result of the resurgence of transnational ethnic identity.

There is always conflicting and contradictory opinions about the form and structure of the civil society. In context of India, civil society is sandwiched between a structured dominance of the state on the one hand, and on the other, its struggle to come out of that structural trap. It is not unusual in India of a civil society being controlled by the state for its ideological dominance. From a Gramscian sense of civil society as explained in his *Selection from the Prison Notebooks*, civil society acts as the locus of state dominance. Civil society generally holds a positive connotation among the masses as a place for democratic social change. Castells (2010) on this note asserts:

Legitimizing identity generates a civil society; that is, a set of organizations and institutions, as well as a series of structured and organized social actors, which reproduce, albeit sometimes in a conflictive manner, the identity that rationalizes the sources of structural domination. (Castells, 2010, p.8)

The identity conflict as Castells (2010) has rightly pointed out in terms of resistance identity and a legitimizing identity is nothing but the clash between a state controlled civil society that always legitimises its own agenda, and on the other side, there is a counter civil society mostly controlled by the masses that resists the state dominance. The civil society that resists the state dominance is the habitat of the new minorities and marginalised communities whose concerns are often overlooked by the state under popular pressure and majoritarian politics. Media literacy as a critical category would unearth such deception of the public in the name of civil society revolution that indirectly promotes state agenda for the exploitation of the masses.
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