Knowledge, Society and Culture

for India as a developing society

Milind Sohoni
Head, CTARA IIT Bombay
sohoni@cse.iitb.ac.in
Today

- Types of Knowledge - personal and systematic
- The development question and how they fare
  - The forging of culture!
- A personal narrative
50 years ago in Nasik
The Meticulous Engineer
The Meticulous Singer
What if I hide as a मोगरा in the mali's garden? How will you find me?

I will become a जाई. Mali baba will string us together in a mala. That is how I will find you.
A saint
A listener in Mumbai
Structure and Correspondences
At 17

51 kilos, three *personal* representations
Science

Properties
- Outcome- Theories, causality.
- Leads to technology
- Social-Aesthetics and argumentation
- Systematic-expensive experimentation
Big Science

The Great Unknown

The "Scientific" Known
Natural History
The culture of natural history
Treks
After several years

How do we explain this?
Severe stress in key areas
Society

![Diagram showing the relationship between Environment, State, Market, People, and Civil Society, with subcategories such as Roads, King, Musician, Jatra, Farmer, Shopkeeper, Rain, Gobar, Artisan, Skins, Minerals, Coal. The diagram illustrates the interconnections between these elements.]
Agents

- A pays B to deliver to A
- A pays B to deliver to C
- Examples Cobbler-Teacher-Tehsildar
Ask the scientist
Everything is known!

- Scientist-corruption, backwardness
- Social Scientist-class, gender and caste
- Economist-market failure
But is this true?

What is science made up of?
Subject of science
Combustion, nano-electronics
Process of science
skills of observation, documentation, argumentation, experimentation

- New experiment

- *Which is the best chulha in the village?*
Dhaulvalli

What happened

- 7 wadis, 5 best chulhas-lots of arguments
- Boys and girls visited each other homes and took measurements
- Lead to better chulhas? Role-models?
- Separate the cultural from the scientific?
In fact...quite possibly
In fact...quite possibly
Another System-Markets
Markets

- commodity (utility)
  - not cultural artefacts

- Money-price as signal
  - anonymous,
    - instantaneous,
      - ahistorical

- **Beliefs**
  - Rational and fair
  - Efficient
How does it play out

- **Packaged Wafers** Rs. 5 for 30gm, Rs 8 for 50gm

- Money going out-coming in as dole or low prices for rice

### Hindustan Lever 2014 Annual Report

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<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
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How do we reverse this?

Can women of Dahulvalli not make wafers?

Quality, Hygiene—better machines and processes

Trust, confidence, role models

Same as what runs community services!

How does a community serve itself better?
What runs the modern Big-System?

**Branding**
- Support to mobility
- Suspension of discernment
- Eventually consumable, part of identity

**Elite Agency**
- Highly productive systems: clever people to operate.
- Elite Agents-iconic scientists, innovators, artists
- Elite identification
  - Harvard, MIT, IIT, UPSC
- Put In charge of big systems
- **All benefit!**
In Reality

- Wasteful, Unsustainable, inequality wired-in
- Aspirational dysfunction, inimical to community action
- Turns the rest of us into alienated consumers
- Loss of empiricism. Loss of coding and transmission of knowledge. **Loss of culture!**
How does a community serve itself better?

- More diverse roles for the familiar
- More give and take across time, more history
- More comprehension
- More practice and culture!
What to do?

Massive Decentralization right down to taluka level - governance, higher education

- Give people back their language, their *shastra* and their *sahitya* and *its methods*
- Human practices and empathy as the guide to teach social and physical sciences
- Comprehension of the structure of society
- Rehabilitation of the seasons and natural history
- Production of role models
Towards a convivial society

- The personal-experiential
- The systemic-methodological
- The subject matter-practices
- The mystery resolved-**choice**!

*But there is only one way*- **Culture as growth**

- **A Human Weakness**
- More secure, More certain, less drudgery=agriculture
- Inherent bureaucracy
- **Culture of the government servant!**
- **Allure of the big system**
Finally, at the personal level

Re-enchantment-Hard Work
Thank You