Knowledge, Society and Culture
for India as a developing people

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What we know

- Increasing inequality
- Climate change and increasing risk
- The role of science and technology
- *An emerging mono-culture!*

- Must Knowledge be conducted this way?
Today

- Types of Knowledge—personal and systematic
- The development question and how they fare
  - *The role of culture— the forging of a new culture!*

- A personal (and un-publishable) narrative
50 years ago in Nasik
The Meticulous Engineer
The Meticulous Singer
What if I hide as a मोगरा in the माळी's (caretaker's) garden? How will you find me?

I will become a झाई. माळी baba will string us together in a हार garland. That is how I will find you.
A saint
A listener in Mumbai
Structure and Correspondences
At 17

54 kilos, three *personal* representations
Science

Properties

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

The "Scientific" Known

The Great Unknown
The culture of natural history
Treks
After several years

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

Environment

State

Market

Assets

People

Civil Society

Roads

King

Musician

Jatra

Farmer

Artisan

Rain, Gobar

Skins, Minerals, Coal

Shopkeeper
Agents

- A pays B to deliver to A
- A pays B to deliver to C
- Examples: Cobbler-Teacher-Tehsildar

Knowledge

- Sound and Rigorous
Ask the scientist

The Great Unknown

The "Scientific" Known
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?
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?
CTARA's intervention

Twisted tape pack.

Increased efficiency, less soot.
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

<table>
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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

Different interpretation of agents and knowledge

Different Vision of the University
University-The Current

A modest beginning: University-as a civil society institution
The Knowledge of Engagement

The Design of CTARA

- A new direction and not in opposition
- A recipe for the bottom 80% to serve themselves
- Very clever!
New Knowledge, New Mechanisms

Core values: Problems of the bottom 80%. Deliver value!

Professional Programs: interdisciplinarity, field work, development perspective and core sectors

Creation of the Development Professional
Areas of work

Core sectors: Water, Agriculture, Energy, Environment

Concrete problems: Engagement, case-studies.

Plans, designs, feasibility studies, analysis, gadgets, systems.
Ultimately-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