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## **RADHAKAMAL MUKERJEE AND THE POLITICS OF DISCIPLINARY ERASURE: A PRELIMINARY NOTE**

It is commonplace to find references to ‘the Lucknow school’ in the historical accounts of Indian sociology (Mukherjee 1979, Singh 1986, Uberoi *et al.* 2007). Even when scholars differ in their assessment of its contributions to the growth and development of the discipline, and some even dispute the very idea of a ‘school’,<sup>1</sup> generations of students have come to learn about certain specific characteristics of this school: its vision of sociology and social science having a historical civilizational anchorage, its sense of unease with positivistic, utilitarian and the general evolutionary constructions and premises of the western sociology, its openness towards historicity, culture and values in the formulation of sociological concepts and their theoretical underpinnings, and its methodological eclecticism (Singh 2004:145). To some, the Lucknow school represented a highly creative phase in the evolution of social sciences in modern India given its intellectual response to India’s colonial subjection and cultural subjugation (Saran 1958, Joshi 1986a, 1986b). In course of its evolution, its sensitivity to the richness of Indian tradition, its flair for ‘philosophical theoretic orientation’, its distinguished style of cultural critique, its understanding of the problems and processes of social transformation based on grassroots insights and empirical fieldwork, and its anchorage in the value-oriented and non-compartmentalised social science vision made the Lucknow School an intellectual force to reckon with (Singh 1984). On account of its multi-disciplinary orientation, Joshi (1986a and 1986b) finds it more appropriate to call it the *Lucknow School of Economics, Sociology and Culture*. It has generally been claimed that the Lucknow School was the pathfinder in orienting the concept of social science to the needs and requirements of the country struggling under the colonial yoke. Evidently, in a colonial setting when the very *zeitgeist* of a nation was at stake, the role of a social scientist could hardly be conceived as just a narrow professional. S/he had to organically connect with her/his people and partake of the latter’s agony- and suffering. S/he had to involve herself/himself not only in ‘identifying and interpreting their problems and predicaments but also in formulating categories of understanding and in shaping the content and forms of their national consciousness in relation to their historical traditions and their sub-continental size and economic and

cultural diversity' (Joshi 1986a: 26). In a sense, the Lucknow school embodied the existential angst of an entire nation.

However, one does not find homologous theoretic tensions in the writings of the 'pioneers' (Mukherjee 1979) at Lucknow. Not surprisingly, one of the most popular chroniclers of Indian sociology offers a rather modest assessment of the contributions of the so-called Lucknow School of Sociology: 'it does not seem to have made a major impact on the theoretical nature of Indian sociology. The reason probably lies in the lack of an integrated or unified perspective in the philosophical theoretical contributions of these sociologists' (Singh 2004: 99). On the other hand, Patel (2010: 283) characterises the sociology at Lucknow as 'visionary, analytical, empirical and interdisciplinary'. While acknowledging the major differences among members of the School, she sees there 'a growth of a new sociology confident of being Indian, modern and simultaneously indigenous'. More importantly, the Lucknow sociologists 'did not define the identity of sociology as anthropology and did not use the methods and methodologies of anthropology crafted within colonial modernity'.<sup>2</sup> Expectedly, their contributions have triggered and informed the on-going debate on sociology *for* India. In different ways, they inform the three heuristic moments through which this debate has evolved: (a) the idea that Indian sociology should reflect the philosophical, historical, and cultural specificities of Indian society (b) that Indian sociology should accordingly improvise and innovate upon the existing sociological concepts and categories largely drawn from the western sociology and work towards indigenisation of concepts and theories, and (c) that it should propound an alternative paradigm to western sociology, which leads to total negation of the idea of sociology altogether as an academic discipline in the case of A. K. Saran.<sup>3</sup>

The foregoing synoptic presentation of the broad philosophy of the Lucknow school, and the theoretical and pedagogic approaches pursued there, provides us a setting to assess Radhakamal Mukerjee's contributions, and his place in the disciplinary history of Indian sociology relative to other exemplars. Indeed, by the time Mukerjee joined the Lucknow University as the founder-head of the Department of Economics and Sociology in 1921, a new orientation for an *Indian School of economics and sociology* had already crystallised in his mind.<sup>4</sup> Lucknow merely presented itself as an institutional *tabula rasa* where he could inscribe his philosophy and value commitments in a larger arena (Mukerjee 1997). At Lucknow, he consolidated his conception of 'bridge-building between natural sciences like biology and social sciences; between economics, sociology and other human sciences; between theory-building and fact-finding; between social thought and social work' (Joshi 1986a: 12). In particular, as Guha (2003: 1122) writes, 'Radhakamal Mukerjee anticipated, by decades, the methodological alliance recently forged in American university departments between ecology and social sciences'. It would be no exaggeration to say that the questions raised by this School in its initial years, and the

perspectives and insights generated on the problems facing the country, largely emanated from Mukerjee's lifelong mission of constructing an integrated and unified social science.

Yet, the sociology profession in India has been slow in acknowledging Radhakamal Mukerjee's foundational role in the shaping of Indian sociology despite his stupendous contributions to the discipline. There is no denying that his name echoes a ring of familiarity to the students of the history of social sciences in India. However, more often than not, he appears to have been overshadowed by the other two eminent members of the Lucknow school that he helped found in the first place. At times, it appears as if the past glory and seminal legacy of the Lucknow School had much to do with the contributions of D. P. Mukerji and D. N. Majumdar than that of Radhakamal Mukerjee. This paper looks into reasons behind the differential treatment accorded to Mukerjee by the future historians and chroniclers of Indian sociology. In a related vein, the paper explores the factors and processes that go into the making of selective retention and perpetuation of the disciplinary memory. The paper concludes with a plea for a comprehensive critical assessment of Radhakamal Mukerjee's enviable corpus of scholarly work.

## II

Expectedly, Radhakamal Mukerjee does not figure in the list of the select twelve who are 'widely recognized as among the "founders" of sociology and anthropology in south Asia' though he gets mentioned as one among 'numerous others who were also important in shaping the contours of the two discipline in India' (Uberoiet *al* 2007: 48).<sup>5</sup> Likewise, another collection of nine essays delineating 'impact of society and polity in producing and disseminating knowledge in the two cognate disciplines of sociology and social anthropology' (Oommen 2007: ix) does not contain a single reference to Mukerjee even as it offers a critique of D. P. Mukerji's presidential address for the latter's privileging of Sanskrit as the fountainhead of the knowledge of Indian tradition (*Ibid.*: 102-03). Even T. N. Madan, having consistently advocated 'better informed and critically nuanced appreciation of what the founders strove for and achieved' (2007: 287), in his book-length delineation of the *pathways* in terms of various *approaches to the study of society in India* could not find space to study Mukerjee's contributions.<sup>6</sup> This absence is equally marked in another recent publication devoted to the search for 'alternative discourses in Asian social science' (Alatas 2006) which does not have a single entry under Mukerjee in its list of plentiful references of Indian sociologists and social anthropologists.<sup>7</sup> This appears intriguing as Mukerjee turns out to be 'one of the earliest sociologist-economists in India... who clearly lays down the foundation of a distinctive Indian sociological paradigm and theoretic structure' (Singh 2004: 141).<sup>8</sup> These subsequent publications apart, it is noteworthy that Radhakamal Mukerjee's presidential address to the third All India Sociological

Conference in December 1958 at Agra follows that of D. P. Mukerji's in April 1955 at Dehra Dun and that of D N Majumdar's in February 1957 at Patna.<sup>9</sup>

There are well-established parameters to gauge the academic influence of a scholar: publication of festschrifts, citation of the works of the scholar concerned, institution of memorial lectures and awards, inauguration of a distinctive perspective and approach towards the study of social reality, impact on the selection of themes for investigation by the subsequent generation of scholars, and critical appreciation of the scholar's oeuvre by colleagues and disciples. A close scrutiny of these parameters substantiates the assertion that Mukerjee has fared poorly compared to his contemporaries in the field. We come across the first published festschrift in 1955.<sup>10</sup> Subsequently, there are two festschrifts published in 1971 and 1972 respectively.<sup>11</sup> In 1987, there appears another festschrift.<sup>12</sup> The same year also saw the founding of 'Dr.Radhakamal Mukerjee Memorial Society' in Delhi by some of his students. G. R. Madan (1997: 13-20) in his 'Preface' to Mukerjee's autobiography mentions a series of events to commemorate Radhakamal Mukerjee's birth centenary in 1989.<sup>13</sup> One also finds two exegetical essays on Mukerjee - 'Theory of Personality in Sorokin and Mukerjee' (92-106) and 'Radhakamal Mukerjee's Inter-Disciplinary Method and Frame of Reference in Social Science' (107-113).<sup>14</sup> Thereafter, in 2000, a multi-volume anthology of Mukerjee's writings gets published.<sup>15</sup> The crowning glory to Mukerjee comes by way of the institution of Professor Radhakamal Mukerjee Endowment Fund in 2010 under the auspices of the Indian Sociological Society.<sup>16</sup>

The foregoing testifies to an increasing, though belated, recognition by the practitioners of Indian sociology of Mukerjee's contributions to the discipline. One may argue that given the 'socio-philosophical and architectonic style' (Singh 1986: 11) of the Lucknow School it is hardly surprising that these pioneers gravitated towards disciplinary oblivion. After all, the lasting value of a scholar's contribution is ultimately the function of its quality and rigour. And since Mukerjee's approach was 'too loosely eclectic and evasive to be effective in working out the terms of synthesis among the social sciences' (Madan 2007: 260), it faded with the passage of time. Moreover, 'for Mukerjee, the human was ultimately the divine and the social was inseparable from the cosmic. Consequently, his empiricism was tempered with intuitive understandings' (*Ibid.*: 261). For instance, Mukerjee (1961: 48) asserts, 'beyond the existential society, there is the invisible society that extends into the past and the future and becomes timeless, and also enlarges itself beyond known species and space into the cosmical community'. He sees human society as 'perennially throbbing, humming cosmical beehive' comprising 'all beings, plants, animals and humans, and even the stars and the galaxies, knit together in a common life give meaning to the social destiny of man' (*Ibid.*: 48). Mukerjee's attempt 'to bridge the gulf between the finite and the infinite, the fleeting and the eternal' and his endeavour to look for 'the affinity and

continuity between the human order and the supra-human and supra-temporal order' (*Ibid*: 52) makes his philosophy of social science pronouncedly metaphysical.<sup>17</sup> Probably, this overdose of metaphysics has precluded any serious attempts to undertake empirical studies on this model. Singh (2004: 101) puts it succinctly, 'as contribution to social theory, its place remains very much at the level of axiomatic meta-theory. It is based on a system of deductive reasoning which is exegetic and speculative, hence different kinds of operationalisations of this meta-theory are possible for sociological studies'.

In this reading, it was his 'fuzzy and problematic' (Madan 2007: 261) conceptualisation of the nature of social sciences that explains its ultimate demise.<sup>18</sup> But that has equally been true for D. P. Mukerji and A. K. Saran even though they are appreciably discussed, and are cited much more frequently than Mukerjee.<sup>19</sup> In fact, 'Radhakamal Mukerjee's vision of sociology, though rooted in the Indian tradition, was still universalistic' and 'he saw the possibility of developing a general theory of sociology based on a social action theory' (Singh 1986: 12). Plausibly, this universalism was not politically useful enough for the partisans to the sociology *for* India debate who could meaningfully relate to D. P. Mukerji's more particularistic philosophic theoretic orientation. In a way, the spirit of the times was against Mukerjee's search for a general theoretical paradigm of sociology.

The extensive spread of his writings could be another possible reason for Mukerjee's declining academic influence in course of time. While writing on a wide variety of themes and topics, he spread himself too thin: slums and industrial labour, regional economic structures, peasants and agrarian economy, values, social ecology, comparative philosophical treatment of civilisations, art and aesthetics, population control, economic history, migration, social psychology, marriage, family and sex, democracy and civics, morals, culture, mysticism and spiritualism. On the one hand, these multidimensional contributions constituted a huge corpus of writings in divergent fields, on the other, they made his philosophical, theoretical and methodological orientations scattered and less forceful. It does not matter that Mukerjee's writings (unlike Ghurye's) reveal greater sensitivity to issues of sociological theory and methodology. According to Singh (2004: 141-42), he not only integrated the western theoretical and methodological paradigms in the studies of social and economic problems and issues in India but also undertook a critical and philosophical diagnosis of the emerging crises of human condition in the industrial societies and its civilisation. Mukerjee's continual response to contemporary trends in the western social sciences and sociology is a testimony to his praiseworthy exposure to the other traditions of social scientific knowledge. This is also reflected in his selection of the substantive domains of enquiry such as social ecology, regional and institutional economics.

Interestingly, Mukerjee has failed to acquire eminence as the spokesperson of an Indian variant of sociology notwithstanding his central

focus on evolving a thorough-going critique of the positivistic and utilitarian character of the western social sciences. In a sense, 'Mukerjee is perhaps the only sociologist of his times in India who attempted this ambitious alternative philosophical paradigm for generating a universal theory of sociology and social science both as a corrective and as an alternative to the western traditions of social science theory' (Singh 2004: 142).<sup>20</sup> Indeed, Mukerjee is tireless in articulating his concern for the one-dimensional focus of western social science: its preoccupation with *homo faber* rather than *homo symbolicus*. His postulation of an integral and interdisciplinary social sciences is meant to address such a logic of reductionism implicit in the western social science formulations of the human actor and social institutions: 'modern evolutionary naturalism, Spencerian, Marxian or Bergsonian, reduces man's mind and values as passive entities manipulated mechanically by a vast process that he cannot intelligently direct or control' (Mukerjee 1960: 118 cited in Singh 2004: 143). By contrast, he draws upon philosophical traditions such as Vedanta, Buddhism and Taoism to develop a general theoretical paradigm of sociology as a counterpoint to the western theoretical approaches. To this end, he recasts dialectical method privileging a view of the human actor as an eternal negotiator between the existential (deterministic) and the transcendent. Seen thus, his sociology is suffused with endogenous consciousness and Indian/oriental civilizational anchorage as they embody values of universal humanism and ethical piety, and thereby, hold promise of a movement away from materialistic rationalism or positivism (Singh 2004: 143-44).

Some of the appraisals of Mukerjee's oeuvre hint at the narrowness of his vision of Indian culture. In Madan's recent assessment, for Radhakamal Mukerjee, specificities of Indian culture meant 'upper caste Hindu culture' (2011: 31).<sup>21</sup> As a matter of fact, Mukerjee appeared to be concerned about what he calls 'race suicide of Bengali upper class' (1997: 165) owing to rigid rules of caste and marriage. He appeared equally concerned about the dominance of the lower castes due to the vast influx of refugees from East Pakistan. At the same time, he presents an ecological explanation (the silting up of the Bengal rivers and the spread of malaria in west and South Bengal combined with the eastward shift of the delta-building rivers) for the preponderance of the Muslims and lower caste Hindus in North and East Bengal.<sup>22</sup> In retrospect, he can be charged with having perpetuated common sense myths: 'In Bengal for more than three quarters of a century, the upper castes had been declining or stationary and the lower castes and Muslims multiplying fast' (Mukerjee 1997: 110). What is disconcerting is his equation of this trend with the decay of the Bengali nation. Yet, his lament about the decline of West Bengal, 'the home par excellence of the upper castes' is couched in terms of agricultural decadence in the moribund portion of the Bengal delta and attendant logic of economic and social forces bringing about 'continuous Hindu decline and Muslim predominance' (*Ibid.*). Besides, he equates the population dominance of the Muslims with their political power, and, claims

to have foreseen, rather forecasted, partition on the basis of 'his analysis of demographic and agricultural trends over three quarters of a century in Bengal' (*Ibid.*: 111).<sup>23</sup> He considers the hydrographical and economic gravitation towards the east as the precursor of the imbalances between Hindu and Muslim communities in Bengal. What is questionable is his assertion that these changes in the social composition of the population had been working against Bengal's traditional social and cultural life. His preoccupation with the striking disparity between the advanced and backward castes or communities (the latter multiplying at phenomenally quick rates) precludes him from subjecting his assumptions to any searching investigation.<sup>24</sup> The question is if Mukerjee's uncritical understanding of the Muslim question made his legacy suspect for the subsequent generation of Indian sociologists. Unfortunately, the question is yet to be posed categorically, and there is diffidence to look into the underbelly of our disciplinary histories.

### III

Viewed thus, this paper has tentatively identified a set of plausible factors that explain Radhakamal Mukerjee's erasure from disciplinary memory: his metaphysical and mystical weight onto a this-worldly discipline and the consequent ambiguities surrounding his philosophy of social science, methodological naiveté and extensive scope of his writings, lack of clarity regarding Indian/oriental corrective/alternative to western social science, and finally, his non-inclusive vision of Indian history and culture. However, they need to be demonstrated based on a comprehensive critical assessment of his large oeuvre. Admittedly, the identification of these factors is based on the premise that the academic influence of a scholar emanates out of the value of one's published output. Recent works of disciplinary history, though, foreground other issues such as the informal membership of the contemporary networks of influence, access to and control over prestigious publishing houses, a critical mass of illustrious students to perpetuate the memory, and one's location in the prestige hierarchies of academic institutions. One may also ask if the decline of a given centre of learning (Lucknow in the instant case) precedes the declining influence of some of its masters (alternatively, if the declining academic influence of its stalwarts leads to the depletion of institutional esteem).

### NOTES

1. While focusing on the differences among the exemplars of the Lucknow School, Madan disputes the idea that there was anything like a 'Lucknow school'. However, he regards Radhakamal Mukerjee, D. P. Mukerji and D.N. Majumdar as 'exemplars', with A. K. Saran as the critic within. According to him, all traditions grow around exemplars. However, this does not mean that the contributions of the exemplars unproblematically constitute a tradition or a school. The question of how one defines and locates a school or a tradition remains an important though unresolved issue (see Sundaret *al.* 2000: 1998). Madan (2007: 261) asserts, 'there really was no "school", formally proclaimed,

nor did the faculty share a common approach to teaching and research'. For the differences and commonalities in certain basic assumptions and perspectives of these exemplars see also Madan 1994, 2011.

2. Patel (2010: 283) relates the loss of appeal of the Lucknow School to the growth of the 'nationalist' sociology of M N Srinivas.
3. See particularly the essays 'Indian Sociology: Retrospect and Prospect' (135-66) and 'Ideology, Theory and Method in Indian Sociology' (95-133) in Singh 2004.
4. In the same year, he had been offered a professorship in Economics at the Bombay University. Mukerjee chose Lucknow over Bombay as he was excited about his foundational role in the shaping of a new department in a new university. It needs no reiteration that he was instrumental in bringing D. P. Mukerji and D. N. Majumdar (two other eminent members of the much talked about Lucknow 'triumvirate') to the department (Mukerjee 1997). It is anybody's guess how different the history of sociology in India would have been had he joined Bombay University instead of Lucknow.
5. His exclusion from the list has been explained as largely a matter of chance. The much celebrated 'retrieval and reassessment of our shared disciplinary history' (Uberoi *et al.* 2007: ix) had to do without him as T. N. Madan having agreed to write on D P Mukerji could not have been asked to also write on Radhakamal Mukerjee. But, more importantly, there is an attempt to justify the editorial decision on the ground that Mukerjee having receded from the mind of present generation of sociologists, his non-inclusion would hardly constitute a noticeable absence (Madan 2011 footnote no 5, p. 40).
6. The words in italics refer to the title and subtitle respectively of Madan's book (1994) which contains two individual chapters on D. P. Mukerji and D. N. Majumdar but none on Radhakamal Mukerjee. Even otherwise, Madan has written extensively on the former than the latter which gets corroborated by looking at the references in Madan 2007, 2011a and 2011b. Indeed, Madan delivered the first Radhakamal Mukerjee Memorial Lecture under the auspices of the Indian Sociological Society at its XXXVI All India Sociological Conference held at Ravenshaw University Cuttack during 27-29 December 2010. This lecture is subsequently published in the *Sociological Bulletin* (Madan 2011a), and also in another collection (Madan 2011b). The intention here is not to question a scholar's prerogative to work on individuals/themes of her/his choice. Since Madan has been one of the illustrious alumni of the Lucknow School, and has played a pivotal role in making its contributions visible in the academy through his scholarly assessments, it appears appropriate to highlight this otherwise trivial issue given the assertion of the present paper. In another instance, in one of the early assessments of sociology in India, Bottomore (1962: 101) writes, 'a group of sociologists at the University of Lucknow, influenced originally by the work of the late D. P. Mukerji, have interested themselves in logical and methodological problems'. He also mentions A. K. Saran in this context whereas he has just a piece of factual information to share with his readers: 'in 1921, in the University of Lucknow, Radhakamal Mukerjee became the head of the department of economics and sociology' (*Ibid.*: 98).
7. It appreciably discusses D. P. Mukerji's emphasis on Indian tradition and historical specificities (Alatas 2006: 43-44). Elsewhere, another influential chronicler of the history of Indian sociology, Ramkrishna Mukherjee (2004: 3527) avers, 'In India, the concept of unitary social science was perhaps first mooted by D P Mukerji in early 1950s, when he exhorted social scientists to not only break the walls between the specialisations in the mansion of social science but also to keep the ceiling of the mansion open to the sky'. He adds further, 'In late 1950s, Radhakamal Mukerjee clearly addresses the social scientists to gather under the rubric of transdisciplinary approach in place of



holding on to the disciplinary segregation'. One should note the sequence in which they have been mentioned.

8. In fact, Singh considers his most significant contribution to sociology as 'his formulation of a general theoretical paradigm of social science and sociology from the perspective of Indian philosophical traditions'. He adds, 'it is a paradigm which attempts to generate a universal general theory for the study of social and cultural phenomena as an alternative to the western theoretical approaches in sociology' (Singh 2004: 142).
9. The invitation for presidential address is seen here as a measure of the invitee's academic-intellectual eminence. In the hierarchical world of Indian academy, it may not have been merely incidental that Mukerjee was superseded for this prestigious role by two of his juniors in the Department.
10. Baljit Singh (ed.). 1955. *The Frontiers of Social Science: In Honour of Radhakamal Mukerjee*. London: Macmillan and Company Ltd. It contains a eulogistic chapter on him by the editor entitled 'Mukerjee as a Pioneer in Indian Economics', and also an autobiographical piece by Mukerjee entitled 'Faiths and Influences'.
11. Hasan, Zafar (ed.). 1971. *Research in Sociology and Social Work: Radhakamal Mukerjee Memorial Volume*. Lucknow: Department of Sociology and Social Work, University of Lucknow, and Husain, Ishrat Zafar (ed.). 1972. *Population Analysis and Studies: Radhakamal Mukerjee Commemoration Volume*. Bombay: Somaiya Publications.
12. Loomba, R.M. and G. R. Madan (eds.). 1987. *Society and Culture: In Honour of Late Dr. Radhakamal Mukerjee*. Ahmedabad: Allied Publishers. This contains an essay by RM Loomba entitled 'Radhakamal Mukerjee: Life, Work and Philosophy'.
13. One such programme in Delhi was organised at Kamani Auditorium which was attended by the then vice-president Shankar Dayal Sharma. Other speakers too paid rich tributes to Radhakamal Mukerjee on the occasion some of which are included in Mukerjee (1997: 215-36). The Society also instituted Radhakamal Mukerjee Memorial Lecture: three such lectures (all by economists) had already been delivered by the time of the publication of Mukerjee's autobiography. The year also saw the publication of a memorial volume: Madan, G. R. 1989. *Economic Problems of Modern India: Problems of Development*. Delhi: Allied Publishers.
14. The reference is to Srivastava, Harish Chandra. 1968. *Studies in Indian Sociology* (Volume 1). Varanasi: Samajshastra Prakashan.
15. Madan, G. R. and V. P. Gupta (eds.). 2000. *Integral Sociology: An Anthology of the Writings of Prof. Radhakamal Mukerjee* (4 volumes). New Delhi: Radha Publications.
16. Dr. Radhakamal Mukerjee Memorial Society has played a key role in the institution of the Endowment. The Endowment facilitates the annual Professor Radhakamal Mukerjee Memorial Lecture to be held along with the All India Sociological Conference. As mentioned earlier, the first Lecture (2010) was delivered by Professor T.N. Madan and the second (2011) by Professor D.N. Dhanagare.
17. Mukerjee writes (1961: 51-52): Philosophy that cherishes alternative and complementary truths and values, and, ..rises beyond them to universal and immutable truths and values for mankind's common understanding and dedication and leads the social sciences to the universal insights, experiences and values of man, and moulds and shapes one community, one culture, one world.. it extends unity and solidarity from the earth to the cosmos-community...It invests human relations and values with cosmic status and dignity, and brings the social to an ever-higher level of communion or an unlimited perennial society of the universe, which is the supreme value and

meaning in itself, higher in significance than man himself or his ephemeral and parochial earthly society.

18. Despite its many shortcomings, Madan thinks that Mukerjee's work has left a deeper mark than D. P. Mukerji's. He writes, '[A]s a pioneer, Mukerjee was a man in a great hurry, who wrote a great deal on a wide variety of subjects, but did not go deeply into any one of them'. Madan, though, acknowledges Mukerjee's contribution to laying the foundations of a number of new fields of enquiry such as economic anthropology, institutional economics, social ecology, sociology of values, socio-economic studies of rural life, and the Indian working class (Madan 2007: 286). Elsewhere, Madan approvingly quotes A. K. Saran 'in his intellectual career Dr. Mukerjee has tried to meet the challenges of the West almost in all forms in which it has come' without much success as he was not a 'deep thinker' (Saran 1958: 1018 cited in Madan 2011a: 38). Evidently, Mukerjee's 'deeper mark' is more because of his pioneering role in charting out new substantive domains of enquiry than his originality in terms of approaches and perspectives.
19. A. K. Saran's popularity is understandable for epistemological and methodological extremism attracts attention. What calls for serious investigation is D. P. Mukerji's flamboyant presence in the history of Indian sociology compared to the relative neglect of Radhakamal Mukerjee. It is commonly agreed upon that D. P. Mukerji did not write much, did not undertake any empirical study, and wrote more like a cultural critic than a sociologist. By contrast, Radhakamal Mukerjee wrote/edited fifty books on a wide variety of themes. Mukerjee (1997: 5-6) contains a comprehensive list of publications.
20. A perusal of the writings on the history of Indian sociology creates an impression as if D P Mukerji were the main spokesperson behind the idea of the rootedness of the study of Indian society in its history and tradition. He has gained more critical attention on the issue compared to Radhakamal Mukerjee (see, for instance, Alatas 2006; Oommen 2007).
21. D. P. Mukerji has also been critiqued for his predominantly Sanskritic-Brahminical conceptualisation of Indian culture (see Oommen 2007: 102-03). However, given Mukerji's progressive aura, and his accommodative stance towards Persian traditions, such a critique has been more subdued.
22. In his autobiography, he writes, 'in the thirties I recommended essential eugenic reforms for the Bengalee to check the decline of the Hindu population as against the Muslims, and of the cultural caste Hindus against the backward castes who had been developing fast in numbers' (1997: 163).
23. He writes, 'social history must follow geography. Politics cannot change the fortunes of land and waters, and the vicissitudes of agriculture going on for nearly six centuries. The areas towards the north, centre and west had been the seats of ancient learning, culture and prosperity in Bengal. Her future importance gravitates more and more to the east with the Ganges swerving eastward from the sixteenth century' (Mukerjee 1997: 162).
24. Muslims had been living mainly in the healthier and more progressive regions of eastern Bengal; but their proportional strength had shown an uninterrupted increase everywhere for more than a century. Unlike the Hindu, the Muslim showed preference for new and distant settlements, which were decidedly healthier, and where there was less pressure both on the soil and the village site. In new settlements in North and East Bengal where Muslims and lower caste Hindus dominate, the disparity engendered by customs regarding marriage and widowhood among Hindus and Muslims is one of

the chief causes of the abduction of Hindu girls. Besides, the Hindus are placed at a disadvantage in newly reclaimed territories, because social customs definitely favour population increase among Muslims and definitely retard it in their case. The Muslim peasants can move out more easily to distant chars and marshes have another wife-cum-labourer besides the one left in the parent village, both being prolific (Mukerjee 1997: 163).

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