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Unity in Diversity: Search for Common Indian National Identity

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Abstract: *In a multiethnic country like India, extracting a common national identity out of the numerous distinct social identities is a cumbersome task. India, in spite of its rich cultural heritage and glorious past in terms of one of the great ancient civilizations, today somehow lacks in offering a unified identity milieu for its citizens. The various sub categories of caste, class, ethnic and linguistic groups dominate the identity of Indians. The question which arises at this point is why in spite of being one of world's largest democracies, Indians lag in fulfilling the constitutional pre-requisite of equality and fraternity. Expressions of emotions and expansion of thoughts are somehow paralyzed among Indians due to loss of the respect and utilization of their own language. The probable reason for this can be located in the Indians' colonial subjugation. The derivation of common national identity for Indians hence calls for an interdisciplinary research paradigm. The present paper is an attempt to critically examine the existing literature on Indians' identity published during the last few decades. It also highlights the key areas of research endeavours with a possibility to identify some salient features of Indians' common national identity.*

Keywords: *Identity, Social identity, National identity, Indian national identity*

I. Introduction

Identity is about how an individual defines himself or herself and how others perceive him or her. It is formed through the process of socialization and the influence of social institutions like family, peer group, etc. A person with a strong sense of identity is one who knows where s/he is in life, has accepted this position and has workable goals for change and growth. S/he has a sense of uniqueness while also having a sense of belonging and wholeness and simultaneously multiplicity of identities (Erickson, 1995). If people did not have an identity, they would lack the means of identifying with or relating to their peer group, to their neighbors, to the communities in which they live or to the people they come across in their everyday lives. Identity therefore 'fits' individuals into the society in which they live. Under this broad aspect, distinctions can be made as, personal identity, relational identity and social identity. Personal identity is relevant to individual's difference from the others but social identity carries similarities with other members of the group. The personal component of self (the "I") is different from the sociological component of self (the 'me') (Mead, 1934). Relational self identity highlights one's interpersonal side (Sedikides, Gartner & O'Mara, 2011). Identity is a plural concept, considering that individual or group can mobilize, actualize, or produce identities according to the context (Dechamps & Devos, 1998).

The personal self is the unitary and continuous awareness of 'who' one is (Baumeister 1998). It is less clear how to conceive the social self, which can be as varied as the groups to which an individual belong. Everybody has a range of different, cross-cutting, social identities, including those derived from highly meaningful groups (e.g., Indian army officer) as well as those referring to more abstract and ambiguous social categories (e.g., Asians). The result is that perceptions of self and others emerge depending on the situation within which identity is most salient (Crisp & Hewstone 2001, Haslam & Turner 1992, Mussweiler et al. 2000, Spears 2001, and Van Rijswijk & Ellemers 2002). Hence, the extent to which a group affects the social self may differ from one group member to the next, depending on the extent to which they consider themselves in terms of that particular group membership (Ellemers et al. 1999c).

Instead of deciding whether the individual self or the collective self is more important, it is better to specify the conditions under which one is likely to take precedence over the other, and with what effect. An important contribution to the understanding of these issues is provided by the social identity approach, subsuming both social identity theory (Tajfel 1978, Tajfel & Turner 1979) and self-categorization theory (Turner 1987). This theoretical framework emphasizes the interaction between social identity from the perceiver's point of view implicating different aspects of the self and social context that enhance or diminish the meaningfulness of personal as well as social identities.

Identity and Social Identity

Social identity is the self-awareness of an individual based on his or her association to the society or any particular group/s. It is defined as that part of the self which refers to cognitions arising from societal position of the individual (Sarbin & Allen, 1968). Social identity research is one of the important domains in social psychology across the globe. Primarily the concept of social identity as a domain under psychology developed in Europe out of a sense of dissatisfaction with attempts to explain intergroup processes in terms of personal and interpersonal relations (Hopkins & Reicher, 2011). Tajfel (1978) proposed a distinction between individual level and group level process, which led to the self categorization theory (Turner et. al., 1987). Elaborating further, the social identity theory (SIT) proposes that individuals get a positive social identity, a positive self-concept based on their membership and through social comparisons between their own and other groups. They try to achieve positive distinctiveness for their own group in order to protect and maintain their self-esteem as group member (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Hence, social identity refers to the fact that the individual perceives him/herself as similar to others of the same background (the 'we').

Tajfel and colleagues (1971) published a series of studies in the early 1970s in which the participants were assigned groups on the basis of arbitrary criteria. Based on these experiments, Tajfel concluded that the mere process of making salient 'us and them' distinctions changes the way people see each other (Tajfel & Wilkes, 1963). A parallel approach to the social identity theory is that the impact of a social group on the way people see themselves and others surrounding cannot be understood without taking into consideration the broader social context in which they function. Explaining this, the theory (Tajfel 1978, Tajfel & Turner 1979) focused on the proposition that social structures can be characterized by a number of key features namely the membership of the group, permeability of group boundaries, the stability of group statuses, and the legitimacy of current status relations; that are also important determinants of the likelihood that group members self-define either at the individual level or at the group level. Researches show that people were more inclined to identify as group members when group status was unstable (promoting intergroup competition and social change), whereas the individual level of self-definition was more salient when group boundaries were permeable or inclusion in the group seemed illegitimate, and is relatively stable (Ellemers 1993).

Further researches in the self-categorization theory have focused on immediate social contextual factors that may influence self-definitions and identity concerns (Turner 1987). The basic assumption is that the relevant social context determines which categorization seems most suitable to provide a meaningful organization of social stimuli, and thus which identity aspects become salient as guidelines for the perceptions and behavior of those who operate within that context (e.g., Oakes 1987, Deaux & Major 1987). Accordingly, research has demonstrated that people perceive their own and other groups in terms of different characteristics, depending on which comparison group or comparative domain provides the frame for their judgments (e.g., Doosje et al. 1998, Haslam & Turner 1992, and Van Rijswijk & Ellemers 2001).

According to Brewer's taxonomy, identity can be categorized into four types based on the definition of social identity (Brewer, 2001). These types are briefly discussed here;

- Person-based social identity, i.e., identity which is formed during the developmental process and socialization. Models following this category of social identity are developmental theories of gender identity (Skevington & Baker, 1989), racial or ethnic identity (Cross, 1991) and cultural identity (Ferdman, 1995).
- Relational social identities, (Stryker, 1980), i.e., form of relational identity such as occupational role relationships, familial relationships and close personal relationships. Groups involving relational membership lead to this kind of identity, such as social clubs and teams. These identities are interdependent and complementary in nature.
- Group-based social identity refers to the perception of self in terms of group membership. Turner's theory of self categorisation fits into this model as it advocates depersonalization of self in response to social categorised membership (Turner et. al. 1987). The self is perceived according to its membership, group norms and group distinctiveness.
- Collective identities is similar to the group-based social identities, collective identity involves shared representations of the group, on the basis of common interests and experiences. It refers to an active process of shaping the identity accordingly with that of the others. The concept of collective identity provides a bridge between social identity and collective action on the political ground (Gamson, 1992) and acts as a key concept in the study of 'identity politics'.

Apart from this, a person can be broadly identified according to the culture, religion, region, gender, language and caste (especially in Indian society). These classifications are hereditarily acquired from the family. These may be termed as 'facets of identity'. Although a person can modify or change them, birth is the primary decider of these facets.

National Identity: National identity is the form of social identity decided by birth or citizenship of a person in a country. Nationalism is the concept arising after the movement of national liberation as a result of colonial rule and reformations of nations in Asia and Africa (Salazaar, 1999). National identity is strengthened with the emergence of nationalism but is formed as a cognitive construct during the developmental phase. Nationality of a person determines the national identity, but nationality is dependent on citizenship of the country. Nation is considered as a deep, horizontal comradeship, in a form of 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1991).

Cultural Identity: The term 'culture' refers to the language, values, beliefs, norms, customs, clothing, food, gender roles, knowledge and skills, and all the other things that people acquire that make up the 'way of life' of a society. Cultural identity is a part of socialization process of an individual. Parental migration, mother's cultural knowledge and orientation (teaching about culture, language) demographic characteristics such as education, and degree of community urbanization influence cultural identity (Knight et. al. 1993).

Regional Identity: Regional identity is somewhat a related concept to state-nation induced identity. In India, states divided on the basis of language and regions give an exclusive example of regional identity. Since the regional or territorial principle is drawn from a belief in ancient heritage, encapsulated in the notion of 'sacred geography', and figures in both imaginations, it has acquired political hegemony over time. Territory is a part of the national identity, but overpowering as an ingroup when it comes to preference (Vershney, 1993).

Religious Identity: Religion as identified in psychology is a set of beliefs and practices related to the divine, God or sacredness. Zinnbauer and Pargament (2005) defined religion as, 'system of belief in a divine or supernatural power, practices of worship and other rituals directed towards such a power'. They also referred to 'religion' as a broad construct, which is not exclusively differentiated from spirituality. Positive effects of religion on group membership provide adolescents 'a sense of membership and belongingness', social support, self-esteem and satisfaction (Loewenthal, 2000). Religion offers an orientation to life and channels an individual to facilitate the rationality of self.

Gender Identity: Gender has two components, namely Masculinity (M) and Femininity (F). While early literature used these two terms 'sex' and 'gender' interchangeably, from the late 1930s, femininity and masculinity had come to be recognized as significant dimensions of personality rather than as given but invisible properties of biological maleness and femaleness (i.e. as psychological processes within are different from appearance) (Basu, 2010). Although sex is a trait determined by birth, gender is psychological in nature. Gender identity is influenced by the society but developed inwardly in the individual.

Social Identity and National Identity

Social identity theory states that identification to a certain group defines individual's social identity and position in the society (Tajfel, 1978). Group members form an ingroup feeling towards each other which often leads to formation and sustenance of outgroup stereotypes. Social identity theory discusses about the permeability of symbolic and social boundaries and its effect on individual and collective identity. (Ellemers, 1993). Studies show that people adapt to their environment through cognitive categorization and stereotyping. Turner (1987) proposed three levels of self-categorization aroused during the formation of self-concept: the super ordinate category of the self, the human identity; the intermediate level of self which is the member of a social ingroup, the social identity; and the subordinate level, i.e. the personal self-categorizations based on interpersonal comparisons or the personal identity. The social identity is strengthened and nurtured by the ingroup positions as opposed to outgroups'. Fiske (1998) particularly argued that ingroup-outgroup classification result from the automatic process of drawing boundaries, which generates categorization as various race and gender.

According to the developmental theories, the acquisition of identity is done in the process of socialization but as per sociological theories, it starts with the differentiation of the social system, its functional roles, positions and the structural relationships among these. Hence, social identities represent the internalization of the norms and expectations associated with society. Social identity theory in social psychology starts with differentiation of the social system, it focuses on categorical distinctions rather than functions or roles as the basis of differentiation. In social identity theory, the ingroup is a set of people who share a common characteristic or social experience (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Taking the macro version of the society, the nation forms a larger group comprising of citizens having similar decent or origin. Although in the era of globalization, citizenship becomes more legal rather psychological, nationality-based model of citizenship potentially rely on a strong social psychological reality which is the commonness of national identities (Sindic, 2011). National identity is the form of social identity decided by birth or citizenship of a person in a country. How we decide nationality is a question in itself.

Considering birth as the parameter for national identity excludes cases of refugees and immigrants and considering citizenship as the parameter adds the confounding variable of race, origin and socialization. In this particular discussion, only nationality acquired on the basis of birth and socialization is being considered. Like similar social identities, national identity is based on people's belief that a national group exists and that the people within that group share common characteristics. People must 'recognize one another as compatriots' (Miller 1995: 22) and share an ingroup feeling. A person's shared belief about the national group matters; without this shared belief, there can be no national identity. Miller's five aspects of national identity are: 1) a belief exists about the existence of national community; 2) this identity embodies historical continuity; 3) the national community is an active community; 4) the identity is embedded in a geographical place; and 5) there is a common political culture with shared beliefs (Miller, 1995: 22–6).

National identity is strengthened by Nationalism, which is the concept arising after the movement of national liberation as a result of colonial rule and reformations of nations in Asia and Africa (Salazaar, 1999). Nationality of a person determines the national identity, but nationality is dependent on citizenship of the country. Nation is considered as a deep, horizontal comradeship (Anderson, 1991, p.7). The understanding of national identity as a shared community was depicted in Benedict Anderson's (1991) definition of nation as an 'imagined community'. Anderson defined nation as an imagined community that is both sovereign and limited. It is sovereign, because the nation governs itself and it is limited as there are boundaries. Even though people within the nation have hardly met their fellow nationals, they can imagine the oneness with those residing within the boundaries of the nation. They feel a strong sense of comradeship even without the benefit of personal interaction.

The basic components of the national identity framework are belief structure, cultural homogeneity, national heritage and ethnocentrism (Herskovits, 1948; Huntington, 1996; 1993). Belief structure is the role which religion plays in facilitating cultural participation. It lays impact on culture and its interaction with the unique national identity. A belief system or structure enables a psychological link between individual beliefs and a culture's aggregate social structure (Husted et al., 1996). Next component is national heritage. It is defined as the importance shown towards the nation's history and mythology. The national heritage component gives the culture's sense of its own unique history (Huntington, 1997). Another component is cultural homogeneity. The diversity of subcultures in a given national boundary is hypothesized to exert an inverse relationship to the 'strength' of national identity. This is the case of Indian society. India being a multicultural nation psychologically lacks in a unique common nationality component. The cultural homogeneity component symbolizes the cultural uniqueness of a given society and its sense of national identity. The most dramatic component of national identity is ethnocentrism (Shimp and Sharma, 1987). Ethnocentrism, as a concept was developed by Sumner (1906); suggesting that, in an intergroup situation, one's ingroup is the centre of everything, and all others are associated to or dependent on it. Ethnocentrism tends to be viewed as 'the synonym for general antipathy towards all outgroups' (Berry and Kalin 1995:p. 303). On the basis of numerous studies on this topic it was concluded that 'ethnocentrism shows a lack of acceptance of cultural diversity, a general intolerance for outgroup and a relative preference for ingroup over most outgroups' (Berry and Kalin, 1995). An ethnocentric tendency is considered to be one in which individuals, or societies, make cultural evaluations based on their own cultural perspectives. A strong ethnocentric attitude will be one indication that the given culture has a high degree of a sense of national identity.

Social Identity Complexity

The unintentional growth in the dimensions of social identities in human life is adding to the raised complexities. The innate group memberships, such as nationality, religion, language, gender, caste, etc are outnumbered by the acquired ones, for example, associations, federations, sports club, political affiliations, etc. These multiplying identities subjectively combine and further decide the human behavior. This subjective structure of multiple identities is theorized as social identity complexity theory (Roccas and Brewer, 2002). In this theory, four patterns are explained according to which crosscutting group memberships are combined and managed. The first method is 'intersection', where only those who share all the category membership are considered as ingroup. For example, one Indian Hindi speaking person will consider only other Indian Hindi speaking as ingroup member. In the next method, i.e. 'dominance', one prime group membership dominates other identities. For example, being male (member of male ingroup) dominates other social identities. Next pattern is 'compartmentalization'. In this method, activation of group membership is contextual and situational. And the one high on both differentiation and integration is 'merger'. In this method, the individual recognizes that each of his/her group identities is inclusive in terms of role playing. As a result, others sharing either or both group membership are considered as ingroup members simultaneously. On the basis of this theory, national identity and its overt expression is subjectively defined. It is dependent on the individual, time and space.

Globalization and National Identity

Globalization and national identity are two separate concepts but having influence on each other. Impact of globalization on identity has often focused on the diminishing importance of the nation state or of local cultures in shaping identities. People rethink their identities and exercise control over defining themselves in the context of the encompassing forces of globalization. Edensor (2002: 29) summarizes the dichotomies by stating "Thus globalization and national identity should not be conceived in binary terms but as two inextricably linked processes". Global processes might diminish a sense of national identity or reinforce it. However, with the global cultural flow, globalization is facilitating the expansion of national identities and providing cultural resources which can be domesticated within popular and everyday national cultures (Salazaar, 1998).

Indians and their national identity

Being Indian is not just having a citizenship of India, but having roots in the Indian civilization. Now, as we see India, it is the result of post-colonial distribution of land and partition of the country. Historically it was composed of India and her neighboring countries. Geographically, India was known as the *Bharat Khanda* (Indian subcontinent) (Kumar, 2000). What we Indians are today, is a result of years of immigration, conquests, ramifications, evolution and globalization (recently added component) (Chatterjee, Pusalker, & Dutt, 1958). Hence Indian psyche cannot be termed as homogeneous and Indian identity is heavily influenced by the multicultural mindset (Hong, Morris, Chin, Benet-Martinez, 2000). The affiliation drawn from Indian nationality is derived from history, but is influenced and regulated by modernity. Nationality gives rise to the unified 'we' feeling based on the nation.

India is among the oldest existing civilizations of the world. Evidence found in the form of *Vedas,* Upanishads and epics like the Mahabharata and the Ramayana depicts the origin of Indian culture. Fascinated by the uniqueness and diversity of India and Indians, many travelers, traders, monks and ambassadors have visited and stayed in India. Since the 3rd century B.C. travelers have given travelers accounts based on their observation and interaction. These written records in it act as an archival discourse for studying India, Indian society, culture and Indian psyche.

Observations based on Indian Society

The Greek ambassador Megasthenes was probably the first traveler who presented an official account of his visit to India. He came to India and stayed in the court of Chandragupta Maurya from 324 - 300 B.C. merely based on the keen observation, he divided Indian society into various classes: philosophers; husbandmen; shepherds and hunters (manual labor); fighting men and inspectors; counselors and assessors of the king. He presented a detailed report on Indian society, caste functioning, but not on the chaturvarna system (Harichandan, 2009). Chinese travelers, Yuan Chwang came during 629-644 AD and I.Tsing in 671-695 AD. They also observed and interpreted Indian society from their perspective. In 399 BC, Faxian, the oldest Chinese monk to travel to India, explained Indian rituals and religiosity. Few other Chinese monks such as, in 627 BC, Xuanzang and during 671-695 B.C. Yijing visited the birth place of Buddha and other relevant places of His life and wrote about Indian rituals, traditions, their association to Buddhism and status of Buddhism in India (Sen, 2006).

The earliest Arabic traveler Al- Biruni (973 -1030 AD) wrote about India based on his Sanskrit knowledge. He also translated some Indian texts into Persian. Abul Fazl Allami in late 16th century wrote about Akbar's court, Indian society and the Varna system. Ibn Batnta, an Arab traveler from Morocco came to India during 1333-1347 AD. He wrote about Indian geography and culture based on what he witnessed (Harichandan, 2009).

After 17th century, there were frequent European travelers in India. Barbasa, the Portuguese traveler, based on his observation and interaction with local people wrote about the major cultural features of the caste system and in details, the practice of untouchability. French merchant and traveler, Jean Tavernier had written historical and commercial accounts of his travel in India, about the reign of Aurangzeb & Hindu beliefs, rituals and customs. Abraham Roger, a Chaplain at the Dutch factory at Pulicat in Madras studied Hinduism from Dutch speaking Brahmin, Padmanubha and wrote about Hinduism and the caste system. Proceeding further, we can get British accounts on Indian customs, land policies, and Bengal society (Harichandan, 2009).

Regarding these accounts, the major problem was that they relied on mere observation and the study of texts which was not much connected to the social reality of the village life. These texts are not based on common citizen's version of the society. Second, the texts portrayed the Brahminical view on Indian society, which is a one sided viewpoint for the society. Lastly it did not take into account the regional variations in Indian society and culture. Different communities, and tribes hold varied customs, and minute details of these sects sere not included. Although the earliest writings on Indian society are brief and sketchy, they are important for understanding Indian society.

Throughout the literature found from travelers account, British documents and historical descriptions, the emphasis is on description of India and Indian society. Very few writings are based on Indian psyche and objectification of Indian identity. Most of the writings focus on the caste system of Indian society. The caste system since the Vedic periods regulates Indians' life. The Varna theory of caste system makes caste as an endogamous classification of people based on their role in society, but is essentially decided by the birth. the rigid caste barriers allow members of only elite caste and a particular gender (male) to be expressive, this fact exhibits a long lasting effect on Indian psyche (Sen 2005). So, these findings can be applied in the field of psychology and identity research but with limitations. The main limitation in such research is the lack of empirical research and records in psychology. A complete study of Indian texts requires thorough knowledge of Sanskrit, Pali, and Ardhamagadhi, which isa difficult task in 21st century (Kumar, 2000). The beginning of Indian psychology may be traced in the writings of many eminent thinkers, like Vivekanand and Sri Aurobindo in the early part of the last Century (Dalal, 2002).

Approaches Towards Deriving Indian Identity

Deriving a singular national identity for the billions of diversified Indians is challenging. But there must be some commonalities which enable an Indian residing in northern India and other in southern India, both worshipping the same idol and celebrating similar rituals. Considering these facts, it can be hypothesized that there ought to be some sameness in the psyche of the Indians (Sinha, 1999). In Indian psychology, identity research based on Indianness, emerged out as an attempt to understand and compile features of Indian psyche. Indian civilization is not just a melting pot where various civilizations have homogenized; rather it has added new dimensions to the already existing identity or situation. The Indian, thus, comprises a human with multi-identities which s/he holds together (Jahanbegloo, 2008).

Politically, there may be two principal imaginations about India's national identity: the secular nationalist and the Hindu nationalist. The secular nationalist consists of territory and culture and the Hindu nationalist consists of religion and territory (Varshney, 1993). For the construction of the secular India, one of the best sources is Nehru's 'The Discovery of India' (1989). Pluralism, unity and tolerance to diversity are the main themes of this book. He explained that in India, there is unity in culture, not in religion. He stated:

"Ancient India, like ancient China, was a world in itself, a culture and a civilization which gave shape to all things. Foreign influences poured in and often influenced that culture and were absorbed. Disruptive tendencies gave rise immediately to an attempt to find a synthesis. Some kind of a dream of unity has occupied the mind of India since the dawn of civilization. That unity was not conceived as something imposed from outside, a standardization of beliefs. It was something deeper and, within its fold, the widest tolerance of belief and custom was practiced and every variety acknowledged and even encouraged." (Nehru, 1989).

Sketching the portrait of an Indian is not a new concept. The attempt to describe and draw characteristics of Indians based in ethnic identity bears its roots in the colonial era. The eight volume work entitled "The people of India" is a series of photographic illustrations, with description of the races and tribes of Hindustan, originally prepared under the authority of Government of India (British India), published between 1868 and 1875, is probably the first colonial data on Indians (Pinney, 1997). Derived from other theoretical literature, Indians are perceived as mild, passive, inner-directed, having low level of aspiration (Narain, 1957; Spratt, 1966; Taylor, 1948). Historically, India as a nation has remained intact only under strong central power based on military strength (Sinha, 1999). In spite of being one of the world's largest functional democracies, the colonial mindset is evident in Indian society, education, architecture and administration (Varma, 2010). Indian love for power and hierarchy is evident by Indian social structure (Varma, 2004). This is an appropriate reason for the nomenclature Indians received as being 'homo hierarchicus' (Dumont, 1970). Indian society is just theoretically equal; practically the power hierarchy is evident in each and every sphere, including public and private sector (Kakar & Kakar, 2007).

Co-existence of contrasting values is a distinguishable Indian feature (Choudhary, 1966). The highest ideal of work stands side by side with the lowest example of depravity in work culture and behavior (Sinha & Sinha, 1990). Indians can compartmentalize the new learning of science or business with the older ways (Singer, 1972). Tolerance of dissonance is a part of Indian social thinking. This is the probable reason for the unresolved conflicting tendencies present in Indian Psyche (Sinha, 1962). On a critical note, these traits have enhanced adaptability and resilience among Indians. One of the preliminary studies in psychology, which supposedly encompassed a quite reasonable portion of India, revealed three core characteristics of Indian psyche, namely, familism, hierarchical and maintaining personalized relationships (Sinha, 1999). It has been also proved empirically that the core components of Indianness are culture and religion (Kapur, Mishra & Das, 2011).

Although these findings are varied, there exist some common elements. Taking a keen observation on the studies, their stepwise analysis and conclusions, components like family, practices, belief system and social functioning focus common Indian elements. Overgeneralization and somehow biased judgment are made about Indian collectivism. A recent study rank India on third position following US and Germany, on the list of

individualism (Fisher, et al. 2009). We, Indians are oriented towards smaller ingroup sect, such as family, peer group etc. drawing a collaborative 'we' feeling based on nation is rare. Indian life and society is more oriented towards micro level group, like family and less oriented towards macro level ingroup feelings, like for the nation. For Indians, the sense of identity is being expressed on occasions of collective celebrations, such as festivals cricket matches etc (Kakar and Kakar, 2007). Indian practices, may be religious or cultural, are not same but similar in nature. These are mostly festival oriented, meant to please the supernatural powers for nature's prosperity and spiritual. The long back caste system of Indian society has a very intriguing effect on Indian psyche. The hierarchical functioning of society, individual inclination towards maintaining power distance and vertical work culture, all these can be attributed to the *chaturvarna* system.

II. Conclusion

The overall view obtained from this article is about the need for identifying the common elements of Indian psyche which can lead to psychologically definable identity markers for Indians. The present discourses on Indian identity consider over generalized facts; few research approaches towards getting an insight of this field. The common elements derived in this article not necessarily unite Indians, but can lead to certain amount of predictability about us. 'National identity' is a difficult subject as it attempts to draw the exact nature of any particular nation; hence national identity is controversial (Watson 2000). Overall, from the theoretical and few empirical finings, the common element of Indian identity can be considered as being 'family oriented, 'hierarchy prone' and preferring 'societal practices'. However, these topics are yet to be explored further in order to derive the components of Indian national identity, empirically.

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