Chapter Three

Learning from the Grassroots: Educator Activism

3.0 Introduction

The argument in this chapter is the need to develop an "educator activist" identity that would enable advocacy from below replacing current advocacy from above of the TNANs. Examining the aspect of being involved with the grassroots would allow for inclusion of the cultural and social aspects in working with the marginalised and not just emphasise the economic dimension. This would give us an opportunity to arrive at a working definition and personal qualities of an "educator activist." I formulate such a definition towards the end of this chapter.

The findings in chapter two have led us to see the necessity for individuals and groups of Northern advocates to include marginalised individuals and groups, especially from the South, in their advocacy. This implies being in touch with the grassroots in the South and the North. Grassroots in the North include the migrant population, marginalised groups including women, the economically weak, gay and lesbian groups. This contact and co-ordinated work with such groups will enrich the experience and expertise of all involved to advocate from below. In the context of MNCs and governments, shaping and controlling the lives and consciousness of the masses for their own ends of profit and power, the need is for people who have themselves evolved a counter consciousness and capable of leading others to this transformative counter consciousness. It is my hope that educator activists, a concept that I elaborate in this chapter, will provide such an alternative.

To arrive at establishing the need for such an identity on the part of the Northern and Southern advocates, I begin by examining the role of theory and praxis, intellectualism and activism, in advocacy networks. This can be exemplified further by surveying the process of such identity formation in the South, with a concrete example of the *dalit* movement in India. Thereby, I focus on the life experiences of its founder Ambedkar and present day *dalit* theorists and activists as revealed to me through my interviewst with them.

Increasing professionalisation of the TNANs, as described in chapter two, section 2.5.1.2.1, led to their increased alienation from political grass-root movements and social

basis. This is especially so in the North. The link between advocacy groups and grassroots initiatives within the South is also weakening. The gap is even greater between theorists who criticise society's functioning and the grass-root activists. Bringing together socially critical theory and praxis contributes to a great extent to mobilisation of the masses. The dichotomy that exists between theory and action of TNANs shows itself when seen from the national, sub-national and local points of view. A closer look at grassroots movements in the South, especially the dalit movement in India, and their transnational ramifications, helps elaborating this dichotomy and distance.

To achieve the goal of community mobilisation, the need for educators, theorists and analysts to develop an activist-identity is imperative.[92] This concept of "educational activist" is developed here on two levels: theory and praxis. The "activist" part of educator activism does not refer to "actionism." It refers, rather, to action in the sense of making theory practicable. It calls for theorists and educationists to see the advantages of letting the action-potential in their theories find expression in the field. Theoretical interests and practical mobilisation activity should interact and fructify one another. It is a call for theorists and educationists to see the advantages of letting the action-potential in their theories find expression in the field.

Educator activism is a choice between social praxis, which makes mere insight possible, and a political praxis, which consciously aims at transforming systems and institutions. The kind of rhetoric of economy driven advocacy is incapable of praxis. In such rhetoric, change is merely "purposive action guided by social-technical recommendations"(Habermas, 1974:3).[93] In turn, it constructs a difference between the "more" and "less" intelligent, the "more" and "less" practical and ultimately the "powerful" and the "powerless". This is also well described in the context of the legitimation crisis of "knowledge control" by the North in the previous chapter, section 2.5.2. This rhetoric produces and constructs static and demeaning identities. To counter

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[92] In literature regarding theory and practice and the need for combining them both, the terms used to describe socially involved intellectuals and theorists are often used interchangeably: While I prefer to call them educator-activists, Said calls them public intellectuals, Foucault calls them single intellectuals, Bourdieu terms them engaged intellectuals and in the past Gramsci termed them organic intellectuals. See section 3.2 below.

[93] The problem with traditional theory and social philosophy is that they have taken on a monologic form, incapable of essentially relating to praxis. In the context of advocacy, it exists in the form of not relating to the essential needs of the grassroots populations.

such construction of identities, alternative concepts of developing dynamic and complex identities is necessary.

3.1 Action Potential in Theory

Theorists need to develop an identity suitable to put their theory into praxis. However, when we accept that commonality and community are produced through political mobilisation and are not given *apriori,* then a move from one form of identity to the other needs to be consciously produced through involvement with social action and community work. Coupling identity formation with a particular project of developing an identity suitable for advocacy work is therefore inevitable. This coupling implies seeing the process of identity formation in the classical sense, in the light of recent calls, from contemporary thinkers and intellectuals, for an active role of intellectuals in social affairs (Mc Laren, 1997; Said, 1996; Bourdieu, 1991; Mato, 2002; 2000; 2000a). A fluid and un-centred understanding of identity is necessary which helps seeing the action-potential in theory. It:

> …suggests an active political role for theory, not merely in its traditional role of providing analyses for which politics will supply the actors and actions. Theory is involved in creating the terms in and through which subjects come to recognise themselves, to grasp their circumstances and imagine their futures. It hails them, calling into being, provoking self-recognition, identification and desire. As one constituent of class politics, class theory offers a range of subject positions that individuals may inhabit, constituting themselves as class subjects with particular political energies and possibilities. It is in this sense that theory is powerful and always political (Gibson -Graham-, *et al*, 2000:19).

The pre-requisite to releasing this political potential in theory is a conscious involvement with grassroots issues and a comprehensive view of justice.

3.1.1 Conflicting Interpretations of Theory and Knowledge

Involvement in social movements provides opportunity for new intellectual types to emerge and gives individuals, opportunities to learn new skills and to practise them. This is the reason why it is important for theorists and academics to be in touch with the grass roots. This new intellectual type will have to be imbedded in a vision of knowledge or discours as implicated in and constitutive of power, and as an important medium through which other social processes are constructed. Knowledge is plural, contradictory, and powerful rather than singular, cumulative, and neutral. The production of knowledges is a world-changing activity, one that repositions other knowledges and empowers new subjects, practices, policies, and institutions (*ibid*:21).

It is precisely in this area of producing such kind of knowledge that the tension between intellectuals and activists could be explained. Tensions between intellectuals based primarily in the community and those working within formal, educational settings are a constant feature in the cultural life of various grassroots movements (Escoffier, 1995:20-34).[94] Intellectuals, both community and academic (section 3.2 below), are crucial to the process of articulating collective identities and forging a sense of group loyalty. Starting out from different relations to the production of the collective representations of their community, each intellectual operates outside established institutions of cultural legitimation because the identities represented by the marginalised, new movements are not accepted by the society at large.

There is, therefore, a "strong emphasis on inventing a new knowledge, a new vocabulary, and defining bodies of knowledge" (*ibid*: 21). One possibility is to re-define the role of intellectuals in the sense of developing their own capacity for political creativity and imagination on their journey to become educator activists. These new efforts at creating knowledges and identities and languages are called for to replace institutionalised forms of knowledge that marginalise certain communities and social groups. The involvement of intellectuals, therefore, with the grassroots movements is important because these movements are often sources for new scientific theories, academic fields and offer spaces for new political and social identities. It is in this complex of grassroots movements, construction of new knowledges and cultural politics that conflicts between intellectuals and activists generat. At the same time it offers the possibility for the emergence of the identity as educator activists.

The necessity to develop relevant forms of knowledge by concerned and activist scholars is even more important when seen in the context of the political effects of different forms of knowledge that are relevant in the understanding and representation of communities, movements and political issues. Foucault, for instance, refers to the importance of examining the "truth effects" and "power effects" in the context of knowledge production

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[94] Escoffier explains the conflict between community and academic intellectuals in the context of the gay and lesbian movement. Arguing that the definition of identity and the production of culture are most crucial to the formation and collective action of the new identity movements, he goes on, to say that it is a politics constituted by construction of shared knowledge and ethical norms, one that nurtures a new affirmative sense of self.

and dissemination.[95] The importance of such validity and legitimacy of knowledge is important not only from the point-of-view of the social and political development of movements, but also its effects on the political and intellectual leadership of these movements. The latter of these will be the subject for my discussion of the *dalit* movement and its leader Ambedkar in one of the following sections.

3.1.2 Conflict over access to Resources and Authority

The difference in access to material and authority resources is one of the noted causes for tension between academic and community intellectuals. Notwithstanding the higher salaries for academics in comparison to the activists, politically inclined academics who choose to research on movements of the marginalised like women, lesbians, gay and cultural studies, face the problem of under funding. Inequalities between mainstream and committed academics are also reflected in the hierarchy and status within educational institutions and the society at large. This has a also lot to do with the different social value accorded disciplinary knowledge based within formal educational institutions compared to the vernacular knowledge of community intellectuals. This difference yields unequal degrees of cultural authority or "symbolic capital" leading to different power effects (Bourdieu, 1990).

Using cultural and symbolic capital is an important basis for acquiring the power to articulate a collective identity. The social authority acquired in previous struggles has a huge influence in efforts to inculcate in others minds a vision, a sense of self and the recognition of social possibilities. Like credit, those who have obtained significant recognition can only bank upon symbolic and cultural capital. Therefore, the representatives of a community or movement can only be chosen at the end of a long process of institutionalisation, because the representatives are the forces who shape the group. It is important that the social movement's vision of history is based on actually existing social forces and developments.

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[95] The terms "power effects" and "truth effects" are the double effects of any discursive operation by which power/knowledge is constituted. Refer to Foucault, Michael, "Truth and Power" in Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977. New York: Pantheon, 1980:108-33.
Also see Smart, Barry. "The Politics of Truth and the Problem of Hegemony" in: Couzens, David. Foucault: A Reader. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986:157-74. Smart here relates Foucault's conception of power/knowledge and Gramsci's concept of Hegemony.

While community intellectuals are engaged in the production of knowledge as part of a project to create solidarity within their community, the academics are engaged in the creation of intellectual legitimacy. Most often the intellectual legitimacy is the one that becomes the source of intellectual authority in our society, marginalizing the kind of knowledge emanating from and sought for by the grassroots movements and their intellectuals. It is a conflict between the epistemic authority of the formal institutional intellectuals and the charismatic authority of everyday community experience of the community intellectuals.[96]The undermining of vernacular knowledge propagated by the community intellectuals lies in the essentialist belief that such knowledge emanates directly from the community. There is a bias that it is only limited to the political and moral conflicts in the community without any larger significance for society in general. It becomes enmeshed, unjustly, in the normative and moralistic priorities of the community. This essentialist belief causes vernacular knowledge produced by community intellectuals to be taken less seriously outside their communities.

On the other hand, the struggle of marginalised groups like the *Dalits*, becomes hegemonic, in the sense of Gramsci through a careful building up of their authority, which gradually leads to a unification of their theory and praxis.[97] The educational institutions and intellectuals in such a unification process are strong sources of cultural legitimation. The struggle for recognition and empowerment of the *dalit* communities in the process of forging and reconstructing their collective identity gives rise to a great deal of cultural politics. Such a struggle requires both vernacular and disciplinary knowledges, both solidarity and legitimation. However, the social acceptance of a stigmatised community depends on the legitimacy offered by the disciplinary knowledge produced by it. As mentioned earlier, this disciplinary knowledge is the domain of academic intellectuals, and they, in order to produce a relevant disciplinary knowledge need the co-operation of

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[96] For a distinction between the epistemic and charismatic authority, see the discussion of Rorty, Richard, "Solidarity or Objectivity" in his Objectivity, Relativism and Truth. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991:21-34.

[97] " Critical understanding of self takes place therefore through a struggle of political 'hegemonies', and of opposing directions, first in the ethical field and then in that of politics proper, in order to arrive at the working out at a higher level of one's own conception of reality. Consciousness of being part of a particular hegemonic force (so to say, political consciousness) is the first stage towards a further progressive self-consciousness in which theory and practice will become one". See, Gramsci, Antonio. Selections from the Prison Notebooks. Ed. & Tr. Quintin Hoare & Geoffrey Nowell Smith.Third Printing. New York: International Publishers, 1999: 133. On the one hand, Gramsci refers to hegemony, negatively, as leading to the leaders and the led, the powerful and the powerless and on the other hand he refers to the gradual development of grassroots ideas into hegemonic, positively, to powerful, transformative forces.

collective intellectuals. The collective representation of community intellectuals and activists articulate new meanings and values, new relationships, leading to continued creation of new practices.

3.2 Approaches to Educator Activism: Some Pointers

In this process of co-operation between academics and community intellectuals, the conflictual point is the control over grounds on which knowledge is produced and legitimated. The question then is of who gets to represent the community, politically and intellectually. What need to be acknowledged by the community and academic intellectuals are their different approaches to theory. The resistance of community intellectuals to theory arises from the context-dependence of vernacular knowledge. Academics insist, however, that theory is important to make explicit the links between social and political institutions and interpretative strategies. These different points of view and related tensions legitimate the need for an amalgamation of academic and community intellectuals. Moreover, there are hardly any kind of institutional framework that encompasses both community and academic intellectuals. More often community intellectuals are stigmatised and even excluded from mainstream public spheres. It is only through the creation of some form of public spheres that the psychological investments and academic privileges of the scholars and the academic charismatic authority of community intellectuals and activists can be modified in order to produce knowledge that draws both vernacular and disciplinary sources. Debate, analysis and experimentation must be implemented to test the validity and authority of each kind of knowledge because both kinds of knowledge would be trivialised without such encounters and exchange. Collective debate must be the basis for producing academic and community knowledge. For such a dialogue to take place there is a need for the establishment of cultural intermediaries like publishing houses, journals, and national/international conferences. Owing to the marginalisation of Southern knowledge bases, and domination of resources over knowledge and intelligence by the North, there is a need for working towards a more just access to such knowledge resources. This process of working will be discussed further in the chapter under the section, *Learning from the South*. Here, I continue discussing different approaches to the roles of intellectuals and activists.

3.2.1 Educator Activists: An Emerging Concept

Research regarding the importance of theorists' and educationists' involvement at the grass root levels is limited, but the need to explore such identity-development has been pointed out earlier. John McCarthy, describing activists' identities and careers writes: "…understanding transnational activism requires understanding the more or less formal opportunities that allow committed activists to choose extended careers in transnational activism. Such an understanding leads to a consideration of mobilising structures and the mobilisation of resources"(McCarthy in Smith, *et al*, 1997:247). A selection of views from important thinkers on the role of intellectuals in political and social life provides us with pointers to my own concept of educator activists. While I cull out, below, some of the important views on this issue, I still hold on to their limitation, the sense of their being still in a primary stage. They fail to concretise the identity of educator activism, in the sense of intellectuals embodying within themselves the revolutionary potential of theory and the practicality of concrete action at the grassroots levels. Many of the thinkers, until today, stop short of attributing an important role to intellectuals in directing social movements and advocacy networks. That is the reason why many of the citations and references to analysts in this regard only qualify the term "intellectuals" with terms such as "engaged", "committed" and so on. Such qualifications fail to incorporate a clear "activist" dimension to intellectuals, which I am attempting to do through reflections on "educator activists". The concept of "educator activists," theerefore, is not a mere substitute to the terms, "intellectual" or "activist." It is rather a conglomerated use of these terms to indicate individuals involved in social change.

3.2.1.1 Traditional and Organic Intellectuals

One of the pioneers who reflected on intellectuals being active at the grassroots levels is the Marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci. He makes constant references to the concept of "organic intellectuals", distinct from "traditional intellectuals." Gramsci focused in his writings, among other things, on the formation of intellectuals. There can be no distinct category of intellectuals independent of class or a community to which they belong. Although all men and women are potentially intellectuals, not all are intellectuals while discharging their social functions. Gramsci groups such functional intellectuals into two groups. The "traditional" intellectuals are the professionals whose position ultimately derive from the past and present class relations and conceal an attachment to various

historical class formations. The "organic intellectuals" on the other hand, are the "thinking and organising element of a fundamental social class. They are defined less by their profession than by their function in directing the ideas and aspirations of the class to which they organically belong" (Gramsci, 1999:3). This scheme of traditional and organic intellectuals runs through all aspects of Gramsci's thought. This scheme has its origins in the Leninist idea of workers and professional intellectuals of bourgeois origin being fused into a single unit. Lenin was totally against the distinction between the division of labour in social democracy between an elite class of intellectuals providing theory and ideology to the non-intellectual working masses. Gramsci took this scheme of Lenin a step further, relating it to the working class as a whole. The working class is capable of developing from within its ranks its own organic intellectuals. The organic intellectuals of the working class, therefore, have their role in production and in the organisation of work on the one hand and, on the other, of playing a "directive" political role. "It is through this assumption of conscious responsibility, aided by absorption of ideas and personnel from the more advanced bourgeois intellectual strata that the proletariat can escape from defensive corporatism and economism and advance toward hegemony"(*ibid*:4).[98]

Transferring these idea of the conflict between traditional and organic intellectuals to my argument of the conflict between mere academics and activists, we may say that the advocates for the marginalised need to develop a new attitude, purpose and outlook in their theory and praxis. The mode of being an educator activist does not suffice by being merely eloquent, momentarily being able to move feelings and passions. It implies active participation in practical life, as constructor, organiser and permanent persuader. There needs to be a move from technique-as-work and technique-as-science to the "humanistic conception of history, without which one remains 'specialised' and does not become 'directive' (*ibid*:10).[99] In the current struggle between the ideology of the market economy and the attempt at transnational advocacy lie the efforts of its advocates winning the ideological battle. This is possible only when they are organically involved with the grassroots, marginalised groups they are advocating for.

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[98] Also see George, Susan. „Winning the war of ideas: Lessons from the Gramscian Right", posted on the homepage of Susan George in the following website: www.tni.org

[99] The Italian term „dirigente" translated here as "directive" in English, infused into this context, contains a number of key Gramscian ideas: "on the possibilities of proletarian cultural hegemony through domination of the work process, on the distinction between organic intellectuals of the working class and traditional intellectuals form outside, on the unity of theory and practice as a basic Marxist postulate, etc.," *ibid*., footnote no. 9

3.2.1.2 Public Intellectuals

The reference to Gramsci can be criticised by some as an anachronistic misquoting of his ideas to our modern times. It may be considered a just critique. But reflecting on a deeper level, focussing on the political message of Gramsci makes his ideas even so relevant today as well in his times. This contemporaneity of Gramsci's thoughts to our times is reflected very much in the works of Bourdieu relating to the importance of intellectuals becoming relevant, committed and collective in their efforts. Closely related to the concept of organic intellectuals is the concept of public intellectuals.[100] Later work of the late Bourdieu referred to this aspect highlighting the need of intellectuals becoming more involved in community affairs (Bourdieu, 2001:34-42; 2002; 2004). In the face of continued new forms of domination by economic and bureaucratic forces, the "intellectuals" have a clear and present challenge of getting involved with social questions today. An effective way of doing this would be to put into place "critical networks" against dominant forces, where the "specific intellectuals" in the Foucaultian sense, and strong collective intellectuals could find their place. These collective intellectuals would have the task of thinking and acting independently to protect their autonomy, those whose task lies in "representing, embodying, articulating a message, a view, an attitude, philosophy or opinion to, as well as for, a public…publicly to raise embarrassing questions, to confront orthodoxy and dogma, to be someone who cannot easily be *co-opted by governments or corporations, and whose raison d'etre is to represent all those people and issues that are routinely forgotten or swept under the rug."*(Said, 1996:11. *Italics* mine). They have a collective task of renewing politics replacing the one of neoliberalism. This can only be done when critical, political thinking is defined in a novel way instead of withdrawing themselves into their "small academic worlds", from where they are occupied with themselves without seriously moving anyone to think and act differently (Bourdieu, 2001:37-39). Like Gramsci, Bourdieu invests such critical, committed intellectuals with a "directive" role. However, Bourdieu sees the role of such committed intellectuals to be involved in the creation of social conditions for the collective production of realistic utopias:

> The collective intellectual could co-ordinate the search for new forms of political action and co-operation, put into place collective projects and participate in their implementation. His role then is a sort of midwife, supporting politically active groups in their efforts, formulate their tasks and

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[100] See „ Scholarship and Commitment." Collected Papers of the Modern Language Association of America, Chicago, December 1999.

aims better, to become aware of what they are and could be or should be and thereby gathering and spreading social knowledge about the social world (*ibid*:9. *Translation* mine).

3.2.1.3 Movement Intellectuals and Established Intellectuals – Cognitive Praxis

Categorising movement actors, those involved in advocacy networks, only between the "leaders and the led" or "organisers and individual members" could lead to the inability of capturing the "range of intellectual activities that are performed by activists in social movements"(Eyerman&Jameson, 1991:94ff; Eyerman, 1994:133ff). Bringing into perspective the cognitive dimension into our discussion on advocacy and identity will provide opportunities to decipher this range of activities. Jameson and Eyerman analyse social movements in general, but their views on a cognitive approach to social movements applies equally well to my discussion on advocacy networks and the 'activists' involved in these networks. Following this logic, we may say that advocacy networks are producers of knowledge and not merely sources for instrumental and strategic actions. Seen in this way, one may perceive the range of intellectual practices occurring in advocacy networks coupled with the contributions of the different actors to such networks.

All activists in advocacy networks are in some sense "movement intellectuals" through their contribution to the formation of the network's collective identity. However, all activists do not participate equally in the network's cognitive praxis, meaning the cognitive dimensions of its activities. The higher visibility of some actors as organisers, leaders or spokespersons, owing to sources outside the network, for instance, the media, distinction is made between the leaders and the led. All intellectuals, however, emerge in particular contexts, in processes of social interaction and through carrying out activities in particular social contexts. In this sense, the term intellectual has a particular interpretation in the context of social movements and advocacy networks. They are attributed the role of producing ideas or the manipulation of symbols, the creation of meaning and identity which in turn are the "core of social movement activities". They provide movements with ideological direction (Konrad&Szeloenyi, 1979; Gouldner, 1979).[101] Such intellectuals however, develop their identity through interacting with social movements. Jameson and Eyerman define such movement intellectuals as "those individuals who through their activities articulate the knowledge interests and cognitive identity of social movements.

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[101] The influence of intellectuals on social movements is acknowledged as so important that some analysts claim that social movements are created by intellectuals for their own interests. Social movements are seen as vehicles to pursue the interests of intellectuals.

They are movement intellectuals because they create their individual role at the same time as they create the movement, as new individual identities and a new collective identity take form in the same interactive process"(Eyerman & Jameson, *ibid*: 98). Therefore, movement intellectuals do not perform their intellectual function in the context of a social movement or represent some transcendental intellectual role within social movements. Intellectual activity here is a process identical to the "activities" of the social movement. It is a "process rather than product". This does not imply that the intellectual is above the actions of a social movement. It implies, rather, that movement intellectuals constantly evolve their identity in the context of the grass roots actions of the movement.

This perspective of the intellectual's role in the movements is to be seen as a development from the elitist role attributed to the traditional, partisan intellectuals in the nineteenth century. A brief evolution of this role aids in understanding our own concept of educator activist more clearly. Jameson and Eyerman term this transformation as a shift from "intellectual-in-movement to movement intellectual". The 'intellectual-in-movement' or the partisan intellectual of the nineteenth century was part of an elite grounded in high culture, using a higher standpoint to claim insight into the laws of history and society, and in the process asserting to themselves a role of leading blind social forces. Their movement intellectual practice, enforced through their spoken and written texts, attempted largely to influence the understanding and activities of other movement actors. Quoting Marx and Engels as classical examples of such partisan intellectuals, Jameson and Eyerman describe partisan intellectual further as an, "ideologist and teacher, gatekeeper, deciding what was relevant for discussion and who was competent to participate"(*ibid*:113). This function was later institutionalised to include editing newspapers or running meetings for social movement organisations and communication networks. Contrary to the traditional role of intellectuals in the movements of the past, today, the role of intellectuals in movements is limited and specialised, always determined, in my view, to the extent that they do not put themselves "above" the grass roots but work "with" the various movement actors and grow along with them.

The task of educator activists, therefore, does not rest merely in being merely an oppositional critic of dominant structures and culture, but to aspire for humane universal values. Edward Said attributes such a role to intellectuals. Writing about this aspiration for

universal values Said says, "The intellectual does so on the basis of universal principles: that all human beings are entitled to expect decent standards of behaviour concerning freedom and justice from worldly powers or nations, and that deliberate or inadvertent violations of these standards need to be testified and fought against courageously"(Said, 1996:11-12). The role and impact of intellectuals in society permeates almost all of Said's work (Ashcroft&Ahluwalia, 1999:131).[102] The key issue of Said's discussion on the function of intellectuals is their role in producing non-coercive knowledge. The public intellectual needs to stand, as "an isolated individual consciousness" against prevailing orthodoxy. The power to do this is obtained when the intellectual becomes concrete in his thought and writings, responding to the signs of the times. Said substantiates this stand to be taken by the intellectual as a "professedly universal or humane set of values, which has provided significant local resistance to the hegemony of one culture." The individual consciousness, when firmly aware of its environment and situates itself in the world, responding sensitively to the dominant culture, "is not naturally and easily a mere child of culture, but a historical and social actor in it" (Said, 1978:132).

However, the question remains as to how intellectuals adopt this critical consciousness? It is at this point that the need for a conscious development of an educator-activist identity becomes crucial. Said specifies such a conflict in identity formation when he mentions the conflict between "filiative" bonds (by birth, nationality, profession) and the method or system acquired "affliliatively" (by social and political conviction, economic and historical circumstances, voluntary effort and willed deliberation)(*ibid*:25). One of the ways in which such an identity is acquired could be read into the distinction that Said makes between the "potentate" and the "traveller" while describing the role of the academic. Intellectuals need to adopt the identity of the traveller suspending the claim of customary routine in order to live in new rhythms and rituals. The traveller crosses over territories and frontiers abandoning fixed positions all the time (Said, 1991:18). The universalism of Said is not a reductive type, which apes western traditions, norms and values, but a "textured

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[102] The following works by Said have specific references to the role of intellectuals in social and political affairs:
Orientalism. New York: Pantheon, 1978; Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the rest of the World. Pantheon: New York, 1981. Updated and Revised with a new Introduction, 1997; The World, the Text and the Critic. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983; Culture and Imperialism. London: Chatto & Windus, 1993; Representations of the Intellectual. New York: Vintage Books, 1993; "Third World Intellectuals and Metropolitan Culture" in: Raritan 9(3), Winter 1990; "Identity, Authority and freedom: The Potentate and the Traveller" in: Transition 54, 1991.

universalism in which the local and the global interact to produce a better world for all" (Ashcroft&Ahluwalia, ibid:144). Being grounded within his or her particular society and seeking to expand the space ascribed to them, intellectuals must become relevant to the marginalised and the disadvantaged.

In being involved with grassroots organisations, educator activists then face the challenge of confronting the superficial cosmopolitanism and universalism of globalisation and global competitiveness, which only serve the ends of the ruling powers. This rhetoric of false universalism based on economy robs the masses every possibility of defence in the face of economic forces. Committed scholars need to counter this unreal universalism with a true universalism, which in reality bases itself upon urgent, global problems, for instance the environmental degradation whose dangers cross all borders. This is equally true of the economic and cultural issues too, for instance, the debt problems of the developing countries and the influence of money in the production and distribution of cultural goods. All this may lead to the coming together of intellectuals who think universally, who would cross the borders of states, especially, S-N inequalities, and engage themselves in ensuring universal ownership of universal resources.

3.2.1.3.1 Breaking the Scholarship-Commitment Borders

This calls for developing a disposition and ability to overcome the borders between nations and more importantly to breakthrough the holy limits or sacrosanct borders between scholarship and commitment. This is a difficult process, because to think nationally and to act within the borders of theory without having to bother about the grassroots is deeply rooted in the minds of academics and researchers. This process of breaking the sacrosanct borders between scholarship and commitment is only possible when academics, researchers and educators leave their academic microcosm and build relationships with the outside world, especially grassroots organisations, and related marginalised groups. Scholarship with commitment is therefore a strategy of getting involved in politics, a choice to be made for "political and professional activism"(Croco, *et al*, 1999:2). Their specific contribution in getting involved with the formation of options to the neoliberal politics is to bring in new ideas and provide "symbolic power" to critical inquiries into the effects of neoliberal philosophies, unmasking its effects which are until now concealed, but could be predicted professionally (Bourdieu, 2001:41).

3.3 Need for Educator Activists

We have established above that educator activists need to play an active role in improving advocacy on a transnational level. In doing so, they create a basic interest for social and political will for, and involvement with social action among the wider population. This argument is based on the fact that education and its structures, institutional and extra-institutional, primary and adult education, have a great impact in imparting or hindering such involvement. Educational system traditionally is meant to contribute to conserving existing social structures. So it is important to examine how this system conserves existing structures, and therefore supports the status quo. It helps further reflection on how one could transform these structures. There are, of course, other systems, like economy, family, tradition, logic, which hand down and conserve structures. In modern times, educational system plays a greater role than other conserving structures. The handing over of power and privileges from one generation to the other takes place through educational structures. The school system has a mechanism, which takes the cultural, and familial inheritance, sanctions and ratifies it as its own achievement. The intellectuals and educators can play a greater role in re-directing this hand over of power and privileges not to the status quo but to the marginalised and underprivileged.

The difficulty in taking on such a role lies in the fact that intellectuals in a broader sense are not well equipped or prepared to understand the mechanisms set into motion through the domination of cultural and social aspects through economy which dictates the flow of power and privileges in society. On the other hand, they have so much to do in their own day-to-day business with their specialised work or interests, that they have little time left for involvement with political and social issues. However, it is also a fact that the intellectuals are neither spontaneously ready nor willing to concretely involve themselves with grassroots movements and concerns. It may be argued that many researchers and intellectuals do study and publish a lot of social problems, like slums in India, the problems of migrants in Germany and so on. Researchers and intellectuals conduct field studies, and then they are back to their theory bound institutions and fact-finding next project. The difficulty lies, however, in the de-politicisation of intellectuals, academics, and educators working in their own little boundaries, little boxes. Their research activities turn out to be empty exercises when not brought into contact with the general picture of the growing influence of economy and international structures of injustice and inequalities.

I wish to illuminate this alienation of researchers and educators from the grassroots world of the marginalised with an example from the German University research scene. There are a lot of dissertations published on the language problems of children of Turkish-migrants in the Universities of Berlin. Rarely, do such dissertations bring in the picture of racism, xenophobia and the closed German society into the discussion, which has led to the isolation of German and Turkish communities from one another to a large extent.[103] The language problems of the Turkish children are dealt with in isolation from the general relationship with the German children, thus making the Turkish children themselves exclusively responsible for the problem. These studies and researches, being apolitical, remain useless exercises unless they, at the same time, challenge the biases and political oppression of migrants by the white population. This has also to do with the lack of interdisciplinary research and praxis structures in educational institutions. It is an example of conformity to official and self-built, watertight compartments between different fields of research and between theory and praxis. This conformity hinders and discredits critical thinking. While heavily thematising the situation of the marginalised, thus making them objects of research, it leaves dominant structures, biases, and the mechanisms of discrimination, largely untouched. Thus, education has become more situation-oriented rather than structure-oriented. It has become problem-and difficulties oriented rather than solution-and action oriented. It has become theory and fact-finding oriented rather than praxis and analysis oriented. It has cornered itself into a cul-de-sac of merely reproducing research material than seeing the world as it is, in its naked reality and in need of change and creativity. This is the result of a lack of political interest and a habit of being a mere bystander. It reflects a lack of expertise in transforming political problems into research issues. The greater the political problem to be studied, greater is the difficulty of such a transformation.

In the above context, the task of educator activists would be to help expel the "colonisation of minds"(Bourdieu, 2001:199) in the North that "researches" migrant-situation purely from the majority perspective. The need is for a "symbolic revolution" in the minds of

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[103] There are, of course, large number of research projects and dissertations published on racism in Germany. Unfortunately, most of them deal exclusively with right wing extremism and neo-Nazi scenario. This emphasis on right-wing extremism results in a masking of the day-to-day, hidden racism against migrants and asylum seekers practised by officially non-neo-nazis. Moreover, studies on right wing extremism is done in isolation from the identities and attitudes of the general population regarding migrants and the opinions migrant communities hold of the same.

people to challenge and stop the reproduction of structures of injustice through educational, state, bureaucratic and religious institutions. It is important to make such places, arenas for real dialogue and action. The need is to politicise theory and bring the intellectual milieu more and more into contact with reality.

In this context, it is important to note that the universal intellectual speaking for a universal and abstract idea of human rights is only one aspect of a multi-dimensional politically acceptable role. Foucault argues that such universal intellectuals could be replaced by "specific intellectuals"(Foucault, 1980:122-127). This corresponds to the discussion of educator activists who make efforts to make their research and study present, committed and relevant to social and political issues at the grassroots. The cultural authority of such specific, organic, community intellectuals or educator activists is open to question. They could adopt a new role, one that is deeply hybridised by the multiple sources of knowledge and authority in cultural life. I wish to illustrate such adaptation process, in what I refer to, below, as the adult development journey.

3.4 Adult Development Journey: From Academics to Educator Activists

To help us on the way of understanding the identity production of educator activists, some critical notes from Erikson, Piaget and Habermas will be helpful.[104] The basis of adult identity processes comes from the use of Erikson's concept of identity. In general, Erikson viewed identity as a psychosocial entity: as a product of individual factors unique to the individual combined with experiential factors derived from social forces. Erikson developed his ideas in the post-1945 period and relates his ideas to the "industrialised countries". Despite that, for our context, the processes and conditions described by Erikson, under which identities of individuals and communities are evolved, are of relevance. Identity, for Erikson, is basically the development of a "strong sense of being at one with oneself as one grows and develops. It means, at the same time, a sense of affinity with a community's sense of being one with its future as well as its history-or mythology"(Erikson, 1974:27-28 cited in Kathryn, 1997:2). The formation of individual

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[104] This discussion on identity, here, in no way conflicts with, nor reduces the discussion on challenges to identity formation and views on identity offered in Chapter Two, earlier. It is useful, rather, to read both discussions on identity as being complementary. The context and the necessity of once again entering a discussion on identity are to bring in the aspect of adult identity formation. In chapter Two, the context was globalisation and its effects on identity formation. In this Chapter, the focus is on the identify formation of educator activists.

identities has a social-relational character. In order to feel at home in this world, this strong sense of being at one with oneself and the community needs to be accompanied by collective identity. It follows then that individual identities are formed only within stable group identities, expressing "…a mutual relation in that it connotes both a persistent sameness with oneself (selfsameness) and a persistent sharing of some kind of essential character with others"(Erikson, 1959 cited in *ibidem*). Erikson further claims that the establishment of an average expectable continuity in child rearing and education is a matter of human survival. This is because humans have a need to be recognised, to be responded to, given function and status, and these needs require the existence of a fairly stable group with the will and resources to transmit its specific way of organising experience to each new generation. Young people, for instance, need a stable environment, which allows them to develop in a culturally and psychologically consistent way, which will fit them for an adult status ensuring a sense of competence and usefulness and of recognition by other members of the group.

Erikson insists that the resolution of identity is not restricted to adolescence, or completely once and for all resolved in reaching adulthood, but rather it remains part of one's personality and could be re-examined at any point after its initial emergence (Erikson, 1968:22-44; 1963).[105] Erikson describes the conditions for a possibility of new identities around three areas as follows:

> One is *factuality*, that is, a universe of facts, data, and techniques that can be verified with the observational methods and the work techniques of the time. Then, there is an inspiringly new way of experiencing history as unifying all facts, numbers and techniques into a *sense of reality* that has visionary qualities and yet energises the participants in most concrete tasks. And, finally, there must be a new *actuality*, a new way of relating to each other, of activating and invigorating each other in the service of common goals (Erikson, 1959:33).

In the absence of any one of the above three process, namely, *factuality, a sense of reality and actuality,* no true identity can be formed. One may understand that *factuality* refers to the empirically verifiable dimensions of identity formation relating to the natural and social environment within which individuals are situated and the ways of group-organisation around its needs. *Sense of reality* could be the worldview, the set of values and categories that constitute, interpret and evaluate the world. The institutions that produce the social

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[105]In this work the basic assumptions of Erikson on Identity can be found. Erikson assumes that the process of identity formation is always changing and developing. It is a process of increasing differentiation, and it becomes ever more inclusive as the individual grows aware of a widening circle of others significant to him, from the maternal person to "mankind" (p.23).

relationships through which the worldview is lived could be the *actuality* in which individuals and groups develop their identity (Kathryn, *ibid*:3). One other relevant observation from Erikson's conception of identity is that it is not gained once and for all time. It is a never-ending process or "evolving configuration" requiring a balance between continuity and discontinuity enabling the individual to absorb new developments and to meet new demands without suffering from identity diffusion, meaning a "split of self-images, a loss of centrality, a sense of dispersion and confusion, and a fear of dissolution"(Erikson, *ibid* cited in Dean, *ibidem*.).

Such processes of identity formation also include the stages of assimilation and accommodation. Taken from Piaget's theory of child development, *assimilation* refers to the process by which new information is taken by individuals in such a way as to fit into what the individual already knows or is capable of doing (Piaget, 1969; Beard, 1972). *Accommodation* refers to the process of making a change in oneself to take into account new experiences that require the formation of new categories, ideas or attitudes. Involvement of persons with concrete issues and other persons, experiences and institutions, understood in the context of the processes of assimilation and accommodation, has the potential of shaping their identity in a direction individuals wish to take. Identity formation therefore is a continual process involving acts of acceptance and rejection of options before individuals. These options, acceptance and rejection are based upon the person's needs and values. *It is this possibility of examining and making moves to organise and direct one's identity that is the basis for my argument of developing an educator-activist identity.*

3.4.1 The Social Requirements of Identity Formation

In discussing the identity of educator activists, it is important to consider the significance of historically and culturally novel conditions constituting the modern world for identity formation. In modern societies, human activities are fragmented through the division of labour and the differentiation of spheres, namely the economic, political, familial and cultural. These different spheres comprise different spaces where social action takes place. Habermas' work delineates the identity effects that accompanied the differentiation of modernity into these spheres. In describing the emergence of the public sphere (Habermas,

1994)[106] in the second half of the eighteenth century in England, France and Germany, Habermas shows the emergence of "specific identities through a nexus of institutions, intimate (familial), private (economic and cultural) and public (the state)"(*ibid*: 25-26). The different spheres were mutually constitutive although governed by different values and logic. I wish, here, to stress the different components of identities, which together constitute an individual or a group. The fact of the bourgeois subjects, gathering together in the public sphere and asserting themselves against the monarch and the powerful public authorities is similar to Erikson's assertion of the need for a strong sense of self, security, acceptance and participation in social affairs in the development of a stable identity. While we may see identities as a state of "being", as seen in the analysis of Habermas, we need to also dwell on the fact that identity has much to do with "doing". Identities of "doing" need a fusion of imagination, knowledge and power"(*Kathryn*, *ibid*: 7-9). Identity needs to be situated in the context of action.

3.4.1.1 Identities of Doing – Identity and Political Action

Besides examining the „being" aspects of identity, it is important to examine the ways in which collective intentions are created in persons and groups. Such intentions prepare people for political action and are crucial to understand modern politics. Much is done today in the field of political action in the name of such collective intentions. The nature of beliefs, desires, motives, intentions and their relation to action are important to the analytical philosophy of action of natural individuals. Kaviraj (in Kathryn, *ibid*: 47-63), analysing the action methods of different religious and linguistic groups in India, for instance, argues for a "move beyond the simple, singular term, identity, and to introduce further distinctions between its various modes". This argumentation is similar to the discussion of Maria Root in chapter two (Section 2.3.1.3), where I argued for the need to develop an approach to multiple identities. A useful distinction here is between a *descriptive* and an *agentive* identity. Descriptive identities describe the being of individuals and groups, but an agentive identity becomes the mark of political modernity, because success in modern political world depends heavily on the relative effectiveness of various groups in mounting actions. Identities in our times have an active or agentive quality. These are "characterisations that people in the modern world characteristically accept,

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[106] Public sphere refers, in this context, to a forum in which the private people, come together to form a public, readied themselves to compel public authority to legitimate itself before public opinion.

acknowledge, covet, foster, arrange for themselves…these are not identities that are given, but taken; not description that 'men' have to inhabit helplessly, but ones they assume in order to facilitate actions and for achievement of purposes consciously undertaken (Kaviraj, *ibid*: 56. *Inverted commas* on the word "men" *mine*). This may be illustrated with a reference to the transformation of the caste descriptions in India, which were in the traditional hierarchy, merely "identities of being" to the modern "identities of doing". Traditionally caste descriptions in India were ones that people had to live by, unchallenged. These were not identities to do things with. Therefore people who were untouchables in the caste system had no chance to change the overall structure of social descriptions from which they derived their meaningfulness. However, through their struggles in modern times, they have "been converted into identities for doing things collectively, precisely to challenge the irremediable division of productive responsibilities and rewards that the traditional caste system imposed on all constituent groups"(*ibidem*). This aspect of identity for organising collective action and not just for description of humans is important in the context of our discussion of involvement with grass roots, marginalised groups. Although humans have shown great resilience in developing effective forms of collective action, larger collectivities like the nation, state and ethnicity have and are constantly repressive in the sense of shrinking the political action possibilities of marginalised groups. Advocates for these groups need to understand the identity of these groups from the point of view of the groups themselves, and not just give into identities conferred upon by their state, nation or religion. In the context of developing an educator-activist identity, the focus of "identity for action" consists in the fulfilment of political values desired by individuals. This process of individuals getting involved in social and political matters, concretely, in advocacy work in the developmental field, would mean a journey from being mere theoreticians to becoming educator-activists.

I discuss this journey, later in section, 3.8.1. Here, I continue describing further facets of identity formation.

3.4.2 Identity and Life Cycle

A further aspect to be considered in describing identity development as a journey is to see in the context of one's life cycle. Erikson sees the life-cycle of individuals as one of the main co-ordinates in the development of identity: "Among the indispensable co-ordinates

of identity is that of the life-cycle, for we assume that not until adolescence does the individual develop the prerequisites in physiological growth, mental maturation, and social responsibility to experience and pass through the crisis of identity. We may, in fact, speak of the identity crisis as the psychological aspect of adolescing. Nor could this stage be passed without identity having found a form which will decisively determine later life"(Erikson, 1968:91). Erikson views human growth as not in merely being alive or vital, but places it in the context of inner and outer conflicts which the vital personality weathers re-emerging from each crisis with an increased sense of inner unity, good judgements and a capacity to do well according to 'his' own standards and the standards of those significant to the person (*ibid*:92 citing Jahoda, 1950).[107] Using the *epigenetic principle* derived from the growth of organisms *in utero* and combining it with the knowledge of psychoanalysis, Erikson traces the process of a person's personality development.[108] Personality, therefore, can be said to develop according to steps predetermined in the human organism's readiness to be driven toward, to be aware of, and to interact with a widening radius of significant individuals and institutions"(Erikson, *ibid*:93). It is an attempt by Erikson to bridge the gap between the theory of infantile sexuality, which dwells more on the biological aspects of growth, and the knowledge of human's physical and social growth.

My interest here is not to go into the theory of infantile sexuality, but to refer to the *epigenetic principle* underlying the stages in development of personality. My attempt at referring to the stages of identity development of Erikson is to argue for such an identity development in the process of becoming an educator activist. I, therefore, do not go into details of all the stages mentioned by Erikson, but only mention the two fundamental dynamics that Erikson refers to by way of justifying the developmental stages. In general, the diagram, deviced by Erikson (see Appendix one at the end of the dissertation), depicting the developmental stages formalises a "progression through time of a

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[107]There can be different opinions as to what a healthy personality or "to do well" in life could mean. Erikson, for instance, quotes the definition proposed by Marie Jahoda of a healthy personality in an adult: "a healthy personality *actively masters* his environment, shows a certain *unity of personality*, and is able to *perceive* the world and himself correctly."

[108] Generally stated, *epigenetic principle* states that anything that grows has a ground plan, and that out of this ground plan the parts arise, each part having its time of special ascendancy, until all parts have arisen to form a functioning whole. This principle derived from the study of the growth of the foetus in the womb, and later the physical growth of the child is translated into the later evolution of his social and psychological personality.

differentiation of parts". In concrete, it means: firstly, that "each item of the vital personality…is systematically related to all others, and that they all depend on the proper development in the proper sequence of each item"; secondly, that "each item exists in some form before 'its' decisive and critical time normally arrives"(ibid:94-5). There exist fundamental relations among various components of the personality, while each component has its fundamental facts. Each of the stage comes to its ascendance, meets its crisis and finds its lasting solution toward the end of the stages mentioned. The important dynamic to be noted here is the crisis that arises when the person "encounters" his/her environment in the process of development (*ibid*:96).[109] The cause of the crisis in each stage lies in the fact that "incipient growth and awareness in a new part function and go together with a shift in instinctual energy and yet also cause a specific vulnerability in that part"(*ibidem*). I wish to integrate this dynamic of "encounter-crisis-resolution" occurring in each of the stages of the journey from being academics to becoming educator activists.

3.4.2.1 Identity, Horizon and Orientation

Another important aspect in the development of educator activist identity is the contribution of Charles Taylor's "horizons", limits that constitute human agency. He wrote that "stepping out of these limits would be tantamount to stepping outside what we would recognise as integral, that is, undamaged human personhood"(Taylor, 1989:51). These horizons within which humans develop their identity can be seen in the understanding of what is of crucial importance to each person. "To know who I am is a species of knowing where I stand. My identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame of horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose. In other words, it is the horizon within which I am capable of taking a stand"(*ibidem*). This defining of oneself within certain horizons would also imply an orientation, a direction towards certain goals and needs, which a person can achieve by expanding these horizons and constantly accommodating new experiences into his/her horizons. Without this stable horizon and a constant expansion of horizons and an orientation towards one's goals, there would be disorientation and crisis of identity. This constant search for one's horizons and the process of accommodation can be a difficult and often frightening, but necessary experience

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[109] „Crisis is used here in a developmental sense to connote not a threat of catastrophe, but a turning point, a crucial period of increased vulnerability and heightened potential, and therefore, the ontogenetic source of generational strength and maladjustment."

(Erikson, 1968:142ff; 1958).[110]. This process of self-definition consists in continuously answering the question "who" one is. The answers to this stem at various stages of one's life-cycle: the family tree, in social space, the geography of social statuses and functions, in intimate relations to one's loved ones, and also crucially in the space of moral and spiritual orientation within which one's most important defining relations are lived out.

3.4.3 A Project of defending one's Subjecthood

There are, however, complexities and hindrances on the path of such a formative journey. Saying that persons have a choice of carving out their identities does not negate the presence of forces outside that make possible or obstruct one's project of identity building. Identity formation involves matters of power-differences too. Such restricting forces on an independent definition of identity in the context of transnational advocacy have been discussed in Chapter two, sections 2.3.1; 2.6.1.2, and will be continued in the next chapter. It suffices here to stress that persons involved in advocacy work have a possibility before them to develop an educator-activist identity. Such an identity formation is not without difficulties and not merely a matter of simple choices in life. It is a project at resisting attempts by others to objectify one's self. The stories of marginalisation of powerless people and the oppression of people working for change are an attempt by structures of power to make individuals, „objects" of their power-tactics. It is a conscious attempt to deprive individuals of being subjects of their own history and activity. It is similar to Sartre's discussion of the "other" being in constant competition with me. One wishes to be a subject and makes of others an object, while the other simultaneously attempts to make me an object. In Sartre's view, "this battle is the key to all human relationships, and not merely those which appear conflictual, but also those of sexual desire and of love. Consciousness is engaged in a permanent struggle to maintain its freedom in the face of onslaughts from all sides."[111] Therefore, there are limits to the freedom of my consciousness and imagination. They are free against the background of one's facticity and

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[111] Sartre develops this theme of individual's consciousness engaging in a permanent struggle to maintain its freedom in his classical work, *Being and Nothingness*. His later work, *Critique of Dialectical Reason* resulted from his concrete involvement with the political issues of his time and an intellectual engagement with Marx and a resultant attempt to reconcile Existentialism and Marxism. In this attempt Sartre examines social and political issues such as group action, historical change, revolution and behaviour in the face of material scarcity of resources. He modifies his radical position on the extent of human freedom by recognising more fully than before the effect of historical and material conditions on individual and collective choice.

situation.[112] One may modify one's situation, but it still constitutes the starting point for any change, rooting consciousness firmly in the world about it. A person is not free to change a multiplicity of aspects of one's condition, and those that the person is free to change may not prove easy. In the process of living, a person creates a self, which does not bind him/her but certainly makes some courses of action easier and more attractive than others. A person's own self-image and the image others hold of him/her also condition the range of possibilities open to the person. A person builds a character over years, and although a person can always act out of character, such a decision is not always easy.

Sartre describes this self-constitution in terms of a "project", each person having a fundamental project of being, which is in part realised by conscious decisions, and possibly elaborated over time. This project forms the core of a whole nexus of choices and behavioural decisions which form the totality that constitutes my self (Howells, 1998). Although a person's actions form a meaningful whole, each act relates to others before and since, and so the decision to make significant changes always comes up against resistance from already existing patterns and structures.

The project of developing one's self, one's identity, does not eradicate our freedom, but in practise it is often easier to deny our freedom than to employ it. This insight of the project of employing our freedom in moulding our 'identity-building project' is important in the discussion around the development of an educator activist identity. It implies a certain level of freedom for intellectuals and academics. They have the possibility to employ their freedom to move to being educator activists rather than denying it. Persons often tend to hide behind their selves they have constructed, fearing change and convincing themselves that their choices are limited. Freedom is no doubt threatening, opening up a range of possibilities which people find daunting. It is therefore, a daunting, but a necessary task to embark on this project of building an identity as an educator activist.

3.4.4 Post-Colonial Knowledge and Identity Development

Having examined the various aspects involved in the identity formation of educator activists, it is necessary for me to lay them in the context of post-colonial advocacy work

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[112] Facticity, deduced from Sartre's writings, are all facts about a person which cannot be changed –for instance, age, sex, height, class of origin, race, nationality. Later, Sartre includes in facticity, more psychological elements of genetic and environmental origin.

to relate it further to our discussion of TNANs. The need of post-colonial intellectuals is seen in countering the "so-called objective truth of the white man's superiority built and maintained by the classical European colonial empires"…which "rested on a violent subjugation of African and Asian peoples". Thereby, the post-colonial intellectual is to act as a reminder of colonialism and its continuing effects as well as to clarify and expand the space that they have been able to carve out for themselves (Said, 1993:67 cited in Ashcroft & Ahluwalia, *ibid*: 142). The post-colonial intellectuals are in a position to challenge the colonial effects on thinking and objectivity, because, "they bear their past within them: as scars of humiliating wounds, as instigation for different practices, as potentially revised visions of the past tending towards the future, as urgently re-interpretable and re-deployable experiences in which the formerly silent native speaks and acts on territory taken back from the colonialist"(*ibid*:55).

In this process of countering colonial objectivity and knowledge, two factors are important in our reflection on the post-colonial nature of advocacy work. Firstly, we need to focus on the negative effects on the consciousness of the colonised populations through the justifications and rationalisations used by colonial powers. Most often the reasons and justifications were based on bringing education and democracy to the colonised peoples (Constantino,1997:385-86).[113] Mis-education, propagation of partial truths through education characterised by a thoroughgoing inculcation of colonial values and attitudes have succeeded in inculcating a false consciousness and a misinterpreted reading of history on the part of the colonised. Because of this uncritical acceptance of the past, most oppressed and marginalised populations in the "third world" still accept their present as a "given". For critical advocacy work, a "demystification" of the past and the "cultural

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[113] Renato Constantino succinctly describes this process of rationalisation by the colonisers and the internalisation of this process by the colonised in the following words. „The various justifications for our subjugations emanated from an adroit utilisation of the past in order to serve colonial ends. Thus our liberation by the Spaniards during the early days of occupation underwent successive rationalisations. The Americans, too, projected various rationalisations for their invasion until they were finally able to convince us that they came to educate us and to teach us the ways of democracy. These justifications have become part of our national consciousness. We learned to regard the cultures imposed on us by Spaniards and Americans as superior and despite sporadic attempts to assert our national identity, we still tacitly accept the alienation of our own culture and the deformation of our economy as natural and unobjectionable developments. We look up to our conquerors and depreciate ourselves; we give respectful consideration to their viewpoint and interests and defend our own with diffidence or equate our interests with theirs. Nationalist voices have had some impact during the last two decades but the dead weight of colonial consciousness and the continuous influx of foreign cultural influences steadily erodes whatever gains have been made. A study of history which seeks to clarify the genesis and development of our peculiar consciousness can be a powerful factor in effecting our independence, both economic and intellectual."

decolonisation of the present" are necessary. "The emancipation of the oppressed is inconceivable without breaking and melting down of this reified historical consciousness and without its positive counterpart: the reconstitution of consciousness as a liberating force"(Meszaros, Istwan. Intro: to Constantino, 1978:3). Therefore, it is important for advocacy work in post-colonial times to be aware of this "counter-consciousness"[114]raising work. It will show up the need to work on the marginalizing effects of colonial history and misrepresentation of the ability of the "third world" populations to use their own wisdom and knowledge without being imposed on it from outside.

Secondly, as a logical consequence of the critique of colonial history described above, it is important to examine whether advocacy workers of today's Northern TNANs do continue the justifying processes of the colonisers in their transnational advocacy. As I have been arguing, most often advocacy work functions on the principles of "help" and uncritical interference in the grassroots processes in the South (Chapter Two, section 2.5.5.2). On the way to becoming educator activists, therefore, academics and theorists intervening on behalf of Southern populations need to be wary of their colonial realities of the past and even so more of reproducing such realities in current advocacy work. While advocating the rights of the third world populations, individuals and institutions from the North have to constantly question their own neo-colonial tendencies and privileges owing to their superior positions as members of the "first world". The crucial question then is whether advocacy work in the South, from those in the North, is really contributing to the formation of counter consciousness and liberation of the people or is just continuing the images of the South produced in colonial times.

3.4.4.1 Developing a Counter-Consciousness

The challenge to develop such a counter-consciousness is not just for the marginalised. Too often, demands are placed solely on the marginalised to defend against neo-colonial tendencies in development work. It is a challenge also for those advocating for the causes of the third world. It is a challenge to rid themselves of their internalised domination that makes them see themselves as helpers and experts. It is an opportunity to truly appreciate

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[114] Renato Constantino sees such counter consciousness in the examination of colonial consciousness and the eventual liberation for its control in service of cultural decolonisation. This needs to be attended by countering the thoughts and ideas that impede proper development of society through evolving a system of thought that can guide the process of change.

the expertise among the marginalised and the capacity to join hands in a learning process for change.

In the task of generating this counter-consciousness, both among the Northern advocates and the marginalised Southern populations, the role of critical intellectuals is important. Thereby, one needs to differentiate between intelligence and intellect. Intelligence works within the framework of limited but clearly stated goals, and may be quick to shear away questions of thought that do not seem to help in reaching them. Intellect, on the other hand, is the critical, creative and contemplative side of mind. While intelligence seeks to grasp, manipulate, re-order, adjust, intellect examines, ponders, wonders, theorises, criticizes, imagines. Intelligence will seize the immediate meaning of a situation and evaluate it. Intellect evaluates evaluations, and looks for the meanings of situations as a whole (Constantino, 1969).

The task of meaningful advocacy seen in this sense lies in evaluation, creativity and criticism. Only those who see society as a unified and interrelated whole, which allows them to learn from the grassroots, can achieve such creativity. This creativity and close collaboration with the grassroots allows them to evolve new forms of social action and projection of new types of social structures. This implies careful avoidance of compartmentalisation, which entails worshipping specialisation as a sign of progress, and remaining isolated from urgent problems that demand solutions. The result of such specialisation and isolation from grassroots is in the formation of a number of experts whose expertise hardly suits the needs of local, grassroots communities. However, breaking away from this intellectual prison on the way to educator activism is possible when those involved, identify themselves with the targets of society's injustices, and set themselves the task of liberating their consciousness as a first step. This will be possible only within the context of involvement in protest movements (*ibid*). Only through such an involvement can theorists evolve theory appropriate to reality that guides relevant action. Theory needs to be based on reality. Local reality must not be made to fit theories learned elsewhere. Rather, theory must evolve from concrete involvement in everyday struggles of the oppressed. What is needed is a reflection of situations free from preconceived premises and prior judgement. It is a difficult task because even those who set themselves to advocate for the oppressed can perceive in themselves the vestiges of orthodox, colonial

thinking and values. It is difficult to remove from one's mind and praxis the misconceptions and prejudices handed down by experts and their biased ideology. It must however be done. We need new knowledge of an old reality and new techniques to change this reality. Said puts it this way:

> The intellectual today ought to be an amateur, someone who considers that to be a thinking and concerned member of a society one is entitled to raise moral issues at the heart of even the most technical and professionalized activity as it involves one's own country, it's power, its mode of interacting with it citizens as well as with other societies…the intellectual's spirit as an amateur can enter and transform the merely professional routine into something much more lively and radical; instead of doing what one is supposed to do one can ask why one does it, who benefits from it, how can it reconnect with a personal project and original thoughts (Said, 1993:83).

Intellectuals working together and learning from the grassroots, marginalised communities can form an effective and dedicated corps of workers for transnational advocacy. It is true that intellectuals cannot be full-time activists, without time for their intellectual endeavours but it is indispensable, at least, that intellectuals' work must be a reflection of their commitment and dedication to the fruition of their ideals. Actual participation in the activities of the movement for change is a must for intellectuals who must test theory in practice and find in experience the basis for intellectual growth. In this way, those aspiring to be educator activists can unify thought and action endeavouring to co-ordinate theory and praxis. Given the primacy of experience, activism will also develop intellectuals from its ranks. Intellectuals on the other hand must cease to be mere cogs in the wheel of mainstream educational production and, instead, create alternative structures of education aimed at counter-consciousness. This offers vitality and meaning to their lives.

One post-colonial example of such unification of intellectuals and activists, theory and praxis is the *dalit* movement in India. This movement was to a certain extent successful in challenging the "native and colonial elites" alike. *Dalit* movement exerted pressures from below demanding social equality both in ritual and market terms (Prashad, 2000:xv; Sekhar, 1990; Dube, 1998). To this movement, I now turn to illustrate some of the points that I raised above regarding the development of an educator activist identity. Examining relevant issues in the life of its founder, Ambedkar, and the current theorists and activists in the dalit movement, will help us understand the complexities involved in educator activism. It is a movement originating from the marginalised in a Southern country with transnational ramifications. It will, therefore, also help us see some of the aspects of transnational advocacy propagated from the South vis-à-vis transnational advocacy from

the North. To arrive at extracting such aspects, I first briefly outline Ambedkar's contributions to the *dalit* cause and to Indian national politics. I then outline important situations in his biography to arrive at the development of his identity as an educator activist.

3.5 Ambedkar and the Dalit Movement: Lessons for Educator Activists

My attempt here is to form a consolidated picture of Ambedkar's journey to becoming an educator activist. In my view such positive alternative image of Ambedkar's life is lacking in the North. Focus in the North has been mostly on conservative, clichéd and popularised views of mainstream leaders like Gandhi (Prashad, *ibid*: 112ff).[115] A comprehensive and exclusive treatment of the development of Ambedkar as a grassroots advocate is, to my knowledge, not available. After presenting a brief picture of the nature and status of the *dalit* movement, I delineate various aspects of Ambedkar's leadership and the leadership activities of current theorists and activists related to the movement. I then chart the process and manner in which he developed his identity leading him to involve himself with the grassroots. In my discussion of Ambedkar, the guiding question is: how did Ambedkar moderate his identity to be an intellectual with an activist dimension?

3.5.1 Caste System and Untouchability in India

There are various approaches among sociologists around the world to the division of Indian society into different castes and the position allotted to "untouchables" in this hierarchy. Within the societies that are characterised by caste, there are theories about the origin and situation of castes. Mostly, these Brahman (higher caste) and Western approaches to Caste assume or support an assumption that caste is something given, religious and so eternal, unchangeable. It is obvious from the oppression and discrimination that they still face, that Untouchability was a socio-religious construction by upper castes, aimed at marginalizing vast sections of people. Keer (1997), one of the most respected biographers of Ambedkar, outlines three theories of the origins of Untouchability.

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[115] This is in no way meant to undermine the contributions of Gandhi to India and to the world. Rather, it is to state that, in their approach to the case of Dalits, Gandhi and the Congress have been negligent, biased and outright destructive. Gandhi and Gandhism tacitly legitimised Untouchability. For a comparison of Gandhi's and Ambedkar's approach to the Dalit issues, see Prashad, *ibid*: 112ff; Zelliot, *1996*: 150-178; Keer, *1997*: 162ff.

The *first* argues that Untouchability is an outcome of the caste system. In the original Vedic Aryanism there was no caste system but division of labour. On the basis of aptitude, liking and capacity of individuals, the Vedic Aryans divided themselves for different occupations: "those who took to learning were called *Brahmins*, those who took to governance were classified as *Kshatriyas*, those who resorted to trade were *Vaishnavas*, and those who served the foregoing three classes were known as *Shudras*"(*ibid*:3). This seemingly pragmatic division of labour later degenerated into the current caste system privileging the Brahmans over all other castes and the Shudras ending up doing the most menial tasks. All this was neatly legitimised by religious and political rhetoric.

A *second* view ascribes the system of Untouchability as being adopted by the Aryans to "preclude the possibility of racial mixture with the original dwellers in India". In a sustained process of repressing the opposition from original inhabitants, the Aryan rulers, ultimately condemned the inhabitants as Untouchables. A *third* view, currently accepted by most dalits, holds that the Untouchables were originally "Broken Men"(Borale, n.d: 62-63). Following the Buddhist religion, they refused to align themselves with the Vedic Hindus or refrain from such practices as beef-eating and were subsequently degraded and segregated as Untouchables.

3.5.1.1 Dalit and Non-Dalit Explanations of Untouchability

Prior to Ambedkar, several attempts were made by reformers, liberal Hindus and non-Hindus to eradicate this practise (Keer, *ibid*:2-3). However, following Ambedkar, there is emerging critical theorising on castes by the *dalits* and other non-Brahmin movements themselves. In western India, at least, this is increasingly referred to as "Phule-Ambedkar Thought" (Omvedt, 1994:22ff).[116] The *dalit* analysts of caste aim at developing theory aimed at abolishing caste and its accompanying oppression and discrimination with the assumption that "caste had an origin in history, and just as it has an origin it could have an end…that action of the oppressed and exploited could be effective in aiding this process"(*ibidem*.). In assuming the origins of caste in history and the efficacy of the action of the exploited, they counteract theories on caste which characterise them as being unique to South Asia; rooted so deep into society that caste is eternal, unshakable and so the powerlessness of social action to remove it. In doing so, two types of ideologies are

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[116]Jotibha Phule was the forerunner to Ambedkar in his attempts to rally Dalits to struggle for their rights.

identified as legitimising caste system: the traditional religion-based and those based on the Aryan theory of race.

3.5.1.1.1 Religious Legitimation vs. Historical-Materialist Resistance

Ideologies based on religion drew their justification from Hindu scriptures and elaborated in mythical renditions of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, two of the popular Hindu legends. The Aryan theory based legitimation uses racist arguments taken over by Brahmins from the British who introduced such European, Orientalist ideas into their censuses and provincial studies of caste groups (Mendelsohn&Viciany, 2000:4-5). The Brahmins, based on this racist theory, asserted "their equivalence with the white-skinned conquerors and their superiority to the darker-skinned lower castes"(Omvedt, *ibid:* 23).

The non-Brahman dalit movement had to, and still, is confronted with the above two approaches legitimising caste system. Jotirao Phule was the first to develop a historical materialist theory of caste, whose themes are even today being developed by Dalit theorists and activists. Not arguing just on simple 'racial' terms, Phule outlined the role of violence and community, which was behind the racial framework of the "Aryan theory". For centuries, the *dalits* have been "provided" with an identity dictated by the higher castes, religion, class and the like. In this process of imposition of an identity from the outside, they were forced to accept "negative rights", like the right over raw hide, flesh of dead cattle, leftover food and caste-off clothes. The *dalits*, under the leadership of Ambedkar in the 1930s, and under various forms of organisation today are insisting on "positive rights" based on a language of equality, dignity, self-respect and recognition (Guru, 2000:123-136). The *dalits* in modern day India are attempting to win back the time and space dimensions denied them or manipulated by colonial rulers and the higher caste, capitalists of India. They were denied a fixed and regulated notion of time, through the *vetbigari* (bonded labour) system. Free space and movement was denied them through a process of apartheid based on the "purity-pollution" ideology. Through the system of Untouchability, the *dalits* were restricted to menial jobs like scavenging, tanning, rag picking and other similar occupations branded as defiling and socially inferior in the dominantly Hindu society. Thus being relegated to poverty, they are also denied access to higher education.

3.5.1.1.2 Conflicting Approaches to fighting Untouchability

The physical and economic degradation is culturally entrenched by maligning the *dalits* opting for liberation and justice. This refusal to listen to the claims for liberation by the *dalits* on the part of the upper castes and the state authorities are expressed through scandal, gossip and malicious caste propaganda. There have been attempts to wage a "collective" struggle against the unjust socio-economic and cultural deprivations of *dalits*. However, "communitarianism" among the Dalits and the false alternatives proposed by the "traditionalists" are suppressing the need for a collective search "for the identification of adversaries and a decisive struggle against the opponents"(ibid:134).

3.5.1.1.2.1 Splinter Groups: Elitist, Christian and Grassroots Approaches

One needs to understand the difficulties facing the *dalit* movement today in order to contextualise the re-emergence of Ambedkar's thought and his mode of activism today. Most Indian observers of the *dalit* movement today note and feel concerned about the lack of a co-ordinated struggle among the various dalit splinter groups in India. The clearest gap is between the *dalit* elites, intelligentsia and the grassroots, masses in marginalised, rural areas. Each splinter group of *dalits* is routinised and functions as a political establishment or business corporation of the concerned group (Rao, 1989:15 cited in Jogdand, 1994:57). Unfortunately, most advocates from the North also add to this splintering by supporting the so-called "Christian Dalits". The role of the Christian advocacy groups and funding agencies need to be seriously re-considered to remove this bias towards taking care of only the Christian *dalit* Groups and neglecting the non-Christian groups. This is also leading to the intervention by the Indian Government in hindering support, however critic-worthy it is, from fluently reaching the *dalit* community. Owing to the leadership ambitions and competition among individuals has created a leadership crisis. Most leadership being urban centred, there is a lack of coordination with the dalit masses living in rural areas. The urban, middle-class leadership has compromised long term, sustainable objectives of the movement for achieving its short-term gains and goals.[117] This reflects a lack of co-

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[117] „The tragedy of the situation has been with the middle class and the intelligentsia among the Dalits, the beneficiaries of the policy of positive discrimination (popularly referred to as the Reservation System recommended by the Mandal Commission and implemented by the Government of India since 1990s). Springing from the most oppressed communities, they failed ideologically to look beyond formal declarations of equality and narrow gains like more jobs, reservation of seats etc., and could not shoulder the historic responsibility to lead the masses, evolve any long term strategy and programmes to strike at the socio-economic roots of the system of oppression. They unfortunately rest content with some sort of sharing of power from above without clinching the issues of power at the grassroots. The consequence is that there is

ordination among intellectuals, social activists, leaders and followers in the *dalit* movement today (Jogdand, *ibid*: 58). Although there exists prolific amount of literature on *dalit* issues and the movement, "the theory at the moment has however become divorced from the active movement and has acquired tones of academic discourse. The revitalisation of a transformatory theory as guide to action is a prime task before the movement"(*Pendse*, ibid:xii). This, ultimately, leads to a growing alienation between educated and economically well-established Dalits form the broad masses. These elite sometimes, out of fear or retaliation from the upper castes, get assimilated into the Hindu oppressive system, and, sometimes-even support the cause of *Hindutva.*[118]

In the 1930s and 1950s, there have been successful initiatives by the *dalits*, especially, attributed to the initiatives of Ambedkar. It is to this phase that myself, and most other authors turn to for inspiration and lessons for the dalit movement today and for other movements *by* and *for* the marginalised. In this context of a lack of a united front of the *dalit* struggle, that increasing reference is made to the strategies of Ambedkar. In turning to the thought and actions of Ambedkar, there have been various tendencies towards it in the intellectual circles of *dalits*. Guru refers to these various tendencies as*: essentialisation of Ambedkar*, by those who hold that there is to be nothing outside and without Ambedkar; or *ideologisation of Ambedkar* which emphasises certain parts of Ambedkar's teachings to contradict Marx or Gandhi; or an *art of suspicion* that ridicules or even rejects the creative interpretation of Ambedkar. While regretting that recent, *dalit* intellectual culture was intellectually insecure and incapable of defending Ambedkar in ideological discourses, Gopal Guru predicts that the twenty-first century will see the *dalits* continuing to read more of Ambedkar not only to find confirmation of themselves but also to observe a

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not a single united Dalit movement in the country. Various Dalit movements highlight different issues related to the Dalits of their own persuasion centred around differing ideologies and perspectives". See, Muricken, Ajit. "Foreword " in: Pendse, Sandeep, 1994:iii (the notes in *parenthesis* are mine).
-"There is a middle class among the Dalits which believes in negotiations and compromises. It launches protests to gain some benefits only for itself. Hence, issues like renaming of a University, increasing reservation in jobs, sets in colleges, scholarships etc. serve its interests better even though at the expense of the rural illiterate Dalits." Jogdand, *ibid*: 58 quoting from Morkhandikar, R.S." Marathwada Riots 1978: Dilemmas of a Dalit Movement" in: Punjab Journal of Politics, Vol 9(1)
-Commenting on the Dalit political elites, Ghanshyam Shah writes: "spend most of their time to lobby, of course, Dalits in corridors of power, rather than to organise the victims in the villages and the streets to take effective political action". See Shah, Ghanshyam. "Politics of Dalit Movement: From Direct Action to Pressure Group?" in Pendse, Sandeep, *ibid*: 17.
[118] *Hindutva* stands for the right-wing Hindu ideology that all Indians, including the dalits are Hindus and so tries, even through violent means to re-convert all minorities to Hinduism. This argument is vehemently opposed by all other religious minorities and so too by the dalits.

comparison with other thinkers like Marx, Periyar and Gandhi. The ideological agenda that will dominate the new dalit sensibility would be the need to redefine Ambedkar in some cases and reaffirm his framework in others (Guru, ibid:135). Today, the need is for a *dalit* discourse based on debate and dialogues, which integrate within itself intellectual pursuits, the left-activist circles, and more importantly grassroots initiatives. My contribution to seeing Ambedkar as an educator activist then is to enrich this discourse and not to claim an "essentialist" or an "ideologised" view of Ambedkar.

3.5.2 Picturing Ambedkar as an Educator Activist

A closer reading of Ambedkar's biography gives us a hint to the values that drove him to become what he was -not just theorist or educator, but an educator-activist. I undertake this study to point out and analyse the "repertoire of actions" that he employed in leading such a movement against all odds. His writings, speeches, theory, were well amalgamated with a matching amount of action and involvement at the grassroots levels. Through these, he "framed" dalit demands in such a way that it mobilised the masses and appropriately utilised the political opportunity structures of his times. Examining such activities, from the point of view that I proposed about the identity of an educator activist, would help us understand how intellectuals become or choose to be educator-activists. Firstly, I refer to important aspects of Ambedkar's ideology of dalit liberation and then list some of his important activist involvements.

3.5.2.1 Ideology of Dalit Liberation

Ambedkar struggled to become a 'learned' economist and lawyer, but a major part of his life was dedicated to political activism pointing to a journey from being a pure academic to an educator activist. His role as a political leader was based on an ideology for the emancipation of the *dalits* and other weaker sections of the Indian society (Thorat, 2000).[119] Among the most important aspects of the advocacy of Ambedkar was his uncompromising dedication to the needs of his people, the *dalits*. This dedication led him to seek a total annihilation of the caste system, which set out from the Brahmanic superiority. Ambedkar was, however, equally dedicated to Indian reality and his national origins. This dedication was not blinded by fundamentalist nationalism but implied a

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[119] Much of the following details regarding Ambedkar's political activities are taken from this article:
Thorat, S.K. "Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Film as a Lost Opportunity. EPW, April 18-24, 2000. I am indebted to Prof. Thorat for that.

demand for a "historical-cultural reinterpretation" through which he sought to avoid the imposition of a Hindu identity on the varied populations in India. As a logical consequence to repudiating the dominance of Hindu ideology, which legitimised the caste system, he was convinced of the need to disclaim Hinduism as a religion. On the social front, Ambedkar sought to combine economic radicalism with the liberal dedication to individual rights. In all these fronts, he gave a unique political autonomy to the *dalits* through mobilising them towards a movement with a "constantly attempted alliance of socially and economically exploited (*dalits* and *shudras*, 'workers' and 'peasants' in class terms). Such exploited classes were projected as an alternative political front to the Congress party he saw as the unique platform of 'Brahmanism' and 'Capitalism'.[120] The uniqueness of Ambedkar lay in the fact that he emphasised the need to work on all three aspects of the marginalised *dalits:* the cultural (identity), the political (movement organisation) and economical (socialism). Another uniqueness of the organisational aspects of Ambedkar was uniting the *dalits,* as a religiously legitimised oppressed group, with other exploited groups like the women and peasants.

Ambedkar remained in close contact with various ideological groups, particularly the Gandhians, Indian communists and democratic socialists. His close interaction with them helped him to develop his own ideological position. He interacted with Gandhi quite closely between 1930 and 1940. The only common ground between them was their desire to eradicate Untouchability. They could not cooperate on various other issues because they had very different views on how things could be achieved. Firstly, Gandhi had opposed Untouchability but supported the caste system till 1945. Secondly, he could not see the connection between Untouchability, caste system and the Hindu social and religious philosophy. Gandhi held the opinion that Caste has nothing to do with religion and that the law of *varna* (vedic/textual form of caste) did not warrant a belief in Untouchability. He suggested a modified form of the *varna* system in place of the caste system but did not favour a radical reform of Hinduism (Thorat, 1999). On the other hand, Ambedkar forcefully argued that both Untouchability and caste system had their roots in the Hindu philosophy, which was based on the doctrine of inequality. He demanded a drastic reform of the Hindu religion. Ambedkar also sought a socialist transformation of Indian society

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[120] Brahmanism here refers to the traditional, religiously legitimised upper caste ideology forced upon by the Brahmins on the dalits.

and emphasised industrialisation and scientific development. Gandhi stood for trusteeship, village and cottage industries and had a general dislike for Western civilisation (Ambedkar 1970:132-60).

Apart from this mixed-relationship to Gandhi, Ambedkar was in close contact with the Indian Marxists. His caste and class paradigm got shaped in the course of this interaction. He agreed with the Marxists that class conflict between classes and private ownership of property had been the root cause of exploitation. But he differed with their approach towards the caste question. In the mid-1930s, he posed serious theoretical questions to the Marxists on the interlinkages between the economic structure and the superstructure. He argued that social and religious status were also sources of power. The social, religious and philosophical elements in Hinduism had justified, supported and perpetuated inequality and exploitation associated with the caste system. This made the caste system an extremely stubborn social institution even if its economic base was destroyed. The reform of the Hindu social and religious order was a necessary precondition for political changes. Ambedkar believed that, "Dalits will not join in socialist revolution for equalisation of property unless they know that after the revolution is achieved they will be treated equally and that there will be no discrimination of caste and creed". Instead, he asked, "Can it be said that the proletariat of India, poor as it is, recognises no distinction of caste? Karl Marx argued that the proletariat have nothing to lose except their chains. But the artful way in which the social, religious and even economic rights are distributed among different castes, whereby some have more and some have less, even the high caste poor know that if a general dissolution comes they stand to lose more of their privileges than their low caste counterpart"(Ambedkar 1989:33-87, 82).

The final crystallisation of Ambedkar's ideological position emerged in the book *State and Minorities: What Are Their Rights And How To Secure Them In The Constitution of Free India* in 1947. In this book he forwarded a socialist economic framework, which he argued for and emphasised in his comments on the 'Jawaharlal Nehru Resolution' on the 'Aims and Objective of the Constitution' in 1946. He said:

> I must confess that coming as the resolution does from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who is reputed to be a socialist, this resolution, although non-controversial, is to my mind very disappointing. I should have expected him to go much further than he had done, ...there are certain provisions which speak of justice, economic, social and political. If this resolution has a reality behind it and sincerity, of which I have not the least doubt coming as it does from the mover of the

Resolution, I should have expected some provision whereby it would have been possible for the state to make *economic, social and political* justice a reality and I should have from that view expected the Resolution to state in most explicit terms that in order that there may be social and economic justice in the country, that there would be nationalisation of industry and nationalisation of land (Ambedkar, 1994a:6-14, *italics* mine).

Even after his death in 1956, the above ideology of Ambedkar, epitomised in his desire to establish "economic, social and political justice", has inspired and influenced the Dalits of all religions: dalits in the Hindu fold, neo-Buddhists, dalit Sikhs, dalit Christians and dalit Muslims, who together form nearly one-fourth of India's population.

3.5.2.2 Relevant Features of Ambedkar's Leadership
3.5.2.2.1 Dalits as Agents of their own Liberation

Having briefly highlighted the main points in Ambedkar's approach to the issue of dalit liberation, below, I highlight important aspects that gave political sustainability of Ambedkar's approach. Theory around Ambedkar's leadership revolves around some key aspects: his role as a caste leader, as a spokesman for the Untouchables and as a national statesman (Omvedt, 1993;1994;1995; Zelliot, 1996): his work with the people at the grassroots and its impact on national and international levels. It was Ambedkar's closeness to the people that he wished to politicise and made him, over the years, design "an ideology and a program which counteracted negative self-images". This way, he urged *dalits* and other oppressed classes to participate in all channels open to them in the democratising process of India in the 1930s to the 60s (Zelliott, 1996:54).

Ambedkar insisted on winning freedom for *dalits* through their own efforts and so avoided any negative altruism from Gandhi and the Congress who were for the most part non-*dalits* and Brahmins. Referring to the advocacy efforts of Ambedkar and N.M. Joshi, a contemporary of Ambedkar, the Journal *Servants of India* noted:

> Being drawn from the humble ranks of the society, one representing the labour classes and the other the depressed classes, they are necessarily strangers to high politics as they are understood in this country. They have the simple faith of the simple folk whose cause they have espoused, and they will not be deterred by the superior smile of the eminent personages surrounding them, from insisting on the literal application of certain principles which they have been taught to hold as inviolable (cited in Keer, *ibid*: 162).

In his critique of Gandhi and the Congress who did little to remove the bias and deep-rootedness of Untouchability, Ambedkar argued,

> I say that the Hindus have not shown a change of heart in regard to our problem, and so long as they remain adamant we would believe neither the Congress nor the Hindus. We believe in self-help and self-respect. We are not prepared to have faith in great leaders and mahatmas. Let me be brutally frank about it. History tells that Mahatmas, like fleeting phantoms, raise dust, but raise no level."(Keer, *ibid*:162-64)

Ambedkar reacted on the basis of values and conscience and moral basis and not in the first place in a political-discourse, patriotism or nationalism. His cause was human rights and he was the first to draft a Declaration of Fundamental Rights much before the United Nations came into existence. He stated, for instance:

> If at all I have rendered any national service…it is due to my unsullied conscience and not due to any patriotic feelings in me. If in my endeavour to secure human rights for my people, who have been trampled upon in this country for ages, I do any disservice to this country, it would not be a sin…Owing to the promptings of my conscience I have been striving to win human rights for my people without meaning or doing any harm to this country (Keer, *ibid*: 167).

Working on the basis of positive, self-respect with the people, Ambedkar mostly spoke representatively, for and with his people: "We must stand on our own feet and fight as best as we can for our rights. So carry on your agitation and organise your forces. Power and prestige will come to you through struggle"(Keer, *ibid*: 167). A *dalit* himself, he thought and felt as the *dalits* felt. Over a decade he had observed, experienced and studied their utter privations, the appalling penury of their lives and their unclean habits. He believed that the sufferer himself does away with it by his own exertions and actions. "Tell the slave he is a slave and he will revolt" was his slogan. To reach this goal of the suffering being their own liberators, he attempted to raise the critical consciousness of the *dalits* while creating a positive picture of the oppressed with their potential to organise themselves for change. "Ambedkar's appeal to the Untouchables moved from heart outwards while that of other reformers went from skin inwards, never touching the hearts of the depressed classes. This was the difference between Ambedkar's attitude and that of the social reformers"(Keer, *ibid*:61). He moved the people towards self-improvement and self-culture through organisation and active struggle.

3.5.2.2.2 Grassroots Advocacy and Mobilisation

In the process of mobilising *dalits* towards their own liberation, Ambedkar asserted the need to act simultaneously on various levels of society and not merely on the economic level. This comprehensive approach of Ambedkar stands in contrast to the "economic" domination of the operation of TNANs that I discussed in chapter Two (sections 2.2ff). Acting simultaneously on economic, cultural, political and religious fields, Ambedkar used

the available "opportunities and changing political demands" around him. Thereby, his chief argument was that the oppressed populations must act themselves towards their liberation. No external political, religious or economic forces genuinely help in their freeing themselves from the oppressive structures. Advocating from the grassroots was, therefore, the strong point of Ambedkar's strategy. Since "only untouchables could understand their own condition and needs, hence only untouchable themselves should lead untouchable movements" was one of the guiding principles of Ambedkar (Zelliott, 1996: 61-63).[121]

3.5.2.2.2.1 Bottom Up Approach to Advocacy

Ambedkar's advocacy for and with his people was "bottom-up" rather than "top-down". This pattern of his is evident, for instance, in the series of Mahad Conferences he organised in order to gather the members of his community in a bid to make their concerns the central issue in order not to impose his point of view.[122] Such and other activities illustrate his pattern of organisation: unifying the untouchables and making them conscious of their lack of rights. The crux of the issue was to create a critical consciousness among *dalits*, and then represent their demands at the national and international levels. Self-help, self-respect and self-knowledge were the primary steps to urging changes on the structural level. Be it the demand to re-instate *dalits* into the British Army;[123] or defying the ban on drinking water at the public places;[124] or demonstrative entries into temples popularly

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[121]Zelliot summarises the following as the guiding principles of Ambedkar, as culled out from various writings and works of Ambedkar 1. Untouchables must revolt, because they are slaves and slavery is inhuman. There being no racial difference that marks off untouchables from Hinduism, Hindu religious scriptures should be rejected if they legitimise this practice of Untouchability; 2.Only by acknowledging and admitting their inferior position could the Untouchables unify and press for change. However, only when the Government acknowledges this deprivation, and the resultant correction of this injustice through special treatment of the caste question could real equality be established. 3. Only Untouchables should lead the untouchable movement, for it is they who could best understand their own condition and needs; 4. Education and Politics are the chief means to equality. Education enables the untouchable to participate on an equal basis in societal affairs. Political agitation and participation secures rights through redressal of their economic and social grievances by law and political policy; 5.Untouchables being Indian, freedom of India is a prerequisite for their freedom and so the primary imperative to struggle for India's freedom. No foreign religion or ideology, therefore, would achieve them equality as Indians.

[122] From 1924 on, thousands of the depressed classes in the Marathi-speaking area saw and heard Ambedkar at some large and innumerable, smaller conferences. These conferences, which symbolised the awakening of the Mahar castes were so called after the small town, Mahad, in Kolaba district.

[123] The British Army, in the 1920s banned Dalits from entering their forces and so a denial of the right to livelihood and occupation. See, Keer, *ibid*: 69ff.

[124] The most famous incident is that of the Chowdar Tank located in the Brahman area of Mahad. In 1927, Ambedkar, leading a large group of Untouchables, stopped at the Tank and first drank water, defying the ban on Untouchables to drink water from wells located in Brahman areas.

known as the 'temple-entry movement' (Keer, *ibid*:137ff);[125] or burning the ancient Hindu law book, the *Manusmriti* (footnote 5 in Zelliott, *ibid*: 78,), [126] the pattern was similar: unite, become conscious of the denial of your rights and agitate for transformation. Ambedkar coupled mass, grassroots agitations with legal efforts to press for necessary structural changes in the courts of law.

3.5.2.2.2.1.1 Consciousness, Organisation and Struggle

In all such involvements at the grassroots levels, Ambedkar emphasised the principle of "learn, organise and struggle". Most dalit theorists and activists echo this principle today, as is evident in the interviews that I conducted. He enunciated a philosophy of equality rejecting the Brahmanical value structure and criticising the economic, exploitative situation (Pendere in Pendse, *ibid*: 71-72). Although he criticised the state, political leaders and the system, he was always conscious of the fact that it is only the people at the grassroots levels who can sustain the struggles. "Conscientisation, continuous dialogue and consultation" were his constant strategies before entering into mass demonstrations of lobbying at national and international levels. It is this effort at conscientisation and participation that Ambedkar vigorously exhorted the Dalits to undertake. It was important that the *dalits*, excluded from participating in issues regarding their identity and rights, claimed their right to decide their future on their own. Ambedkar, in this context, conceived "emancipation as self-emancipation" based on the belief that "the assertion of the deprived, both at the individual and collective levels, calling forth a reorganisation of relations can alone break the ties of dependency and servitude and at the same time help the community to self-critically regroup itself."(Rodrigues, in: Pendse, *ibid*: 41-42). This was the basis for Ambedkar's advocacy in all issues relating to dalit liberation.

3.5.3 The Protest Strategies

One of the main reasons for taking the *dalit* Movement as an example for advocacy from below is that it is organised by the oppressed themselves. It is not imposed by any external "helpers" motivated by a negative picture of the Dalits as being "incapable" and lazy, so

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[125]Keer here, describes the dramatics of the temple entry effort by the Untouchables in Nasik. Large temple entry movements were held in 1927 in Amraoti, in 1929 in Pune and 1930-35 in Nasik.

[126] "A radical Brahmin, G.N. Sahasrabuddhe, a long-time associate of Ambedkar, moved the resolution to burn the *Manusmriti.* …Ambedkar read the *Manusmriti* with a pundit in the months before the Conference and had asked Dhotre to copy out those portions of it, which dealt with punishment for the disobedient *Shudra*. (These portions were burned.)"

need to be saved. On the contrary, inspired by Ambedkar, *dalits* had very constructive, self-conscious strategies of protests for change (Jogdand, *ibid*:51-59). Although deprived of their rights on socio-cultural, material and political levels (Oommen, 1990:225; Rao, *ibid*:51)[127], the *dalits* did not remain subdued by this deprivation but built up their critical consciousness with the assistance of Ambedkar (Guru, *ibid*, 31-41). They insisted on positive rights, rights that are rightfully theirs and unjustly being denied them. They did not beg for what was deprived them, but claimed their basic human rights (Guru, 2000:130). While deprivation was and is a fact in the case of *dalits*, it is equally true that the Dalits organised themselves against this continued deprivation. The strength of Ambedkar lay in winning such a positive image for the Dalits with his various strategies of mobilisation. He basically awakened a feeling of dissatisfaction among the *dalits* and mobilised them towards affecting changes in the structures of domination towards innovation.

Towards this end, Ambedkar sought the following basic tenets for his mobilisation campaign: collective behaviour, leadership, ideology and changed orientation. These basic tenets were followed up with various styles of protests, which are even today the pattern of dalit initiatives in India and on the international arena.[128] The styles of protest involved: *Social Reformist* in the sense of waging different *Satyagrahas* (*"action on the basis of truth which also included protests through fasting"*) to claim their humanity. It also meant instilling in themselves a spirit of agitation to demand their legitimate demands. In all this they acted collectively, building up able leaders among themselves. In their protests of the *political* style, the *dalits* demanded separate electorates for themselves to be represented in local and national parliamentary bodies. They formed political parties aiming at capturing political power. They agitated for their civil and democratic rights. All this assured their political participation and strengthened their political awakening. Moving on to a further level of solidifying their protest forms and ensuring its affectivity, the *dalits* aimed at the

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[127] However, the problem with the relative deprivation approach to Dalits, proposed by Oommen, is that it presents a negative picture of the Dalit initiative: "The real serious damage that the concept of relative deprivation can cause to the Dalit movement today is that it represents the negative utopia in two major senses. First, this concept at the theoretical level, attempts to describe 'what is' without linking it with the question 'what can be' and thus, results is an inadequate description of social phenomena. It denies to sociology a critically subversive character. It also denies to the groups under reference an emancipatory consciousness, because it leads the groups, in our case the Dalits, to organise their thoughts and actions not on their authentic terms but on the terms of the privileged sections whose hegemonic world view underlies the structures of domination". See, Guru in. Pendse, *ibid*: 27.
[128] Black Paper presented to the Indian Government in 1990 as an occasional publication by the National Coalition for Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR).

institutional level. In 1945, educational institutions and hostels were started to promote education among the *dalits*. Education led to strengthening their sense of pride and generated ideas and energy for protesting to gain and retain self-respect.

There is a further element to the efforts of Ambedkar that is particularly novel to grassroots advocacy. As discussed in part two of the dissertation, transnational advocacy movements from the North neglect or fail to grasp the cultural dimensions of the marginalised while merely stressing the economic aspects of the struggles against oppressive structures. It is similar to the leftist movement in India that neglected the symbolic and cultural aspects in struggling against the Hindu oppression of the *dalits*. On the contrary, the *dalit* movement initiated by Ambedkar laid great stress on cultural elements (Omvedt, 1995:23). Ambedkar's move, after serious reflection, of converting to Buddhism was such a cultural move to obtain self-respect, rejecting the caste-system that was inherently religious sanction in the Hindu tradition (Shah in Pedse, *ibid*:13) [129] With such a move, Ambedkar sought to create a new identity for *dalit* minorities that aimed at rejecting old values and instilling a new set of values defined not by the Hindu scriptures or tradition but on terms defined by the *dalits* themselves. This move also challenges Brahmanical hegemony and dominance, raised the militancy of *dalits* for social transformation towards an egalitarian order (Shah, *ibidem*).

3.5.3.1 From Local to Transnational

In the above strategies towards consolidating their protest in society, the *dalit* movement has an important lesson for the grassroots movements and TNANs alike. Under the leadership of Ambedkar, the *dalits* first carried through an internal reform of their own organisation leading to confidence, self-respect and a critical consciousness. Armed with these efforts, they moved to more external, coercive protest forms at an international level. This consisted of collective, direct action to redress the wrongs and establish their own identity in society. While establishing their own base in society and establishing their

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[129] Conversion to Buddhism was one of the strategies that Ambedkar used to reject the religion (Hinduism), which legitimises inequality, and adopt another religion (Buddhism), which advocates equality. In 1956, large number of Dalits, led by Ambedkar, undertook mass-conversion to Buddhism. In defending his move of converting to Buddhism, Ambedkar argued his conversion to Buddhism by mentioning that Buddhism gives three principles in combination, which no other religion does. '*Prajna*'(understanding) as against superstition and supernaturalism, '*karuna*'(love) and '*Samata'(Equality)*.This is what man wants for a good and happy life." See, Keer, *ibid*: 481ff

human rights, they attempted and partly succeeded in shaking the hold of Hindu religious controls over their status. However, as mentioned in section 3.5.1.1.2.1 above, the current situation of the *dalits* is not so well co-ordinated as in the times of Ambedkar, owing to the splinter groups of various dalit groups and the loss of contact with the grassroots on the part of the intelligentsia among the *dalits*. Therefore, "it is the need of the hour to have a movement at the grassroots level through which more vigorous changes can be brought about among the *dalits*"(Jogdand, *ibid*:57).

In the above section, I outlined the leadership methods and contributions of Ambedkar with emphasis upon his grassroots advocacy. In the following section, I focus on certain life experiences that led Ambedkar to be what he was: an educator activist.

3.6 Illustrating the Journey to becoming an Educator Activist

Ambedkar could have remained an academic or a mere educator without getting involved in the issues of his community. In that way he could have produced a large amount of literature on the issues of Untouchability and Oppression, without real involvement with the grassroots. Yet he chose to mould his identity, combining his theory with practical involvement. He chose to embark upon a journey to become an educator activist.

In this conscious choice of Ambedkar, one can observe how the influences that his family, education, and his experiences of oppression became learning situations for the options he made in life. On the community level, his experiences at school, at the University, and subsequent meetings with oppressive Hindu structures that he was born into, aided in strengthening his resolve to remain commitment to activism coupled with being an educator. On the national level, his involvement and founding of political parties, involvement with other social movements, trade unions and religious structures, offered him political opportunity structures. These opportunity structures aided his own transformation and transformation of societal structures. This same transformation potential was strengthened in him by his involvement at the international level.

Deeper examination of the life-experiences of Ambedkar show up the key influences that lead him to educator activism. Similar key influences also echoed in the lives of some of

the dalit theorists and activists that I interviewed in India: exposure to poverty and discrimination; family; society, and transnational experiences.

3.6.1 Exposure to Poverty and Discrimination

Ambedkar always owned his origins and experiences as an untouchable. Early exposure to oppression and discrimination instilled in him longstanding empathy and solidarity with the oppressed. He hailed from a poor family belonging to one of the Hindu untouchable communities in India. Starting from his school days, he was exposed to the cruelties and exclusion experienced by untouchables. The socially, deeply embedded scorn against Untouchables was rampant in daily life: Hindu Cartmen refused to transport *dalits*, drinking water was denied to Ambedkar on his journeys. He was even physically assaulted by upper caste members, when, during one of his walks, being utterly thirsty, he drank at a public water-course:

> What an indelible impression these cruel disabilities must have made upon Bhim's young mind that was so strong, so sensitive and yet so resolute! Under the pressure of all sorts of such disabilities and maltreatment attendant on the birth of an untouchable and humble rank, Bhim was cultivating a spirit of patience in the school of experience…. It was thus in his boyhood that Bhim experienced at the hands of his co-religionists the galling humiliations and the inhuman treatment under which his whole community had been labouring for untold ages (Keer, ibid: 13).[130]

Such upbringing as an untouchable child in a socially hostile environment of the Hindu society strengthened in him the will to struggle for dalit liberation. Although there were many such incidents, three incidents of caste-based discrimination and humiliation illustrate the weight of the matter: the refusal by a barber to cut Ambedkar's hair (his sister had to be his barber for several years), the denial by a high caste bullock cart driver to carry him and his brother after he had discovered their caste, and the rejection of his request to take Sanskrit as an optional subject for undergraduate studies by Bombay's Elphinstone College. Further in his career, he had been humiliated by the high caste Hindus in Baroda during his short tenure as a military secretary to the maharaja of Baroda in 1917. Even the maharaja could not help him when he had been ill-treated by his junior staff and had not been able to get accommodation in any part of the city. At Bombay's Sydenham College, his upper caste faculty colleagues had not allowed him to drink water from their vessel. Such experiences of discrimination led Ambedkar to choose between being committed to the cause of his oppressed class or remain being an intellectual and academic he was at that moment. Later involvements of his in the lives of the people, in

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[130]*Bhim* in this citation is part of the complete name of Ambedkar: *Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar*.

bringing about political change, and on transnational levels (see section 3.5.3.1 above) point to his development from being an academic to an educator activist.

3.6.1.1 Dalit Discrimination in Contemporary Times

One may argue that such discriminatory experiences of *dalits* are a thing of the past. But numerous interview citations from present day dalit theorists and activists prove that discrimination of the kind experienced by Ambedkar is a reality even today. Narrations of the deep and prolonged experiences of discrimination experienced by *dalits* leading them to positively engage to work against discrimination could be extracted from various interviews. SV 10, for instance, describes such oppressive incidents: in his village as a child, in the college as an adult and an incident of the massacre of *dalits* (SV10: 11ff). Further references to such experiences of discrimination and the determination of dalits to work towards their liberation are also found in the following interview narratives:

> For instance, we were not allowed to touch the village well. Once we were playing the ball and the ball fell close to the well and I went close to the well, due to which I was assaulted by some of the *Patils(=a term that denotes village heads or important figures belonging to the higher casts*)and my mother came and asked for forgiveness and all that. That is but at a much later stage where you start protesting. I think my mother brought something from the *Patil's* house, which was really rotten, and I told her that we should not take this rotten thing and I think I threw it away and she slapped me. She slapped me because anything from the house of high caste is something we cannot question. So I think there was a natural atmosphere in my village, which made me more sensitive to the issue, and < I think, I do remember->: that large number of villagers gathering, congregating against Untouchability and we used to go and attend as children. <In the nights, late nights->:, so I think activism came very naturally in my childhood but I think once I went to college, earlier reaction was psychological as a child that I should not be treated different from the others. And I really protested, but did not know why. Why I am what I am…You are an untouchable, that you are a pollution in the caste hierarchy and you are expected to be how the high caste expected you to be. I got an ideological foundation there (SV3: 84-102).

SV17 makes a pointed summary of how atrocities happening to the marginalised, in this case the dalits, leave no other choice but to take a stand against discrimination and struggle for justice:

> In fact-,< I mean->: India and, particularly Bombay, is such a place that you are constantly being forced to take a stand. Something or the other is all the time happening. …you see the charged atmosphere of dalits being angry, dalits being agitated, and also feeling weak, insecure, threatened …and you are continuously drawn into these issues. You can choose not to react, but there are various ways of reacting to this reality: forming kind of discussion groups, conducting meetings, and various other ways. So that is one of the examples that I could give you. So, similarly everything speaks to you about these kind of atrocities: If you see the sociological journals and media, reading newspapers, which are supposed to be making contributions to society and social science, are actually engaged in power. And so you are always engaged in critiquing, problematising and participating in peoples' struggle (SV17: 202-230).

As SV17 puts it, when one is continuously exposed to situations of oppression, violence and death one "is forced to take sides". Further references to such exposure to direct oppression serving as a motivating factor to move towards educator activism can be found in the following interview citations: SV17: 18-83; SV15: 26-61).

3.6.1.1.1 Motivated by Witnessing the Exploitation of Others

Interestingly, interviews with non-dalit theorists and activists belonging to upper castes also refer to experiences of discrimination, exerting strong influence on their way to becoming educator activists. But their experiences are more as "observers" of discrimination of dalits. They decided not to remain by-standers, through being co-opted by their upper caste colleagues into an oppressive mechanism, but decided to go into the field of advocacy through joining NGOs or international development organisations, or by making their theoretical pursuits more action-oriented (SV4:1-67; SV5:13-31; SV6: 7-20; SV7: 1-10; SV11: 1-44; SV12:68-80; SV14: 21-43). This "motivation by observation" is seen clearly also among Northern advocates: NV2 and NV10 cite frustration and alienation from the grassroots and domination by the North in the South motivating them to engage in working more closely with grassroots organisations. (NV2:106ff; NV10:1-22).The motivation of those who directly experience oppression is immediate and personal and not just out of pity or out of sympathy. The difference between educator activists who have themselves experienced intense oppression and those who become educator activists through being witnesses to oppression lies in the "intensity" of experiencing and feeling oppression.

3.6.1.2 Familial and Societal Influences

Another category of factors that influences development of an educator activist identity is "social influences": family, social surroundings, religion etc. What became very clear from the interviews, especially with dalit educators and activists, is the influence of family in moulding their identity. Most often, oppressed persons who tend to be involved closely with the grassroots, have had parents who have themselves been involved in political activism; or have had parents who encouraged their children to work for justice; or provided them with required education and critical consciousness (SV10: 1-12).

Other than family influences, the political environment of their birth places also influence

the future tendencies towards activism. Added to his parental influence, SV3, for instance, recalls the whole political environment that existed in his village having deeply impressed on his mind the desire to work for social change:

> Somehow it so happened that in my upbringing as a child… in the villages, there was the *Samata Sainik Dal (=Corps for Equality)*. This was a kind of corps for equality. They were training how to play stick in self-defence. Because whenever untouchables tried to get or ask for civic rights, there used to be a physical assault on them. Therefore, Ambedkar started what is called *Samata Sainik Dal*, which was a kind of National Cadet Corps (NCC). <So that unit was there and I used to participate in that->: My brother too. In fact I was brought up in that social milieu, in that social movement from that early childhood, and I used to see my brothers' participating in it. (SV3: 20-34 in CS:52).

3.6.1.2.1 Socialization of the Oppressed

In a way one can call it the "socialisation of the oppressed". Influence of various social factors, besides the family, begins very early in childhood, leaving deep impressions on their minds and hearts, giving a direction to their identity formation. SV 17 calls it, for example, an "actor-oriented" reality.

> It was a perspective of others, non-dalits, in a given context…that makes you feel that you are different. On the one hand, the place in which you live, this really provides formation of consciousness, of what you are and real experiences to make your identity or marks your identity as different in terms of others,….influencing agents in a way, defining, influencing, quote, unquote, your "Education" about social reality, which you share. …Later only I found that agents of society in which I was born and educated form actor-oriented social theory or actor-oriented sociology (SV 17: 42; 122ff).

Such social influences are not always positive. SV17 defines forced socialisation to be "the oppressed" as that,which has been impressed upon him by dominant castes, defining who and what the minorities should be. SV 17 calls it the "politics of recognition" imposed on you by the dominant castes, in a negative way. Such experience of domination motivated him to work against this domination. In the citation below, it would refer to the identity impressed upon by the majority on the minority. Fortunately, these forced recognitions and representations are balanced by critical involvement with social movements:

> Now it is only when you occupy a job that you come to know the various forms in which you are discriminated, various ways in which you have been fixed, the various ways through which you have been identified, various ways in which you encounter the notion of "politics of recognition" and this politics of recognition, fixes you, names you, at the same time, defines your being as well (0.3) And if it is suitable to them (=*higher castes*), perhaps, there may not be a problem. <But, if you are questioning the Hindu culture if you are questioning the authority of the upper castes, if you are questioning the knowledge of upper castes, then immediately, structures start working which will defame you, which will put you->: let us say in the frontline saying that he is not good, he is not doing work and all that. <This kind of discrimination goes on in everyday life and it differs in terms of->: if you are still part of a movement and are constantly talking about the concerns of dalits: then, you would experience more. If you are not trying to co-opt or trying to shore up with upper caste, dominant culture, if you are not reacting to upper caste culture, then perhaps, maybe the reactions towards you may not be hard…if you are questioning any knowledge, which would question certain kind of biases, then the reaction of other people towards you is very

different and this is what you continue to experience and at the same time you have been educated both by the movement that you are a part of and at the same time you are educated by the treatment meted out to you from outside (SV 17: 72-88).

SV 13 summarises his familial and other, early social influences in a touching and pithy manner:

PR: [But where there incidents in your life that also unconsciously motivated you to dedicate yourselves to this work?
SV13: There was a lot of influence from my family. Like my mother and father were involved in social work and among the social working they also dealt with issues like land rights and ownership rights, getting *Pattas (=papers proving legal entitlement to land owned by individuals or families),* fighting with the strong people over there…and since I grew up in Madras, the Ambedkarite and Periyar thought influenced me. <So, I did not grow just like that, I grew up with this consciousness->: My father was a trade union member. <You see, all this->:My mother was a teacher, and their concept of justice, to be living for more than your food, your dignity is so important…And, I had a chance to study…and then I thought I should come back and work for the poor. <So it is personal, and the family and also the politics around us and our involvement in this politics->: that has contributed. (SV13:81-93).

Further references to familial and social influences can be culled out from Northern interview partners. The experiences of having a paternalist and sexist father and a difficult childhood with him, for instance, could turn out to be motivating factors to involve one in anti-sexist and feminist movements. The seeds of anti-discrimination sown at such a tender age take on a snowball effect and lead the person to get involved in continuing educator-activism. The following citation provides insights into such motivation from a feminist perspective:

Also, der persönliche Hintergrund ist schon stark die Auseinandersetzung mit meinem Vater, der dominant ist als Mann, der dem normalen patriarchalen Fall in Deutschland auch entspricht und der Widerstand gegen, <ähm: >, also die Verhältnisse, die in meiner Familie geherrscht haben, auch diese klassische Rollenaufteilung, Vater-Mutter und mit den Abhängigkeitsverhältnissen, die da waren, mit denen ich mich nicht abfinden wollte. Die Erfahrung von Abhängigkeit und Ohnmacht auch gegenüber dieser Autorität, die sich als Autorität definiert, das aber sozusagen meines Erachtens gar nicht füllen konnte, weil mein Vater für mich nie eine Respektsperson war in diesem Sinne, dass er sozusagen sich auch Respekt verschafft, durch das was er tut und sagt und leistet, sondern sich nur Respekt verschafft dann aufgrund der Tatsache dass er sozusagen diese Funktion einnimmt. Das war sozusagen eine Erfahrung, was mich sehr stark geprägt hat und wo ich dann auch ganz stark (0.2) versucht habe, also andere Lebensmodelle zu finden. Deswegen also auch so die Auseinandersetzung mit Feminismus, finde ich. <Ähm:>, und, es spielen z.T. auch Lehrer und Lehrerinnen eine ganz wichtige Rolle, die mich kultiviert haben, auch die mir z.B. ein Buch geschenkt haben zum Thema Frieden. Es waren Personen, die mich beeindruckt haben, also vor denen hatte ich mehr Respekt so, weil sie eben ihre Rolle ausgefüllt haben. <Und die waren, ja, auch eben, genau Menschen mit einem politischen Anspruch, die versucht haben, andere durch eigenes Handeln auch zu überzeugen, weil->: es, ja, doch, doch, zu überzeugen. Das ist so eine Erfahrung, wo ich denke das fing so ganz früh an, also zu meiner Schulzeit in einer Form, wo es natürlich sehr unreflektiert war, oder das war nie eine große Entscheidung, ja, sozusagen ich werde jetzt aktiv...und es war sozusagen eine Gegenidentität die mir wichtig war. Und als bewusstere Entscheidung später also, hatte ich ja- sozusagen, schon genannt diese Entscheidung nicht in diese Praxis zu gehen, in Entwicklungszusammenarbeit sondern an die Universität zu gehen...Das war auch eine reflektierte, bewusstere Entscheidung für diese kritische

> Bildungskomponente, die du ja <u>per se</u> hast, wenn du an der Uni arbeitest und Lehre machst. Das finde ich auch bis zu eiemn gewissen Grad <u>Bildungsaktivismus</u>, also z.B. politische Lehre an der Universität zu machen und auch zu versuchen. Das habe ich auch in meinen Kursen gemacht, Bezug zur Praxis herzustellen oder Gender-Trainings zu machen und auszuprobieren und das war dann auch eine viel bewusstere Entscheidung in dieser <u>langen Geschichte von Bildungsaktivismus.</u>(NV4: 102-139 in CS: 293).

A similar narrative about childhood familial, discriminatory behaviour by the "Father" influencing one's educator activist identity is described also by NV1 (NV1: 114-139). NV6 cites examples of being led by his father's own involvement in political action, leading to moving to his own working with the oppressed (NV6: 1-41)

3.6.1.3 Institutional Influences

Influence of institutions, workplaces and colleagues also affect the journey towards educator activism, both positively and negatively. For instance, an over emphasis on professionalisation of advocacy work (see section 2.5.1.2.1 above) impedes the enthusiasm and critical outlook of individuals, swallowed up by the organisation's desire to achieve quick results. NV6 calls it the"Logik der schnellen Erfolgen"(169-182). In such cases, identity of the individual advocates is dictated by institutional interests. Sometimes governmental aid-agencies, in the North, block critical projects from grassroots NGOs, in the North, attempting to work more on an "equal-basis" with Southern grassroots NGOs.

Sharing about her experiences for finding funds in the North for initiating educational projects with an equal participation from the South, NV1 said:

> Und so ist <u>die privilegierte Dominanzherrschaft in dieser Welt-</u>, wenn ich nicht viele Gelder, z. B. wenn ich will, dass diese Programme noch mal aufgenommen werden sollen, wenn nicht im Norden jemand organisiert, dass die Gelder dort hinfließen-, dann wird so eine Projekt dort keine Chance haben. D.h. ich kann auch mit so einem Bildungsprojekt oder auch mit so einem Ansatz nicht aus den herrschenden Machtbeziehungen ausbrechen. Ich kann diese Machtbeziehungen benutzen und strategisch handeln-, das ist genau was wir tun würden oder getan haben, indem ich Transparenz herstelle über die Finanzstrukturen, indem ich z.B. sage, wo können wir das Geld herkriegen und wie begründen wir das, und indem ich offen lege und gemeinsam an so etwas arbeite diesem Konzept-, haben sie natürlich eine Chance. Wenn ich diese Chance für sie nicht organisieren würde<u>, also meine Privilegien opfern oder teilen würde, hätten die keine Chance-</u> das ist so. Das ist natürlich relativ pauschal, weil natürlich gibt es im Südland, in Südafrika z. B., auch lokale Strukturen. Wenn es möglich wäre, Bildungsarbeit zu finanzieren, da wäre dann wiederum die Priorität sicherlich nicht unbedingt was für den Norden rüber zu bringen. Das heißt, wirklich da eine Priorität zu setzen, dass sicherlich jemand nach eifern würde in einer anderen Form von Arbeit. <u>Sie sind immer noch mehr in diesem traditionellen Entwicklungsbild verhaftet und Bildungsarbeit machen würden</u>. Aber es gibt Ansätze-, es gibt Leute, dass wenn ich Gelder mitbesorge-, die das sofort machen würden. Daran scheitert es ganz, ganz oft - und das ist eine Machtfrage (NV1:328-347).

Such experiences were also shared by NV3:391-405 and NV10: 451-462. They criticise the TNANs in the North, among other things, for their bureaucratisation of institutions. Much money goes into running such a bureaucratic machinery compared to the meagre finances allotted to democratic and participatory projects in the South.

3.6.1.4 Transnational Experiences

Although Ambedkar's advocacy originated among his people, his political involvement was not restricted merely to the regional level. He was consequent in his demand that real change and dignity comes to the marginalised only when structural changes at the political level take place. It was this conviction that he put into play when he was elected to be the representative of the depressed classes at the Round Table Conference in London held in November 1930. It was at this international stage that his grassroots advocacy reached transnational levels to fruition when he demanded that the Untouchables and their supporters sought an India free of the British domination. This was an interesting declaration because, until then, the voice of the Untouchables was not heard on the international level. Much of the proceedings at that moment were still controlled by Gandhi and the upper caste, Hindu majority who spoke "for" the Untouchables. Ambedkar, being an Untouchable himself made a stronger impact in claiming the viewpoint of the Untouchables that the British should free India from their domination. Personifying the voice of millions of Indian Dalits, he declared, "We feel nobody can remove our grievances as well as we can, and we cannot remove them unless we get political powers in our own hands. I am afraid that the Depressed Classes have waited too long for time to work its miracle!"(Keer, *ibid*:151).

Another important task carried out by Ambedkar at the international level was the preparation of the *Declaration of Fundamental Rights*, in 1917, safeguarding of cultural, religious and economic rights of the oppressed classes (Keer, ibid:153).[131] This reflects the strategic working of Ambedkar to frame local issues of oppression in a context and a manner that transnationalises grassroots issues of oppression. This declaration demanded for the Depressed Classes the right to equal citizenship in common with other citizens of the State, abolishing Untouchability and other forms of disadvantage, disability or

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[131] It is important to note that such a declaration was the first of its kind. Only later in 1950, did the UN issue the *Charter of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Could it be that the United Nations sought inspiration from the kind of declaration formulated by Ambedkar?

discrimination in law. It demanded adequate representation in the Legislatures and a right to elect their own representatives through separate electorates. It also demanded adequate representation for the Depressed Classes in the services (referring to the Indian Administrative Services) through the establishment of a Public Service Commission to undertake the recruitment and control of the services.

His international experience, especially his contact with the black liberation movement in the Unites States also added to the development of his activist identity. At this international stage, Ambedkar addressed the media, lobbied members of the British Parliament, and took every opportunity to expose the inhumanity rendered to the Dalits in India. He sought the support of the international community to help solving the problem on the basis of humanity. These transnational efforts of Ambedkar brought to the attention of the world the situation of the Dalits being similar to those of the Afro-Americans in the United States. It is also my observation that it initiated a debate on the similarities between the dynamics of racism and Untouchability.

3.6.4.1.1 Effects of Transnational Exposure on Educator Activism Today

Conversations with theorists and activists in India and Germany also revealed a strong connection between transnational involvement with other theorists and activists upon their work at the local level. Transnational involvement contributes to widening one's identity and improving one's networking capacities.

For theorists and activists from the South this may take the form of coming into contact with their counterparts in the West or in other neighbouring "developing" countries. SV3 is a strong example of a gradual, conscious and unconscious development into becoming an educator activist, although there were stages in his life where he shied away from chances to solidify such an identity. Such contacts and network help identify the commonalities between various marginalised groups and the synergy resulting in researching and acting together on various issues of marginalisation. In the citation below, SV3, for instance, narrated the influence exerted on him through his contact with black intellectuals in the US. Speaking about his involvement and joint-work with black American intellectuals and activists, SV3 says:

> What happened is that I went to the USA and spent about two years, I came into contact with African-American groups. Then I spent two to three months with an international organisation.

I just wrote a lengthy letter that I want to be there and so on and did some work there but my relations with them continued. It started in 1993 ,so for thirteen years they have been very helpful to me. I worked hard and we also produced a joint paper on common issues of discrimination. <What happened is that then I visited USA quite frequently->: practically every year I must have gone to the USA, to do this joint research. <And I made use of this visit to the USA to get literature on economics of discrimination which was absolutely good->: developed contacts with the afro-American economists, and that helped me quite a lot (SV3:206-215).

SV9 highlights, further, how the process of working for an international development agency, his exposure to working in Indonesia and other countries outside India, developed in him a sensitivity to his own identity and the injustices involved in S-N work:

It is only this experience of being exposed outside which has realised questions of my identity. Once you go outside the many things that you take for granted are all out of its moorings: relationships, your attitudes, your type of thinking and so you see the positive elements of your culture. For the first time I also realised the aspects of segregation because of my experiences in international development agencies. <Now that made me look into the roots of my own identity and the whole hierarchy hit me and went through phases of realisation of my identity->: and despite my exposure, despite my qualification, despite my employment, suddenly I also have swallowed in the projections that the upper caste have put on the dalits (SV9:76-85).

For activists and theorists from the North this strengthening and deepening of an identity as educator activists comes from meeting their counterparts in the South or marginalised in the North itself. NV6's early influences from working in the South, galvanised his constant search for solidarity with other activists, giving a sustained direction to his whole career and way of thinking:

PR: Was ist deine Stellungnahme dazu: was braucht man noch als Mensch, um gleichberechtigt arbeiten zu können?
NV6: Ich habe mich als Tischler dafür beworben, drei Monate in Brasilien zu arbeiten. Ich habe in einer Tischlerei mit Jugendlichen gearbeitet und das hat mich total fasziniert. <Die Lebensverhältnisse->: es waren sehr arme Jugendliche, aber ich habe sie eigentlich sehr lieb gewonnen. Wir hatten einen sehr engen Draht und ich habe auch meine ganze Freizeit mit denen verbracht, weil ich gerne wissen wollte, wie leben die, was machen die und denken über die Welt. Nach den drei Monaten oder vier Monaten *BTB* war mir klar, ich möchte mal noch tiefer hier eindringen, dazu gehören eine Zeit lang, mehr verstehen und auch im Sinn von Beitrag leisten dazu, also gemeinsam an den Verhältnissen etwas zu verändern. Dann habe ich mich beim *Europäische Entwicklungsdienst* beworben. Ich war 5 Jahre lang in Brasilien...was mir persönlich geholfen hat, ist eine große Neugier, ich will gerne viel erfahren über die Menschen und nicht nur das, was mit dem Volk zu tun hat, sondern ich finde es total interessant, wie andere über die unterschiedlichsten Fragen denken. Davon lasse ich mich gerne faszinieren. Also Fragen über Tod, Gott und die Welt, also das finde ich sehr, sehr interessant und für mich sehr anregend (0.3). (NV6: 89-107 in CS: 315-316).

NV3 has a concrete narrative as to how grassroots activists in the South directed her research, moving it towards becoming praxis and justice-oriented:

<Ich suchte mir ganz bewusst Länder, die eine eigenständige Entwicklung, Profil hatten und versuchten in diesem Weltkontext ein bisschen sie Selbst zu sein, na,->: und soziale Bewegungen und Revolutionen und ähnliches war so ein Punkt. <Dann, mein erstes Jahr war in Mexiko und da bin ich bis zum heutigen Tag sehr froh, dass ich in dieses Land gekommen bin und in einer Zeit, in den 77gern hingekommen bin und in einen Kontext der Universität mit Studenten, die die gleichen Texte gelesen hatten, die ich auch gerade->: <ich hatte Ökonomie studiert->:

gelesen hatte, die gleiche Musik gehört hatten, die ich gerade gehört hatte, und trotzdem ganz andere Dinge noch taten. Also, es war einerseits sozusagen, die sind die gleiche Generation von, unruhigen, kritischen jungen Leuten, <ähm::>,   aber es gibt sozusagen eben auch Dinge, die ganz unterschiedlich sind und ich kann selber erfahren, über andere, aber es gab auch Dinge, die ich über mich erfahren habe, weil ich das Glück hatte, oder so über mein Land erfahren habe. <Meine Generation->: und Deutschland, das Bild von einer Nation, die, kam nicht so ins reine und <u>wir fanden es irgendwie unerträglich Deutsche zu sein und ich habe sozusagen in Mexiko, bin ich auf meine Generation von Leuten gestoßen, die eben mit einem anderen Blick auf Deutschland gucken, nicht bewundernd, aber die linken Ideen, Marx, Arbeiterbewegung usw.</u>, das ist doch auch etwas Ordentliches, na, dass es nicht nur Scheiße ist, na. Und umgekehrt, das ist, <u>querdenkend, na, ein Perspektivenwechsel. Da bin ich, es war für mich eine ganz tiefe Erfahrung </u>(NV3:48-66).

Further concrete references to such contacts with the South influencing the identity, life-style and journey of Northern theorists and activists can also be read in NV9:55-72; NV10:27-50 and NV11:28-38.

In the above mentioned ways, Northern theorists and activists, who are not the direct targets of S-N discriminatory practices, can also count on learning from encounters with the targets of discrimination. Meeting theorists and activists from the South allows recognition of the clear and present privileges of Northern theorists and activists. If this "meeting" has to become occasions of "learning from the South", certain epistemological principles have to be realised and transformed to open channels of learning from the South. More about learning from the South will be discussed in the following part four of the Dissertation. Here, I continue to summarise the various aspects of the identity of educator activists.

3.7 Summarising the Identity-building Project : Characteristics of Educator Activists:
From the foregoing discussion, it becomes evident that the task of educator activist identity building is a conscious, responsible activity. It is a lifetime project (section 3.4.3 above) for individuals involved in S-N advocacy. The result of experiences and influences leading to the educator activist identity involved in this project, results in the cultivation of certain personal qualities. Exercising such qualities in personal, interpersonal, national and transnational relationships with peoples and institutions strengthens their effect and ensures their sustainability. Below, I list and briefly describe these qualities using concepts and terms brought forward by the interview partners themselves.

3.7.1 Conscious Building of Identity

The foremost personal characteristic that could be observed in this identity-building project is the conscious act of entering and remaining in this journey. The fact that interview narratives had so many references to motivating factors involved in working "for" and "with" the oppressed shows the "conscious" attempts on their part to embark upon and continue on such a journey. The question as to whether they consciously chose to embark on such a journey elicited a positive response from almost all the interview participants. There are many references made in this regard, but one in particular is exemplary. Speaking about the process by which he came to combine his academic activities with active involvement in grassroots affairs, SV 5 mentions this "conscious decision":

> For a person like me, it was a very conscious choice. This is an unjust society, yearning for power in society; large number of people, particularly in India are too individualistic. And that has to be changed. If the social scientist does not address that issue, then he is just a technocrat. My career as a social scientist also goes with this value that it must react to the political signs of the times. I did not select social sciences just for the fun of it: Not just for the sake of knowledge and power. I was interested in society; so that the society will change. So, (0.4) for me, there is no contradiction between what you call theory and practice. The difference is that a person like me may not be in the field for mobilizing people, talking to people at length for a long period of time but that we try to understand the actions of people, translate it, theorize it and interact with them. Now activists spend most of the time in the activities, mobilizing people. So that is the difference. Primarily, I am an academic person. But an academic person for social transformation, for activism (SV5: 45-65).

Other relevant references in this context are SV2:502-523; NV3:82-116 .

3.7.2 Changing Perspectives: Combining Theory and Praxis

As a consequence of a conscious decision to stay close to and work with the grassroots facilitates a change in the perspective of those holding particular, even, dominant ideologies regarding development work and advocacy. The crucial effect on the development journey is, that the above-mentioned experiences with oppression, familial and social influences (sections 3.6.1ff above), changes previously held ideologies, giving access to dynamism and flexibility. They experience a kind of change in perception: "Perspektivenwechsel" (NV3: 134): This change in perspective makes some give up their entire theoretical, professional career to go into alternative, non-institutional modes of working with the grassroots:

> <Ich habe mich dann->: wie gesagt, mit 33 entschieden, die Mathematik an den Nagel zu hängen, da ich mir gesagt habe, ich kann so nicht weiter leben, ich kann auch nicht so tun als wäre nichts. <Ich hatte als Mathematiker auch ein Angebot->: das ist ganz lustig, an der Bundeswehrhochschule in München, und da musste ich mich halt entscheiden, steige ich jetzt 100%ig da ein oder meine mathematischen Interessen sind dann immer schon angewandter geworden je mehr ich mich mit Wirtschaftsfragen und so befasst hatte.< Im Laufe meiner Tätigkeit

kann man sagen->:, ja ich war auch schon sehr früh hier, <*Freiburg* ist ja nun eine Gegend mit sehr vielen Internationalen->: und dieses Konzept von *GHBO* ist eigentlich auch immer im Gespräch, vor allen Dingen mit Leuten aus Brasilien und Indien entstanden, mit denen ich befreundet war und bin (NV9:19-28).

This change in perspective, further, aids educator activists in raising new questions and changing once dogmatically held perspectives regarding self and the other, specifically, regarding the marginalised (SV9:97ff; NV10:27; NV11:29ff). Looking at life and events from the perspective of the poor, advocates from the North involved with advocacy for the South, change their previously held, learnt and given, theoretical standpoints giving access to their own experiences and action.

3.7.3 Empathy and Commitment to the Grassroots

Personal characteristics like empathy and commitment have been repeatedly mentioned as being important for educator activism. These characteristics were emphasised by many of the interview partners, both from the South and the North. SV2, for instance, says:

> You have to be a part of that reality. If you have interest in that reality, you cannot, you cannot flirt with that reality. I am using this word very carefully. Most of the activism, intellectual and practical, is an activism of this kind. They would really like to flirt with reality. @What happens to reality, yeah? @, You don't have to flirt with reality. <You have to all the time associate with it->: that is a big challenge, you know. If you are making a film in Bombay, you stay in Bombay, fight their cases, fight their separation, their displacement and agonies on everyday basis. (SV2:470-476)

SV5 calls for a" commitment to local reality", respecting and being led by that knowledge.

> But the prerequisite is really basic understanding, social understanding, historical understanding, cultural understanding, economic understanding of the society. That is a must. If you are concerned about the poor you must understand why it is like that? What are the historical reasons etc. That is one pre-requisite. Second pre-condition is the willingness to unlearn. Unlearning begins with the thing that you have certain theoretical postulates when you are doing something…But once you encounter anything, if you are willing to change your notions, in trying to tackle the issues: why people behave the way do, why people tend to do certain things? So that is what I call the unlearning process. What you have learned intentionally you check with persons who have a different kind of understanding. One has to understand the other and the third thing is the willingness to learn the local culture, the local language. Language is the main important thing. If you do not know the language, you need interpreters and that kind of thing. You cannot build a rapport with the people. You remain an outsider. You have to become an insider: your language, your dress and your style of living. These are all important. One has to learn that kind of thing. Then the other things will come. These are the primary prerequisites for social action for those who come from outside (SV5:183-201).

NV2 calls it "cariño"(a Spanish term for empathy) that should replace the bureaucratization and the resulting isolation of transnational development work from the grassroots:

> <So wie ein „cariño"->: Es ist so eine Liebe, Zuneigung, so eine Empathie, die nicht Mitleid ist, so dass man sich einfach wohl fühlt, das es eine Erfahrung von Wohlfühlen hat, und

nicht in seinem Büro im 7. Stock, sondern am Busbahnhof, das mit Essen zu tun hat, mit Geruch, mit Musik. Das meine ich, ein emotionaler Zugang, körperlicher Zugang. Dass man keine Angst hat vor Gerüchen. Manchmal mit der Technokratie und mit der Professionalisierung geht das verloren. (NV3:355-367 in CS:287)

3.7.3.1 Other Prominent References to Characteristics of Educator Activists

Further terms and references to the qualities required of educator activists can be surmised from the following citations: "respect for your (project) partners"(SV9:432ff in CS:136; words in *parenthesis* mine); „ein Verständnis für Basisdemokratie, Solidarität und Gleichberechtigung. Wenn man nicht davon ausgeht, dass andere Menschen gleichberechtigte Interessen und Meinungen haben, dann kann es nicht funktionieren" (NV2:87-90). „curiosity and respect"(NV3:166); "bridge builders and facilitators" or "translator, mediator" ("Übersetzerin, vermitlerin"; NV3:123-124). NV 11, talking in the context of learning from the South, mentions the "capacity to listen"(NV11:252). NV3 (161-182) has a compact description of what one needs to get close to the grassroots. She mainly mentions the need to replace one's biases, fears and negative approach to the poor and the marginalised with curiosity, respect and empathy towards them.

3.8 Working Definition of an Educator Activist

While describing aspects involved in the development journey to becoming an educator activist, certain interview partners made references to a working definition of what theorists, educators or educator activists could be. I employ particular citations, "in-vivo codes" from the interviewees, both the South and North, while presenting such possible, working definitions below.

SV2 defines educator activism as an ability to combine one's theory with the reality on the ground level:

> Yeah, mere theorist is the one who is really a theorist, actually in the sense that he or she does not base her/his theoretical arguments,<ahm>:, <ahm>: fully informed by empirical details, empirical reality (0.2). So, It develops, it develops, sort of, independent of any kind of practise. <Without saying therefore-> It is a sort of a narcissism, and that creeps into being theory and when the theory is developing itself without having any reference to empirical reality, the one who is, <ahm>::<developing theory and arguments on the basis of concepts and concepts alone, jumping from one concept to another concept without having any reference to empirical reality->:(0.5) there can be differentiation between theoreticians, from, from, the activists and so, these theoretical exercise remains to be empirically blind so, and so therefore it carries with itself all those indications that are associative with theory without practise. <Ahm>:: that is, so, that is how it is different from activism. Now at the same time I should also mention that having mere empiricism or mere practise may not be the right or may not be the sufficient condition for any kind of understanding and emancipation. You have to have both, the combination of both the theory and the praxis…I think the differentiation itself is a false differentiation. I think. one need not differentiate between the two.

Because the emancipatory conditions are all based on, not differentiation, but the association of both the theory and the practise. And that has been historically proved, <ahm:> true in all the epochs of history and the historical interventions of different forces in the country (SV2:5-57).

SV3 provides useful hints regarding what the identity of educator activist could be and what the development of such an identity could involve:

Generally, if I reflect, the identity of a dalit-educated activist primarily originates in his experiences; it tends to form that identity. What is identity? Identity is the way you relate yourself to society. How you are identified as a person in society and what is the range of your association and there you have to check the persons as an educated person or whatever, he can relate at a certain level and cannot relate at a certain level. <At one level, he remains->:Caste identity remains around him. So there is a restriction on the range of his relationships. And that motivates him to think about himself, what he is and why he is and sensitively one then tries to pursue it, wanting to understand and after having understood, they try and become an activist in one way or another. And this process is there in a lesser or a bigger scale among the dalits. Identity formation and entering into some kind of activism is the key feature of dalits, in the sense that they are issues of theirs which others would not take up, it is they who suffer and therefore, they have to take it and so at different levels they do it (SV3:566ff).

NV1 gives a concrete definition of, and delineates the various aspects of educator activism. Referring to the German term, "Bildungsaktivismus" she says:

<Vielleicht, als erstes, würde ich wahrscheinlich den zweiten Teil dieses Begriffes betonen, weil Aktivismus heißt erst mal eigene politische Ansprüche, Werte, die ich habe um zu setzen->: nicht nur auf der theoretischen Ebene zu reflektieren, nicht nur zu wissen, was befreiungspädagogische Ansätze sind, sondern auch zu versuchen, sie zu leben. <Bildungsaktivist heißt eigentlich, dass ich versuche das zu vermitteln->: in verschiedensten Formen zu vermitteln. Und dass ich auch versuche, meine politischen Werte, oder meine Visionen anderen so zu vermitteln, dass sie diese Werte nachvollziehen können, als ersten Schritt, und dass sie sie vielleicht so attraktiv finden, dass sie sich selbst damit auseinander setzen können und ihre eigene Position dazu entwickeln. <Nur hat es die Vision an sich, Leute zu überzeugen, das gleiche wie sie zu wollen->: wobei das gleiche in dem Sinne, dass ich so verstehe, dass nicht immer das gleiche herauskommen muss, sondern dass sich Leute auf einen Prozess einlassen und BildungsaktivistIn wäre für mich ein Teil, der politische Veränderung oder Entwicklung von Gesellschaft bedeuten kann und gerade im Nordkontext bedeuten muss. Weil im Nordkontext ein großer Teil der Gesellschaft in relativ komfortablen Verhältnissen lebt, musst du eigentlich wesentlich mehr dafür tun, dass Leute sich davon weg bewegen, dass sie sich kritisch mit den eigenen Privilegien auseinander setzen, dass in dem Prozess über den eigenen Tellerrand raus geschaut wird. Und dafür ist Bildungsaktivismus, der einfach bestimmte Werte mit reiner Wissensvermittlung verbindet, und das in den Prozess einbringt, das wäre für mich absolut notwendig. Vielleicht notwendiger als es im Südland ist, weil hier die existentielle Betroffenheit fehlt. Ich bin hier. In Deutschland weiß ich, dass es Arme gibt, ich weiß auch, dass es auch natürlich Wohnungslosigkeit usw., usw. gibt, aber ich muss es erst vielen Leuten vermitteln. <Das ist ein Teil dessen, was hier ein Bildungsaktivist tun würde->: und ich mache (NV1:63-86).

3.8.1 Stages in the Developmental Journey Towards Educator Activism

Combing all the above mentioned characteristics and working definitions offered by the interview partners (esp. see SV2:3-78; SV3:563ff ; SV9:76-83; and NV1:61-83) one could decipher and visualise certain stages in this journey to becoming an educator activist. This is a journey that could accompany persons who wish to work towards social justice and transformation. This depiction does not mean that I assume that such is the process. It is to

suggest that such and such "types" of identities may take shape, given such and such experiences, various options made and decisions taken by individuals.

This journey to becoming an educator activist involves four stages: the academics, intellectuals, educators and educator activists (Table Six, below).

Academics	Intellectuals	Educators	Educator-Activists
Pure Research	Interested Research	Action-oriented Research	Action and Research
Uni-Disciplinary	inter-disciplinary	Eclectic	Inclusive
Detached	Curious	Involved	Participatory
Linear Thinking	Multi-linear Thinking	Result-and Situation oriented	Dialogical Thinking/Socially and emotionally competent
Individualist	Community Oriented	People-and Grassroots Oriented	Solidarity

Table Six. From Academics to Educator Activists: Development of an Educator-Activist Identity

3.8.1.1 The Academics

The first stage is that of the *academics*. One could define them as individuals who are pure researchers interested in facts and figures. They are therefore, fixed to one discipline of thinking, rarely showing interest in other disciplines. They believe in linear thinking, adhering to their own work-field without giving enough attention neither to the implications of their work on others, nor to the implication of others work on theirs. Thus, they remain individualists.

3.8.1.2 The Intellectuals

The next stage in this journey takes one to being an *intellectual* whose research is interested in social issues. They study or research with an interest in making their research relevant to their interests and not just researching for the sake of it. They are, therefore, inter-disciplinary in their approach and dialogue with other disciplines. They are interested in knowing what theorists and academics in other disciplines are saying and doing. Instead

of adopting a linear way of thinking, they experiment creatively in a multi-linear way. They can, therefore, be referred to as being community-oriented.

3.8.1.3 The Educators

While academics and intellectuals to a large extent, remain restricted to the confines of their schools or universities, in the next stage of the journey, *educators* leave the classical confines of the classroom, making research action-oriented. They are eclectic, taking in as many useful and critical ideas from different disciplines as possible. They aim at making their intellectual efforts result oriented and true to grassroots situations. Their research is therefore oriented towards grassroots and human interests. Yet, they maintain certain distrust and distance from the people whom they wish to educate.

3.8.1.4 Educator Activists

The stage of *educator activists* takes persons, a step further, from being merely researcher-oriented to being praxis-oriented. Educator activists consciously seek, search and get actively involved in themes and situations they are analysing and criticising. They are inclusive thinkers, open to persons of all cultures and backgrounds. Owing to their emotional and social competence, they have an optimum level of dialogical thinking. They act in solidarity with the people at grassroots levels aiming at transformation of structures and institutions. Seen in the context of our discussion on advocacy in transnational and post-colonial times, the educator activist makes his/her task to be "sensitive to what is involved in representation, in studying the Other, in racial thinking, in unthinking and uncritical acceptance of authority and authoritative ideas, in the *socio-political role of intellectuals,* in the great value of sceptical critical consciousness"(Said, 1978:327, *italics mine*).[132]

3.8.2 Sources and Levels of Learning and Areas of Action

Each of the above four stages is accompanied by respective sources, areas and processes (Table Seven, below) of learning, corresponding to the various stages of development.

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[132] Representation in this citation refers to the knowledge-power issues involved, whereby, situations and peoples are "represented" as advanced or backward, developed or underdeveloped etc. This concept of representation is one of the main issues discussed by Said in *Orientalism*. Although Said does not mention the term "educator activists", the role he designated to public intellectuals, corresponds in many issues to the role that I attribute to educator activists. See related discussion in Chapter Two, section 3.2.1.2.

Sources of Learning					
Areas of action	**structures**	**Personal** Personal Education and Research, Paradigms and Role-models	**Communal** Educational Institutions, Work Environment, Societal Groups: Family, Religion, Sport Clubs/ Organisations etc.	**National** National NGOs, Unions, Political Parties, Trade Unions, Religious Structures, Media	**Transnational** International NGOs, Transnational Advocacy Networks, Trade Unions, Religious Structures, Conferences, Media
	processes	Individual Encounters, Key Experiences	Group dynamics through Co-students, Peers, Colleagues, Family members etc.	Political Opportunity Structures, Transformation Potential	International Transformation Potential

Table Seven. Levels of Learning and Areas of Action

The sources and levels of learning associated with each stage are: *personal*, *communal*, *national* and *transnational*. For each level of this learning there are corresponding processes that result from the experience at each stage or structure of learning. These structures and areas of learning are closely linked to the life experiences of the persons: through encounters with others, their professional and private involvement with the world. The process of learning in each of the above structures are similarly: personal, community, national and international, each structure having corresponding processes of learning and possibilities for action.

On the *personal* level, the structures that influence one's identity are personal education and research, the paradigms and role models that a person sets for himself/herself. The educational and research aspects include access to schooling and later on the possibilities of further formal and informal learning. On this personal level a big role is attributed to the paradigms, models the person chooses, and related role-models that he/she follows. The education, later learning, paradigms and role models generate corresponding processes of learning and action. These processes are personal encounters with people, situations and key experiences in life.

On the level of *community*, a wider sphere of a person's involvement, the structures of learning are educational institutions, workplace, and social groups that the person closely

relates to: they could be the local interest groups, religious community, extended family, sports institutions and the like. The corresponding processes of learning at this level take place in the experiences the person undergoes in relation to the members of the various community structures mentioned above.

On the *national* level, so far as the person is exposed to social movements in his or her region and country; the non-governmental initiatives; political parties; trade unions; the media and religious institutions, the processes of learning and possibilities of action depend very much on the political opportunity structures that the person identifies and uses. An important process at this stage of learning is the development of a transformation potential: an effort to transform unjust structures that the person encounters in his country or region.

The extension of the national structures exposes a person to experiences at the *transnational* level in the sense of involvement with governmental and non-governmental organisations, advocacy networks, trade unions, religious structures and the media. The main process of learning and action in this stage is the development of a transformation potential on a further, transnational level.

3.8.3 A Continuous Journey

Although there are no ideal types of educator activists existing, it is possible to develop and maintain such an identity. Most often, analyses of people's involvement in aspects of transnational advocacy borders on rather narrow differentiation between theorists and activists. I wish to avoid this narrow differentiation and emphasise the grey areas involved in people's differentiated involvement in social change. The schema that I developed in the above two tables, probably, gives a picture of a linear development of one's identity as an educator activist. That is not my intention. This representation only assists in seeing the importance of moving towards effective advocacy and involvement in social issues and not meant to give a fixed and static blueprint. It is most probable that individuals interact from different levels of learning and involvement at various points of their lives. One does not always remain being an educator-activist or only a pure researcher. Rather, educator activism is a continuous effort to remain relevant and transformative, with respect to advocacy and political mobilisation. To graphically depict this differentiated view of a

person's educational activists identity, I devised a diagram (see figure four below) depicting the three components of an educator activist identity. Being an educator activist is not a final stage that one has to reach, but a state of being where one dynamically integrates activists dimenions into his life experiences and the tasks of being an educator, academic and an intellectual. A judicious, conscious and critical effort is called for in this process of *integrating* and *accommodating* one's experiences in order to keep the possibility of being an educator activist ever open.
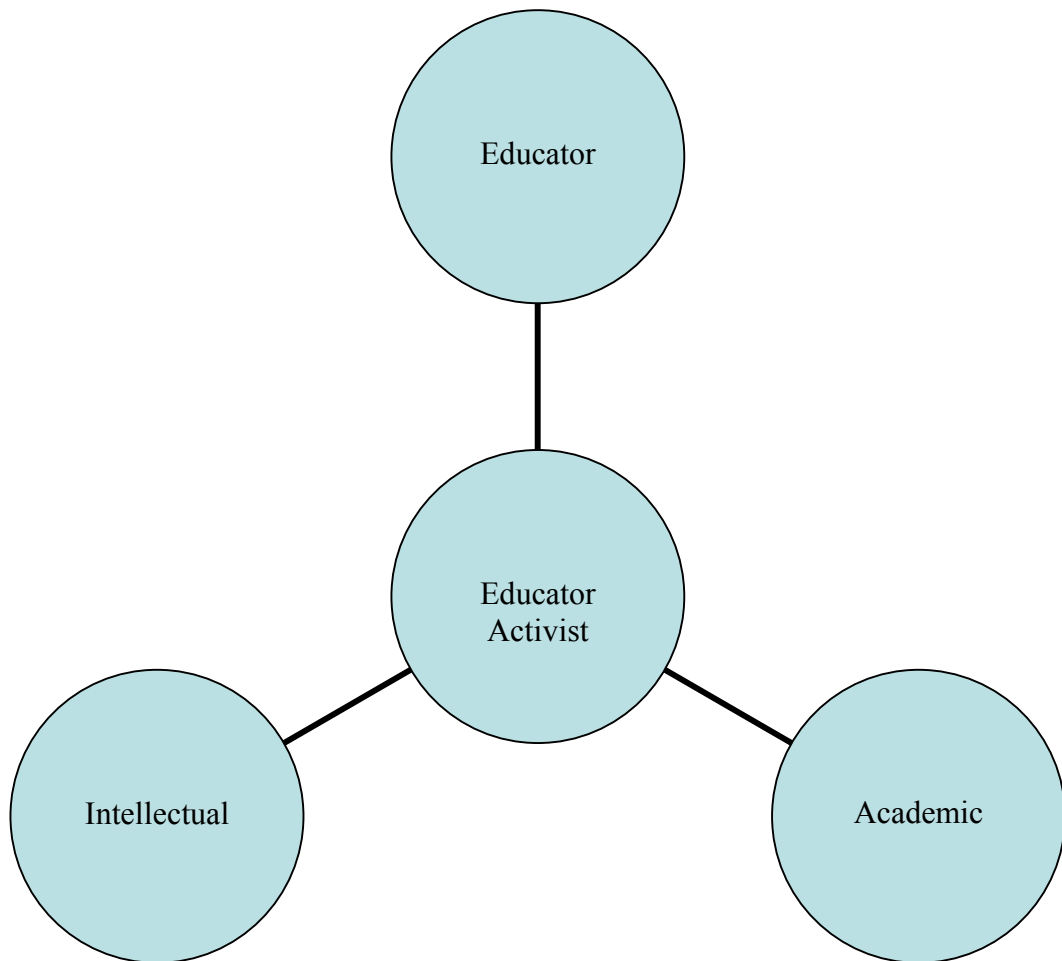
Figure Four: The Components of an Educator Activist Identity

3.9   Intermediate Conclusion:

In this chapter I dealt with the necessity for Northern individuals and groups of advocates to include, in their efforts, the marginalised individuals and groups for whose cause they claim to advocate. This implies being in touch with the grassroots in the South and the North offering a way out of the first of the two legitimation crises of TNANS: *the lack of contact with the grassroots*. Contact and co-ordinated work with such groups will enrich the experience and the expertise of all involved in the process of advocating from below. The need is for people who have themselves evolved a counter consciousness and are capable of leading others to this transformative counter consciousness.

To arrive at the need for such an identity on the part of the Northern and Southern advocates, the chapter began by examining the role of theory and praxis, intellectualism and activism, in advocacy networks. This is further exemplified by surveying the process of such identity formation in the South, with a concrete example of the *dalit* movement in India: mainly focussing on the life experiences of its founder Ambedkar and supported by interview experts with dalit theorists and activists from India.

One of the central conclusions of this chapter is that theorists need to become educator activists in order to contribute to developing sustainable theory and praxis of transnational advocacy. Lessons drawn from *educator activism* in the lives of Ambedkar and the theorists and educators in current day *dalit* movement are valuable to individuals from the North advocating for the South. If one is advocating for the oppressed, it is time to advocate "with" them, developing personal characteristics that bring one closer to the marginalised replacing a paternalistic helping approach. It this process, theorists need to become educator activists in order to contribute to developing sustainable theory and praxis of transnational advocacy. Among the chief sources of such "becoming" is learning from the grassroots. The "grassroots" in advocacy work are, primarily, movements in the South, as exemplified by the dalit movement in India.

In the context of the second legitimacy crisis mentioned in chapter Two, *the remnants of colonial thinking*, a further imperative of learning from the South arises. It is in the orientation of only "helping" the South and not "learning" from them lies the greatest

danger of future advocacy work. I dwell on this aspect of learning from the South in the next chapter.