



Mapping Epistemologies of India as an Object of Knowledge

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Abstract: *This paper explores how India has been represented, understood, and theorized as an object of knowledge across three major intellectual traditions—colonial, nationalist, and subaltern. Drawing on thinkers such as Bernard Cohn, Partha Chatterjee, Sudipta Kaviraj, and Ranajit Guha, it traces the historical shifts in the ways India's social reality has been studied and narrated. The colonial discourse is shown to have constructed India through classificatory systems and “investigative modalities” that linked knowledge with imperial power. Nationalist thinkers, in response, sought to reclaim cultural and political agency by redefining the idea of the nation and its “inner” moral world. However, both these frameworks often reproduced elite perspectives. The Subaltern Studies project emerged as a critical intervention, seeking to recover the voices and experiences of marginalized groups that remained excluded from dominant histories. Through this comparative mapping, the paper argues that the epistemological journey of India reflects an ongoing struggle over who has the authority to define the nation's past and present. It concludes that to understand India sociologically, one must engage with these layered and contesting forms of knowledge that continue to shape its academic and political imagination.*

Keywords: discourse, Nationalist thought, Subaltern historiography, Knowledge and power, Indian sociology

At any given point of time in a society, it is possible to investigate a dimension of knowledge which regulates the functioning of the thought of people. Foucault called this dimension of knowledge a discourse. The discourses are the “material manifestations of the thought that is preserved, transmitted and still affects our present day thinking” (Foucault, 1976:107). The discourses of Indian society are interconnected and varied, expressing the complex realities of a stratified, multi-religious, multilingual and diverse society. Each discourse offers a separate perspective to understand the forces that have shaped India historically and continue to influence its social dynamics today. It is not merely a matter of different method or theory that we have different views about any society. It is the specific institutional patronage as well as dominant forms of knowledge system that shape a particular discourse (Kundu & Yadav, 2021:21). Therefore, we shall not only examine the colonial view of India but also the nationalist viewpoint as well as the subaltern intervention. It is a matter of fact that every epoch has its own spirit of knowing the unknown. The colonialist discourse offers a body of knowledge, narratives, and ideologies produced by British colonial authorities and intellectuals during the British rule in India. The nationalist discourse developed as a critique to the colonial construction of India. On the other hand, the subaltern perspective challenges both colonial as well nationalist discourses as the elite-centric narratives of India, focusing on marginalized groups who were often excluded from mainstream political and intellectual life.

The Colonial Discourse:

When we say the colonial discourse about Indian Society, we mean those statements, analysis, understandings and narratives about India (the colonized people) from the perspective of dominant colonisers. Long before Foucault and his notion of 'discourse' or Edward Said's idea of 'orientalism' was popular to English world, it was Thomas Cohn who talked about the relationship between knowledge and power with great clarity (Dirks, 1997: ix). Cohn had firm conviction that modern India could not be studied either historically or anthropologically without studying the process of structural and cultural changes that colonial rule brought about in the subcontinent (Guha, 1987). In the colonial climate, both white rulers and indigenous peoples were constantly involved in representing each other. The making of this anthropological 'Other' was part of the colonial world. The colonial whites adopted to the construction of new environments peopled by new 'Others'. At the same time, those Others had to restructure their world to accept the fact of white domination and their own position of powerlessness.

White rulers of colonialism came to the subcontinent with models and logics means of representation, forms of knowledge and action to adapt with new environment. They know that knowing, classifying and objectifying 'India' were essential to establish British domination as Cohn (1997) aptly claim "the conquest of India was the conquest on knowledge". Colonial conquest was not just the result of the power of superior arms, military organization, political power or economic wealth. It was made possible by cultural technologies established new opposite categories between colonisers and colonized, European and Asian, modern and traditional, east and west (Dirks, 1997: ix). The colonial state of India was treated as a theatre for state experimentation where different state modalities like historiography, documentation, representation, etc. were used to transform knowledge about India into power to rule India. Cohn believed that Indian society could be known and represented as series of facts. These facts were gathered by using different "*investigative modalities*". An investigative modality includes the definition of a body of information that is needed the procedures by which appropriate knowledge is gathered, its ordering and classification, and then how it is transformed into usable forms such as published reports, statistical data, histories, legal codes, encyclopedia, etc. (Cohn, 1997: 5).

Cohn (ibid: 3-11) primarily identified six types of modalities- historiography, observation and travel, survey, enumeration, museology and surveillance. *Historiographic Modality* has enriched the British empire with an '*ontological*' power to create assumptions about their colonies on their real, social and natural worlds. *Observational/ Travel Modality* has provided the power to give narratives from the point of views of the Europeans on the colonized people. *The Survey Modality* was a form of exploration of the natural and social landscape of India which includes a wide range of practices, from recording of archaeological sites of historical significance to collecting botanical, zoological data, mapping of geographical boundary, etc. Through *the Enumerative Modality*, the British officials considered India as a vast collection of numbers, that is, lists of products, prices, customs and duties, weights and measures and the values of various coins. *The Museological Modality* has portrayed India to Europeans as a vast museum and a source of collectables and curiosities to fill European Museums, Botanical Gardens, zoos and country-houses. Lastly, *the Surveillance Modality* has provided some special instrumentalities to the British rule to control different groups and categories of people in India. For example, certain castes and villages are accused of practicing female infanticide, establishment of 'Thagi and Dacoity Department' in 1835 to investigate and punish robberies and murders etc. Using these powerful modalities, European scholars, missionaries, administrators and so on developed a Euro-centric (Colonial) discourse about Indian society and its major social institutions like village, caste, family, etc. This Euro-centric view originally began to develop since 3rd century BCE by foreign travelers like Romans, Greeks, Chinese, Arabs, Afghans, Persian, etc. From 1760 onward the process of colonial knowledge formation had been accelerated with the coming of modern West like French, British, etc. Cohn (1987:141-158) observed three major traditions of colonial approach that developed by the end of 18th century: Orientalist, Administrative and Missionary.

The Orientalist Tradition- For Edward Said (1978), Orientalism works with the presumption of the Western superiority and posits the Orient (non-Western societies) as static and irrational. Since the Post-Palasi Period, accumulative knowledge of Persian and Sanskrit and the vernacular languages began to develop that enabled the British to gain knowledge about Indian religion, philosophy and history. For example, British officer of East India Company's Army Alexander Dow for the first time to publish

the translation of one of the Persian histories of India as '*The History of Hindustan in 1768-1771*.' The Orientalists like Dow were convinced that the texts were indeed accurate guides to understand the culture and society of the Hindus. N.B. Halhed translated *Dharmashastras* that published in 1776. Orientalist views based on the study of texts had several limitations. For example, it led to a consistent view that the Brahmins were the dominant group everywhere in the Indian Society (which is not true at all). This textual view has given a picture of Indian society as being static, timeless and spaceless.

The Administrative Tradition- The sole purpose of administrative tradition was to maintain law and order that started to develop around 1757-1785 in Bengal. East India Company's officials required considerable data based on knowledge of the structure of Indian Society for a regular collection of land revenue. To reach this goal it started to collect documents and records of previous rulers and assembled them. For example, William Tennant wrote a two-volume work '*Indian Recreations*' published in 1804. The said work includes data based on careful observation on agriculture practices in upper India. H.T. Colebrooke in his '*Remarks on the Husbandry and Internal Commerce of Bengal*' 1806 gave a careful observation combining statistical data and summaries of official report with his own observation and provides a clear description about most of the commercial crops like sugarcane, cotton, indigo and opium.

The Missionary Tradition- We find the first full expression of this view in Charles Grant's '*Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain, Particularly with Respect to Morals, and on the Means of Improving It*'. Grant's view on Indian Society was that the caste system, the government, the legal system and the roles of the Brahmins were the sole cause of the degraded state of the Hindus. Therefore, for him the only hope for the improvement of Hindus lies in the elimination of Hinduism. The major thrust of writings of these missionaries was to condemn Hindus and Hindu Society.

Colonialism had not only profoundly impacted the image of Indian society and culture, but also deeply influenced sociological and social anthropological theories in India. Meticulous introspection suggests that sociologists in India at its formative stage were not free from "academic colonialism" (Patel, 2021). Colonial episteme has become embedded within mainstream sociological traditions of India through the way colonial administrators and anthropologists conceived of India and through its reproduction by Indian second-generation sociologists and anthropologists. As a result, India has come to be conceived of as a traditional society operating in terms of its traditional dynamics. The foundation of Indian sociology was framed by colonial administrators in the context of growth and the spread of Orientalist positions in Europe which was institutionalized in India first through the study of Indian languages and later, through the study of Indian society. It is thus no surprise that these ideas became the frame of reference to create knowledge about Indian society and shaped the disciplinary identity of sociology in India. Based on Euro-centric race theory, Indian people were divided into Aryan and non-Aryan races, now we call 'castes' and 'tribes' (Patel, 2006). The interesting fact is that while 'castes' were defined in the context of Hinduism who had better technology and superior civilizational attributes, 'tribes' were identified as people using primitive technology, living in the jungles and having animistic religious practices. G.S. Ghurye, popularly known as the father of Indian sociology, represented Indian society with these Orientalist ideas. For him, Hindu civilization was structured around the caste system where Brahmins were the most civilized and tribes were most backward. Other religious groups such as Christians, Muslims and Zoroastrians deviated from these norms too and therefore needed to be assimilated into the Hindu fourfold system (Patel, 2021).

The Nationalist Discourse:

The nationalist discourse of India as an anti-colonial consciousness emerged in the late 19th century through a dialectic that developed between the process of colonial state formation by the British empire and the politics of the independence movement. Sudipto Kaviraj (2010: 8889), a noted political scientist, has defined nationalist discourse of India as "the intellectual process through which the conception of an Indian nation is gradually formed, the discourse that forms it, is in favour of it, and gives it historical shape". The colonial rulers advanced the view about Indian society as it is a society which is governed by social codes and customary laws and therefore needed the rule of the law to be administered by the impersonal British authority. It was in opposition to such claim that the discourse on nation building in India found articulation.

Before going further about the process of nationalist discourse formation in India, we need to understand the differences between the ideas of 'nation', 'nationalism', and 'national subject'. A nation is a kind of feeling of a common bond between people based on common cultural past and present. Benedict Anderson has given the most influential definition of it. He defines nation as "an imagined political community" (Anderson, 1991: 6). It is imagined because all the people who inhabit it do not know each other as they do not have face-to-face interaction, yet treat each other as fellow national being (1991: *ibid*). We should remember that the very idea of a nation is not a priory category, rather it has to be brought into existence. Nationalism is that very tool which has the potential to bring the nation into existence. It is considered as the external manifestation of the political consciousness in people or groups within the nation. Lastly, Foucault's idea of the 'subjectivity' or 'subject formation' may be helpful to understand the idea of 'national subject'. The process of subject formation is not natural or spontaneous, but it is based upon the political and social structures of a given historical time. Discussing Foucault's notion of 'subjectivity' Danaher et.al. (2000) have observed that: "our identity is the product of our consciousness, self-governing self and, instead, presents individual identity as the product of discourse, ideologies and institutional practices" (xiv-xv). Therefore, we can say that the 'national subject' doesn't come into being by itself. It comes into existence when the idea of nation takes its shape among the people. The idea of nation itself defines who could be a national subject and what would be its defining characteristics. It is a matter of debate even today who is fit to be called an 'Indian'. Let us now discuss, however, how the process of national subject formation in India got impetuous from the response and resistance to the colonial rule.

There is no simple narrative to the nationalist discourse of India. A nation is a modern community because regardless of all inequalities, all people within the nation are linked with other in "deep, horizontal comradeship" (Anderson, 1991: 7). Ideas about community of course existed in pre-colonial India too. But these earlier communities were 'fuzzy' in nature (Kaviraj, 2010: 95). Kaviraj did not use the term fuzzy 'to indicate imprecision, but only a different way of being precise' (2010: *ibid*). However, these traditional communities were fuzzy in two ways. *Firstly*, collective identities like religion, caste or endogamous groups were not territory centric. The political rulers were also owners of territory and hence, neither individuals nor communities could make any claims on specified geographical areas. Pre-modern communities, consequently, had fuzzy boundaries. *Secondly*, traditional communities were not enumerated and, hence, they were incapable of any large action which is so typical of modern communities. Since traditional communities did not know how many of them lived in the world, they could not conceive of collective action for common good. As compared to precolonial times, however, people of India imagined their modern community of the nation and forged their identities in it from colonial era in different ways. In contrast to fuzzy traditional communities, the modern community was/is an 'enumerated' one (Kaviraj, 2010: 56-57, 70). The idea of the enumerated community came into being after the inauguration of two modern processes during colonial times, viz, the process of colonial enumeration through the Census and the process of mobilization of enumerated communities through new methods of organisation in public arenas (Kaviraj, 2010). This resulted in sharper divisions between one community and another in colonial times which, in turn, accelerated the process of separate (national) identity formation. Needless to say, the process of separate identity formation not only emphasized adjacency and similarity between some people but also marked the boundaries of distance and dis-similarity with the 'Other(s)'.

The above discussion confirms it that the formation of nationalist discourse has no easy trajectory in India. Partha Chatterjee, a distinguished political sociologist, traces the root of anti-colonial consciousness in the nineteenth century when Indian national elites in a very creative way altered the social structure of their life and the entire society by differentiating between "outer" or "material" (political) domain and "inner" or "spiritual" (social) domain (2005: 6). He dismissed the popular perception that anti-colonial nationalism was a battle against colonialism and claimed that colonial rule had complete authority over the "outer" sphere of life and had no sovereign control over the "inner" domain of the national life. Therefore, the national elites got the scope to make far-reaching interventions in the social and cultural domain of national life. Chatterjee (1995) elaborates particularly three fields where these interventions was made possible- language, schools, and family. The growing number of printing presses and the increasing number of magazines, newspapers, and journals in vernacular that developed outside of the pale of the colonial state, help to develop anti-colonial consciousness among the depressed classes and prepare them to fight for their own future and dignity. The second important intervention was the establishment of a network of secondary schools that were supposed to provide an education to prepare the students for participating in the independence movement. The

third important intervention took place in the field of family particularly, woman. Education among women spread rapidly in Bengal but the elite (including women) took care to differentiate them from the British women. She was educated but not a 'memsahib' (Chatterjee, 1995: 129). The nationalist elites guarded their family and women most tenaciously against any intervention by the colonial state.

However, in India, nationalist consciousness took different kinds of responses in different sections of the society. The formation of 'national subjectivity' of the people of different sections of Indian society was a very complex process of negotiation between the colonial rulers and the subject population. Chatterjee's formulation of inner/outer or spiritual/material domains of life holds tremendous potential for understanding these negotiations. Following Chatterjee's formulation as well as observations made by theorists like Kaviraj (2010) and Nandi (2005), we may divide responses against the colonial rule into four broad sets. These sets of responses involve negotiation with different forces at different time and contexts unleashed by colonial modernity in India.

The first set of responses was about a complete disown of everything which was central to Indian culture and embraced every aspect of western culture. Ashis Nandy calls it an "aggressive criticism" of Indian tradition (2005:22). Michael Madhusudan Dutt's (1824-1873) rewriting of *Ramayana* through his classic *Meghnadbadh Kavya* embodies this spirit. Through the retelling of the epic he upheld Ravana and Meghnad as the heroes whereas Rama and Lakshmana as feminine villains (2005:19). It was a kind of national subjectivity which was totally in conformity with the colonial ideals of "subject". Another "aggressively Anglicized" father of late nineteenth century 'Krishnadhan Ghose forbade his son Sri Aurobindo to learn or speak Bengali. He makes sure that nothing Indian should touch his favourite son' (2005:87). The inherent limitation with this set of responses was its uncritical acceptance of colonial modernity. According to the second set of responses, colonial rulers have superior civilization and knowledge system, so they have natural right to rule over the country. *Sir Syed Ahmad Khan* is the prominent example of this response. He set up a chain of scientific society and schools for Muslim community imitating western rationality and education system. Like the first set of responses, it has also no critical engagement with colonial modernity. Respondents of this group never realized that colonial rule would never offer them equality because colonization was based on the principle of *difference*. The third set of responses, however, was much more complex than the previous two. It was agreed that the West was superior in material domains, but India can also offer to the rest of the world in some other spheres of life, mostly spiritual. Nandy calls this set of responses "cultural criticism" (2005: 22). Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay (1838-1894) was the leading figure of these responses. Raja Rammohan Roy, Vivekananda also belong to this group. This group of respondents actually divided social life into inner and outer domains and exercised sovereignty over the inner world. The major limitation of these responses was that it denies the idea of plurality or diversity in cultural life of the people. The fourth set of responses was completely different from the above three types. It was argued that the East, that is India, is superior to West in all walks of life and the logic of colonialism was based on the false premise of Western superiority. Gandhiji and Tagore were the most influential advocates of this response. This set of responses has refused to consider the Dalit and other marginalized groups to identify as 'national subject'. Of course, these 'national subjects' had the potential to free India as an independent nation, but this national subjectivity had nothing to offer to Dalits in terms of their emancipation.

The Subaltern Perspective

The subaltern approach, broadly known as *subaltern historiography*, emerged as a critical paradigm to reinterpret the history of India from the viewpoint of the marginalized. It primarily sought to recover the suppressed voices of peasants and subordinate groups that had been omitted from elite-centric colonial and nationalist narratives. The term *subaltern* itself carries a long intellectual history. In medieval Europe, it referred to vassals and peasants; by the eighteenth century, it denoted lower military ranks. Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937), while imprisoned under Mussolini's regime, famously used the word in his *Prison Notebooks* (1971) as a coded substitute for *proletariat* to evade censorship (Ludden, 2002: 5). For Gramsci, *subaltern* referred both to industrial workers and peasant classes in pre-capitalist formations (Chatterjee, 2011: 2). This semantic flexibility allowed later scholars to adapt the term across contexts. As Spivak (2000: 325) noted, for South Asian historians influenced by Gramsci, *subaltern* came to mean "persons and groups cut off from upward—and in a sense outward—social mobility."

The emergence of Subaltern Studies in India in the early 1980s was both a political and epistemological challenge to Eurocentric historiography. Post-Enlightenment historical traditions in Europe had largely ignored non-Western experiences, an omission that Dipesh Chakrabarty (1998: 265) famously described as “asymmetric ignorance.” Under the leadership of Ranajit Guha at the University of Sussex, the Subaltern Studies collective sought to dismantle this intellectual hierarchy and reconstruct Indian history “from below.” Influenced by post-structuralist thinkers like Foucault and Derrida, the group aimed to deconstruct colonial and nationalist discourses that positioned the elite as the sole agents of historical change.

The subaltern approach thus redefined both the sources and methods of knowledge production. It asked fundamental epistemological questions about who produces history and whose experiences are considered legitimate knowledge. During colonial rule, the British justified their domination as a civilizing mission that brought law, order, and progress to India. However, since the 1960s, Indian historians began to expose the deep economic, cultural, and political damage inflicted by colonialism (Chatterjee, 2010). Consequently, the historiography of modern India became polarized between two frameworks—colonialism and nationalism (Chakraborty, 2002: 5). At one end, Cambridge historian Anil Seal (1968) argued that Indian nationalism was primarily the project of a small elite who “competed and collaborated” with the British for power and privilege. At the other, Bipan Chandra (1969) viewed Indian nationalism, under Gandhi and Nehru, as a transformative movement uniting the “people of India” against imperial oppression.

Ranajit Guha (1982: 3) rejected both these frameworks as elitist, asserting that they failed to acknowledge “the contributions made by people on their own, that is, independent of the elite, to the making and development of nationalism.” His *The Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (1983) provided an alternative interpretive framework centered on peasant consciousness (Kundu & Yadav, 2021: 30). Although Guha’s work shared certain affinities with the “history from below” tradition of English Marxists such as E. P. Thompson and E. J. Hobsbawm, it introduced distinct departures. Subaltern Studies was deeply inspired by Marxism but adapted to the Indian context, emphasizing indigenous categories and resistance practices. As Guha (1984: vii) declared, “We are opposed to much of the prevailing academic practice in historiography...for its failure to acknowledge the subaltern as the maker of his own destiny.”

According to Chakraborty (2002: 8), Guha’s theorization diverged from English Marxism in three critical respects: it distanced itself from any universalist history of capital, questioned the notion of the nation as a universal political form, and interrogated the relationship between power and knowledge. Guha and his colleagues proposed that the “politics of the people” in colonial India existed in an *autonomous domain*, distinct from elite politics. While elite politics was vertically organized through institutions and laws, subaltern politics functioned horizontally through kinship, locality, and shared experience (ibid). This domain, they argued, expressed a collective consciousness of resistance to domination and exclusion.

Before the rise of Subaltern Studies, Marxist historiography—particularly Hobsbawm (1978: 2)—had dismissed peasant uprisings organized around religion or caste as “pre-political,” arguing that such actors lacked a coherent political language. Guha sharply contested this idea, claiming that peasant insurgencies were not primitive outbursts but deliberate and symbolically rich forms of political action (Dhanagare, 1993: 134). He showed that peasants deployed specific gestures, rituals, and modes of speech to communicate opposition and articulate moral visions of justice (Chakraborty, 2002: 9). In doing so, Guha expanded Gramsci’s concept of subalternity and redefined political agency in the Indian context. Dhanagare (1993: 140) summarized the Indian subaltern approach as a synthesis of four Marxist streams: Gramsci’s emphasis on spontaneous action under hegemony, Trotsky’s notion of consciousness beyond party organization, the English Marxists’ focus on historical materialism, and the revolutionary models of Latin American and 1968 youth movements.

After Guha’s retirement from the editorial collective in 1988, the Subaltern Studies project entered a new phase. The publication of *Selected Subaltern Studies*, introduced by Edward Said and Gayatri Spivak’s “Deconstructing Historiography” from *Subaltern Studies VI* (1986), marked its global recognition (Chakraborty, 2002: 17; Roy Chowdhury, 2016). Yet, critical reassessment soon followed. Spivak (1994: 66–111) raised two key concerns: first, that the subaltern project neglected gender, and second, that it risked assuming an overly autonomous subaltern subject. In *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, Spivak (1988: 271–313) warned against the naïve liberal claim of “letting the subaltern speak,” arguing instead that the structures of power themselves determine what can be heard (Chakraborty, 2002). Irfan Habib (1986) further critiqued Guha’s notion of “autonomy,” suggesting that popular uprisings were integral to elite nationalist mobilization. The ambiguity of *subalternity* itself, acknowledged even by

Guha (1982: 8), and the project's limited focus on colonial-era insurgencies were also seen as conceptual weaknesses (Dhanagare, 1993: 142).

Despite these critiques, the Subaltern Studies collective underwent what Roy Chowdhury (2016) terms a “discursive turn” between 1987 and 1989, shifting focus from subaltern politics to issues of representation, subjectivity, and power. This *postcolonial turn*, identified by Chakraborty (2002), was influenced by Foucault, Derrida, and Said, and encouraged scholars to explore the fragmented consciousness of marginalized groups. Recent research has extended this framework to study the lived experiences of Dalits, women, and religious or ethnic minorities in contemporary India (Chatterjee, 2010). The establishment of the Latin American Subaltern Studies Group in 1992 further attests to the project's global resonance.

Partha Chatterjee (2012) later suggested that Subaltern Studies should be viewed as a product of its historical moment, and that a new phase must address emerging forms of marginality. He called for an *ethnographic turn*—one that attends to everyday experiences of Adivasis, migrants (such as the Chakmas), and ecologically displaced communities. This shift, he argued, could open new directions for understanding how identities and resistances are formed in postcolonial India. Through these evolving trajectories, the subaltern perspective continues to challenge dominant epistemologies, insisting that history must remain attentive to those voices that have been silenced, fragmented, or forgotten.

Conclusion:

Understanding India as an “object of knowledge” is not a static academic exercise but a deeply historical and political process. From colonialism's classificatory gaze to the rise of nationalist thought and finally the critical voices of the subaltern school, each phase represents a different way of seeing and speaking about India. The colonial discourse turned knowledge into an instrument of domination, framing India through categories that served imperial power. The nationalist response, while attempting to reclaim agency, often reproduced the same binaries of tradition and modernity and left little room for those outside elite politics. It was the subaltern intervention that finally shifted attention to the margins—toward peasants, women, tribes, and other silenced groups—transforming the very meaning of history and knowledge. The trajectory traced here shows that every epistemology of India is embedded within its time and its relations of power. Colonial administrators produced knowledge to rule; nationalists produced knowledge to unite; subaltern scholars produced knowledge to resist. Together, they reveal that knowing India has always been a political act. The challenge today is to move beyond these inherited frameworks and to build new epistemologies that recognize plural voices, fragmented identities, and lived experiences across regions and communities.

In this sense, India must no longer be seen merely as an “object” of study but as a field of ongoing conversations between power and resistance, history and memory, elite and subaltern. Only through such dialogue can the sociology of India become truly reflexive—aware of its own conditions of knowledge and open to alternative ways of seeing the social world.

Three Ways of Knowing India: A Comparative Epistemological Framework**References:**

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