India is presently seen as going through a crisis of governability. That is not the only crisis through which India has gone. When India completely went under to the British power in the nineteenth century, the first crisis that arose was that of self-esteem. Were Indians at all capable of being their own masters? What was the essence of being an Indian and how valuable was that essence? Thinkers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had to find answers to these questions. Some of them concluded that there was nothing of value in the Indian essence and propagated wholesale adoption of western values. Probably the first person who proclaimed the greatness of Indian-ness was Vivekananda. He was of course a spokesman of the essence of Hindu culture but he also accepted the essence of Islam and Christianity and, therefore, could speak for India as a whole. But Vivekananda could reach only the elite. So could other reformers and agitators who came before Gandhi. When, under Gandhi, and then under Nehru, the freedom movement became a mass movement, all these questions of self-esteem, identity and modernisation were again tackled afresh. This book, edited by Upendra Baxi and Bhikhu Parekh in honour of their academic guru Rajibhai Patel, takes up the story from this point.

The first four essays deal with the contribution of Gandhi, Nehru and Ambedkar to this discourse about self-esteem, etc.

Bhikhu Parekh has categorised the pre-independence thinkers into three groups: the uncritical modernists, the critical modernists and the critical traditionalists. It is significant that he does not find a fourth, balancing category, that of uncritical traditionalists. That shows that everybody wanted modernisation. The only difference was about how much of the tradition had contemporary validity and how much of modernity was really good. Bhikhu Parekh argues that Nehru was unsure of his position about tradition. He felt, partly from the fact that Indian tradition had survived several centuries and partly from some pride in his past, that India’s tradition did have some strength in it. He could not however decide what were the actual strengths and weaknesses. He was sure that traditional institutions could not help in the regeneration of Indian society and were, therefore, not worth reviving. His model of regeneration was of having new institutions based on the state.

Bhikhu Parekh further argues that Nehru failed to forge a structure in which all the four institutions of the state - the Parliament, the Cabinet, the Congress Party and the bureaucracy - could play an active role. He had already settled on an ideology, he could win elections on his own, he had not much use for the party and he had also no able associates in the Cabinet. He therefore depended on the bureaucracy, which consisted of talented people and had already imbued western culture. This statist model also meant a top-down development plan in which industry was given prominence and grew, but there was neither equitable distribution of wealth nor prosperity in agriculture. Even in the educational field, Nehru gave importance to elite and centralised institutions rather than to primary education. Bhikhu Parekh says that Nehru changed his own model in later years and realised the primacy of agriculture and primary education, gave importance to the role of the party and even accepted spirituality; that in effect, Nehru began to move from uncritical modernism to critical modernism.

While Bhikhu Parekh finds a statist model unsatisfactory, he has not put forward any alternative organisational model for society’s transformation. In fact no Indian has ever put forward any alternative model, including leaders like Gandhi and Jayaprakash Narayan. Gandhi had no use for any large-scale organisation as his ideology was of reforming the individual and his society was to be as small as a village. Jayaprakash Narayan propagated a people’s revolution and left the organisational model to the people’s will.

Gandhi’s response to the question of identity

B.P. Patankar, 155, Hemman Nagar, Nagpur 440 009.
Baxi, Upendra and Bhikhu Parekh, (Eds.), 1994; Crisis and Change in Contemporary India, Sage Publications, New Delhi; Pp. 453, Price: Rs 250/.
and modernity has been examined by Judith Brown. According to her, Gandhi’s central concept was of Swaraj, which meant each individual’s mastery of his own self and his refusal to accept slavery whether it be of the British or of any other tyrant or even of material temptations. It was through such a reformulation of the individual that he hoped to regenerate the whole society, not through any statutory institutions. This Swaraj, or mastery of the self also implied a moral law. The two together had to be the basis of an individual’s life as well as of state-craft. Since moral law is supreme, the state can be defined if it does not follow the moral law. Gandhi’s struggle for Independence was really a struggle for the establishment of the moral law. People were called upon to identify themselves with this moral law, which was an all-time law, i.e., it was at once embedded in tradition and also constituted the essence of the future society. Since Swaraj and moral law were, according to Gandhi, implied in all religions, Gandhi could effectively appeal to people of all religions and conceptualise an integrated nation embracing them all. Gandhi accepted tradition as well as modernity to the extent that they were consistent with Swaraj and moral law. Judith Brown has observed that Gandhi’s experiments and ideals ‘cannot easily be borrowed across the barriers of time and culture’ and yet ‘his life suggests to the late twentieth century that people should reconsider the basis of radicalism and should ask fundamental questions about the nature of mankind and the goals of men and women if they are to be fully human’ (p. 95).

Thomas Pantham’s examination of Gandhian thought is couched in highly academic language. He finds in Gandhi ‘an anticipation of some aspects of the present day post-structuralist deconstruction of the foundational ‘binary oppositions’ of the political theory of post-Enlightenment modernity’ (p. 100). The general reader can hardly make any sense from such sentences. According to him, Gandhi saw that modernity involved a lot of exploitation of the lower order creation in the name of science and humanism and he, therefore, developed a distinctive mix of critical traditionality and critical modernity. He picked up truth and non-violence as the essence of tradition and integrated them with the conduct of politics which was of central importance in modern times. Here Pantham finds a complementarity between Gandhi and Nehru. Nehru, as we have seen, had already a gut feeling that Indian civilization had some hidden strength in it. He had the same feeling about Gandhi: ‘a man who could command such tremendous devotion and loyalty must have something that corresponds to the needs and aspirations of the masses’ (p. 112). Gandhi also recognised the role of parliamentary democracy, or parliamentary Swaraj as he put it, as a means of achieving his ideal Swaraj. He also accepted that Nehru had a superior knowledge of the technicalities of democracy. It is, thus, that Nehru and Gandhi together found their solution to India’s problems of self-esteem, identity and the necessity to modernise.

The third personality examined in this book is Ambedkar. Ambedkar devoted his attention primarily to the problems of the Scheduled Castes the problems of their emancipation, which subsumed the problems of their identity and modernisation. Upendra Baxi has devoted his essay to the study of Ambedkar. We have in an earlier volume of this Journal (Vol. 6, No. 3, July-Sept 1994), surveyed the contribution of Ambedkar and Upendra Baxi’s delineation of his personality. Ambedkar’s goal was liberty, equality and fraternity. His nationalism, rationalism and his western, liberal education made him committed to parliamentary democracy. It is through the institutions of parliamentary democracy that he sought to seek political and economic justice for the untouchables. On the social level, he sought to give a new identity to his followers by leaving the fold of Hinduism and embracing Buddhism. He, also, like Nehru, did not have any hopes from the traditional institutions of Indian society.

While these were, so to say, idealistic efforts to change society, the society itself responded in its own way. These ground realities have been examined in some other essays in the book, largely by way of a theoretical analysis.

Three essays, one each by Sudipta Kaviraj, Rajeev Bhargava and Gurpreet Mahajan are on the question of modernity and its relation with religion and politics.
Gurpreet Mahajan takes stock of the argument of those who, dismayed by the atomisation of society, the fierce competitiveness and the erosion of moral values brought about by modernisation, question the very need of modernism and argue for a social-political structure which will be a "loose confederation of different associations and natural communities ... where loyalty will be owed to one's \textit{kula}, jati, varna, village, region and, in the last instance, state" (p. 358). Gurpreet Mahajan has noted the following justifications given for such a choice: (1) Modernisation results in an atomisation of the society where each one is for himself. (2) The state in India is becoming more and more violent and oppressive and has, moreover, been unable to handle various tensions. So it would be good to unburden the state by making traditional institutions active in certain areas. (3) Nationalism which, under modernity, takes the place of religion, is arbitrary and violent. (4) Industrial workers torn from their traditional environment are unable to absorb modernity and the universal identity associated with it and clamour for traditional values which, therefore, merit recognition. (5) Even though citizenship is an important identity, there are other identities which actually exist and which are not incompatible with a democratic state. And (6) whatever desecularisation of the state that has taken place, is not the cause of communal tensions.

Gurpreet Mahajan admits that this argument makes some sense but does not entirely agree with it. She says, firstly, that no model has been worked out to have a loose federation of castes and communities. Secondly, the multiple identities which are envisaged in such a set-up can conflict among themselves. Thirdly, the above analysis does not take into consideration the actual oppressive practices that developed in traditional communities. Only the 'essence' of religion is taken into account and it is then assumed that (a) tolerance for diversity is already built into each religion, and (b) that such religion/tradition possesses internal structures and modes of critique facilitating its growth. Gurpreet Mahajan considers both these claims to be deeply problematic (p. 362). She argues that tolerance cannot be inferred from mere co-existence. Moreover, tolerance across communities does not result in the opening up of spaces within one's own community, permitting an individual to distance himself from the community practices or to appropriate critically one's own inheritance. In fact, individuation and gender-discourse, which are important parts of modernity can hardly be promoted through an internal critique of traditional cultures. Moreover, leadership of religious communities has passed into the hands of orthodox practitioners who can hardly be expected to reconstruct religion in its 'true' form. That leadership has also historically failed to deal with communal tensions. So, ultimately we revert to the modern institution of the state. That the state tries to displace religion is only the negative part of modernity. The positive part is 'the accompanying process through which knowledge, patterns of behaviour and institutional arrangements that were once grounded in divine power are transformed into phenomena of purely human creation'. (p. 364)

Gurpreet Mahajan thus defends modernity. What, however, she considers necessary is to displace the utilitarian, need-based ethics of the liberal society by constructing a society imbued with the spirit of commonness and sociability. This, she thinks, can be done without either a rejection or a blind and romantic acceptance of our past- the past can't be rejected because we are embedded in it, and yet, we need not be its blind followers since that tradition, while it provides us with some prejudices, always keeps a scope for their being revised or reconstructed.

Sudipta Kaviraj makes a historical study of the relation between religion and political processes in India, mediated of course by the superimposition of modernity. He cautions us against projection of our present concepts into the past. He applies a more 'authentic' historical criterion and argues that in pre-modern times, social identities could not have been anything but 'fuzzy'. While cultural and linguistic differences were there, those were graduated. There was as yet no census to divide people sharply into specific groups. There was also no geographical demarcation to indicate that beyond a particular border there was suddenly an absolutely different language. In those times the productive and ritual activities went on without any assistance or hindrance from
the state and there was no occasion for modern concepts like majorities, minorities or nationhood to take root in that society. There was no attempt to combine various sub-groups into monster groups like 'all Hindus', 'all Muslims', 'all Scheduled Castes', 'all Backward Classes', etc. There was also no concept of a nation subsuming all these groups. The formation of large groups became a necessity when politics became a function of numbers. That was also when modernism was introduced into India. Initially, modernity remained confined to the English-educated and that too in the public space of science, legality, administration, etc. Later it seeped into the vernacular-speaking masses but with grotesque transformations. The efforts to make large coalitions of traditional communities required the 'thinning' of religion. Communism is this process of the thinning of religious beliefs and practices. Previously an individual's religious beliefs were thick in the sense that they were spread across a wide variety of levels - from large metaphysical beliefs to minute ritual practices. Religion for the communist is a thin affair, only so much as is needed for rallying people of varying sects for a political purpose. For this reason, when communists say that they are not fundamentalists, they are right. This thinning of religion is also not a creation of the communists. Religion anyway becomes thin under the pressure of modernity, which weakens credulity and brings more and more of a community's life under the control of the state. Religious identities themselves, however, continue to be strong. Contrary to the belief that India had already achieved a composite culture, the historical fact is that there was only a co-existence of various communities facilitated by an absence of sharply defined and enumerated identities and the absence of any great public space in which the communities could fuse together. It is this standing aloof of communities that helped the growth of communalism. The communist simply uses this situation. His language is of the collective advantage of the collective self. The 'nation' is now more important, religion serves only as a base. Communism in India is thus a grotesque product of modernity. It has a contradiction within itself: whether to give primacy to religion or to political considerations?

A communal party swings from one pole to another from time to time, according to the advantages perceived from either. Sudipta Kaviraj deals with all these changes and aspects in great detail, drawing on the recent behaviour of various political parties and actors. He argues that the Nehruvian state has failed to set in motion a process through which liberal, secular ideas could be communicated to the masses. That state brought the fruits of modernity and development only to the westernised elite. Its politics moreover stifled the expression of indigenous culture. All this has caused a schism between the masses and the westernised elite and facilitated the growth of communalism and allowed it to parade as a faith in India's past and as true secularism. His conclusion is that for modernism to succeed in India, a political theory needs to be fashioned which seriously takes into account this specific Indian situation.

Rajiv Bhargava also writes about the relationship between modernity and religion and particularly about the 'discontent at the dominant form assumed in Third World societies by modernity and secularism' (p. 317). He thinks that some of this discontent ignores that religion as well as modernity have some common traits. On the positive side both are imbued with spirituality. On the negative side both are contaminated by linkages of power, wealth and privilege. We must therefore look at the sub-cultures in each category. There are four such cultures. At one end is the undisciplined pursuit of desires. At the other end is an ultimate ideal towards which one aims to devote his life. In between, there is one type which is suspicious of ultimate ideal, and is satisfied with many small ideals. Finally, there is the fourth type which recognises an ultimate spiritual ideal but tries to reach it through small ideals rather than past them. These latter two sub-cultures spring up from long associations between people of differing traditions. When faith in the religion of high ideals begins to totter, religion needs to be proved by evidence and argument. That is the beginning of the ideologue. With his loss of faith he has probably given up his high ideals but, whatever he does, his pursuit of desires has to be justified by religious reasons.
The zealot goes further. He uses religious arguments with utter cynicism. Such divisions exist in modern secularism also. One is the high ideal of super-humanism. Here, man is supposed to be potentially perfect, capable of planning and bringing forth a perfect society. Programmes are made out to achieve such a perfection. The second category is of people who distrust such absolutist ideals and are content with the affirmation of ordinary life. This is akin to the religious category where the householder’s life is considered to be the best part of life. The third category is of course the culture of unfettered desires.

Thus, religion and secularism are structurally similar. The difference between them is that religion is integrally related to God, secularism is not. But that by itself should not lead to opposition and hostility. In fact, the religious man of faith who is humble enough to be satisfied with small ideals is not much different from the secular man aware of his limitations and, therefore, humble enough to seek smaller goods. It is the religious zealots and ideologues that clash with secular zealots and ideologues. We can understand the true identities of Indian political actors only if we understand the above-mentioned differences in various identities. Nehru, though a non-believer, may have been informed with high spiritual ideals and Gandhi though a man of faith had nothing in common with religious zealots and ideologues. BJP’s identity can immediately be recognised in this framework. The party has nothing to do with religion as a faith but it is fundamentally interlocked with religious ideology and zealotry.

Rajiv Bhargava concludes that a sweeping rejection of modernity is neither desirable nor possible. Its rejection is not desirable because of its spiritual aspects and its being necessary for our survival. Rejection is not possible because of the tremendous force with which it has upset traditions all over the world.

Leroy Rouner discusses the role of religion in fostering or hampering national unity and in developing a civil loyalty to the nation. Such civil loyalty is a necessity for India inhabited by diverse people, to hold together, “a loyalty which takes people beyond their own particular community and identifies them with the common cause.” (p. 170). Rouner describes how the Americans found a common cause for their own nationhood and what the Germans found as a common cause for getting rid of the load of Nazism. In both cases, the load-lifting and binding idea was not just a material value but rather a spiritual value. The Indian diversity, Rouner admits, is much more complex than the American diversity and so it would be, to that extent, more difficult for Indians to find a common cause. The traditional bonds that link one Indian to another are those of blood, language, region, caste/class and religion. It is these bonds that give people a sense of being at home in a particular community. But there has to be a new linkage and, simultaneously, a transition from the traditional primacy of group life to the modern values of individuality, secularism and freedom. There has to be a melding of traditional values, which we can never forget and modern values which we may not ignore. Though Nehru realised this, he paid relatively little attention to the efforts at such a melding made by the religious movement in Hinduism. This movement drew creative elements from the Hindu tradition and projected them as the essence of India’s culture, an essence which would make an Indian truly universal man able to transcend the divisions and divisiveness of the historical Indian society, an essence which would be acceptable to the whole world. This essence consists of tolerance and non-violence reflecting the humility of the human being and love for all mankind. This essence is spiritual as well as social. It can form the basis of political action without being degraded. Tolerance in this complex sense is no longer exclusively Hindu, but it is distinctively Indian. That India has found such a binding ingredient has, Rouner says, considerable significance for India’s political future.

The essays reviewed above were about the fundamental questions of self-esteem, identity and modernity. The other essays in the book deal with the practice of politics in India and with some specific topics/programmes.

Rajni Kothari makes what he calls a personal statement about Indian politics. His understanding is that between the late 1950s and 1970, it was through politics that India was sought to be transformed and built. Politics was to be conducted through key institutions; there was a consensus on the values and norms of politics,
giving politics a democratic character. It was the interplay between the political institutions and the various sections, classes and categories of people that was seen to be determining the content of politics. Rajni Kothari seems to be satisfied with the nature of politics of that time. He expresses his uneasiness at the later changes, which he explains in terms of class conflicts on the one hand and the de-institutionalisation and decay of norms on the other. According to him, the bourgeoisie originally supported the establishment of a huge public sector economy as it was itself weak; but once its consumer needs were gratified through this public sector, it had no use for state intervention in the economy. It then supported the transnational agencies which favoured liberalisation of the economy. The masses on the other hand aspired for greater benefits and began to ask for redistributive measures. The state, dominated by the old elite, resisted this pressure, forcing the masses to resort to turbulent protest. Alongside this protest, religious and communal issues also got prominence. The new elite also launched a tirade against the government’s corruption and inefficiency. They propagated a new road to progress: autonomous corporations and, eventually, privatisation and globalisation, with no accountability to the state executive or even to the Parliament. The state was hijacked by new political actors like Indira Gandhi and Sanjay Gandhi, who eroded political institutions. Rajni Kothari feels that the way out of this mess lies through more positive action outside the state institutions. He sees such a movement emerging but what he considers necessary is an aggregation of these efforts. He, however, does not come to any specifics as to which exactly are the new voluntary actors, what are their goals and doctrines and how can those be aggregated at all.

Subrata Mitra does not consider the above to be a political analysis at all but only a “wistful incantation of the need of morality in politics” (p. 229). In his view a fixation about de-institutionalisation and authoritarianism cannot give us an understanding of Indian politics, which can come only through a wider discourse on how political systems cope with discontent and then achieve acceptability and legitimacy. He examines many models/theories. In his own model, discontent is expressed through crowd formation and political conflict. This crowd formation, whether in the shape of Jayaprakash Narayan’s brigades or Sanjay Gandhi’s brigades or the BJP/VHP brigades, is seen as constituting the problem of governability. Subrata Mitra points out that such crowd formation is not an Indian peculiarity. Rampaging crowds, corrupt state machinery and ineffective governments were not altogether unknown in England two centuries ago. Food riots and other challenges to public order occurred throughout early modern Europe. So, crowd formation and its threat to law and order are not unusual. But in Europe, through the centuries, people became accustomed to working within institutional bonds. Though subjectively free to agitate, they became institutionally bound and therefore amenable to productive, compliant roles that make orderly government possible. In India, the freedom struggle did not have the benefit of such institutions. Therefore, popular resistance, i.e., crowd formation became the means of expressing discontent. Gandhi kept the crowd under control by limiting the actual offering of satyagraha to a selected few or even withdrawing an agitation if it got out of hand. With Independence, came the institutions of western derivation. Our traditional selves have not so far been adjusted to them. Thus India has a modern nation-state which, being an alien structure, is inaccessible to its own citizens, who have therefore been unable to develop the attitudes necessary for playing a compliant role within it. This is the genesis of India’s problem of governability. The problem can also be looked at as a mismatch between the need to govern and the need to be accountable to the people. The Establishment wanting to govern comes into conflict with the discontented and mobilised sections of the people. A nationalist discourse has attempted to overcome this conflict by inventing a new essence of Indian society: social harmony. Nonetheless, under the impact of the growing violent conflict over the allocation of material benefits as well as over issues of ethnic identity, this harmony has not consistently held. In the ensuing contest, the state, according to people like Rajni Kothari, has become increasingly violent and authoritarian. Kothari, therefore, places
increasing trust in grassroots movements and partyless democracy. However, the fact is that in spite of the periodical conflict between the state and some classes of people, India has also returned to periods of stability from time to time. This resilience of the Indian state can be explained only by recognizing the positive nature of the elite response which makes it possible to overcome the conflict and restore orderly government. That response is in the nature of redistributive policies and even constitutional changes along with maintenance of law and order. It is the politics of accommodation that led Nehru to the creation of linguistic states. It is through such politics that Indira Gandhi got consistent support from below for her 'authoritarianism'. This politics of accommodation or transactions is successful only when the demands made on the government are possible to be met within the constitutional framework. When the demands transcend these limits, there emerges an unbridgeable gulf between the state on the one hand and the over-politicised and undisciplined crowds or the protagonists of communal politics on the other. Thus, the key to understanding politics is studying the roles of the political actors on either side of the conflict and not some fixation about institutions.

D.L. Seth examines the language debate in India, a solution to which is, in his view, necessary for nation-building. He points out that even thirty odd years after the creation of linguistic states, regional languages have not been firmly established as the universal media of education and administration in the respective states. Mulayam Singh Yadav tried to do it in Uttar Pradesh but was fiercely opposed by the English Press and the English-speaking elite. This shows that the debate over the language issue is no longer about linguistic identities, since those have been recognised through the creation of linguistic states. The debate now reflects the conflict between the pan-Indian English-speaking elite and the new elite, speaking the regional languages and wielding power in the states. The latter have begun to have a greater say because of the numbers they represent. This process of democratisation is bound to go further and reach the dalits and the tribals. However, there will be conflicts between the elite and the masses. The roles of Hindi and English in this conflict are important. The Nehruvian elite were educated through the English language and carried on their discourse about modernisation, secularism, etc., through that language. The new pan-Indian elite, though drawn from the regions is also English-educated. The vernacular-speaking masses are therefore being continuously marginalised. In the field of education also, the English language is getting more importance. With the march of democracy, English will not be able to maintain its hegemony. There is a need to reduce its role in public affairs and in education also, so that the divide between the elite and others can be bridged and the national discourse can be conducted through regional languages. This will remove the extra advantage that the English-speaking have in the access to jobs and power and help nation-building. As for the need for a link language, Hindi is best suited for this role but, for it to achieve that status, Hindi-speaking elite will have to make common cause with other regional elite and will have in the first instance to give more attention to the growth of Hindi rather than its spread.

Prakash Desai and Ashis Nandy look at the political actors from a psychologist's angle. Prakash Desai says that politics in India is personality politics. So he enquires into how Indian personalities are formed. He says that man, apaman and abhiman are the most potent and the most valued aspects of the self-experience of the Indians, right from the mythical times of sage Durvasa. These values are ingrained in the child by the traditional method of up-bringing. As an adult he develops a split personality in which he has to maintain a public image but is privately unable to live up to it. Masses of such adults over-idealise a leadership function. The burden on a leader to live up to such heightened and emotional expectations becomes onerous. Ashis Nandy has projected another psychological factor. He says that in modern times the role of the psychologist as a social thinker has shrunk. His role as a social engineer has come to the fore. In this latter role, the psycho-technologist is critical of the weak and the defeated. He becomes an interventionist, not for reducing injustice but rather for supplanting the culture of the weak by a culture which supports the current doctrines of progress, high economic growth, etc. Ashis Nandy feels that this is bad psychology and that good psychology should be more concerned with human values and feelings.
Pravin Sheth examines the opposition to the Narmada River Project. He finds that the project is a very beneficial one and that even the World Bank has admitted that it will enable a forty-fold improvement in environment. The Bank has also found that considerable progress has been made by the government in rehabilitating the displaced persons. Sheth therefore finds the opposition to the project as misplaced and even immoral. The opposition has not been able to present a realistic alternative which will bring so many benefits. So, while the opposition has brought environmental problems to such a high level of debate, political mobilisation and grass root activism, and while it has pressurised government to be more mindful of the problems of the displaced, enough is enough and the anti-dam movement should not go to the extent of damming the dam.

Praveen Patel examines the question of communal riots. He goes into the various explanations given for the occurrence of these riots, finds them unsatisfactory and proceeds to make a "detailed, systematic microlevel analysis" of the three riots which occurred in Vadodara in 1969, 1981 and 1982 (p. 375). After a critical study of these riots, Patel finds that petty quarrels and conflicts over political and economic goals, rather than truly religious factors have sparked off these riots. Psychological and ethnic tensions were certainly there as necessary causes but the essential source of the riots was in the social structure. The situation was exploited by the elite who in their struggle for power mobilised people on communal lines. In the Vadodara riots, Patel sees a nexus with the infighting within the Congress and with the combination of Kshatriyas, Harijans, Adivasis and Muslims (KHAM) relied upon by Indira Gandhi for retaining power. In citing this combination Patel has perhaps overlooked his own finding that social structure is the more important factor in the riots. If we treat the KHAM combination as a socio-economic structure rather than a communal one- we have in another context accepted caste as an indicator of social backwardness; we would no longer be able to treat that combination as an instance of the communalisation of politics. One can hope, along with Patel, that with the emergence of common goals and cooperation for achieving them, the society will get more integrated and communal violence will decrease.

Jayashree Mehta examines the health scenario. After giving statistics to show that much remains to be done she refers to an assessment which says that the imported model of health services is top heavy, elitist-oriented and dependency creating. She sees merit in the Primary Health Care schemes launched in rural areas, the expansion of manpower employment in health services and the co-opting of Health Volunteers and Health Guides. She pleads for some ways of instilling in people the basic value of preventing illness itself. She calls for more funds to be provided for health programmes. She also says that these programmes need to be made a part of a whole development package simultaneously addressing the social, cultural, economic, nutritional, educational and health-cum-family planning needs of the people.

The overall impression which the book makes on us is that it contains a wealth of information and thoughts about the transformations taking place in India but it does not lead us to a sense of crisis. The reason is that if there is a stress on a negative aspect at one point, it is generally balanced by correspondingly positive aspect at another place. The good as well as the bad points about tradition and modernity have been recognised. If de-institutionalisation is criticized there is a balancing mention of the realistic transactions between political actors. The limitations of dreamy prescriptions have been recognised. One such prescription is a 'holistic' approach to every development problem. There is enough evidence in this book and elsewhere to show that a holistic approach is not unknown to the planners but after a certain point any programme has to be specific to itself. If we look to the specific programmes like the Narmada Project, or Health Care, we find that there is a continuous political activity for solving these problems within the specific parameters of each problems. Some problems have some times been getting worse, but they have been getting better also. There is, therefore, more reason for hope than for despondency.
Crisis and change in contemporary India.